

# CONFLICT AT WORK

It is hard when you do not get along with a coworker. This information sheet can help you figure out how to resolve conflict with coworkers.

## DEAL WITH IT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER

Do not wait too long to address conflict with a coworker. The conflict may get bigger and start to affect your performance. Bottling conflict up for too long can cause you to “explode” if it gets worse.

## BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TALK TO

We all need to vent when we are having conflict. Be careful venting about conflict at work. The person you are venting to may spread this information to another coworker. This might make the problem worse. Talk to a trusted friend or family member outside of work instead.

## TALK TO THE PERSON YOURSELF

It might seem less stressful to ask someone else to deal with the conflict for you. You might even want to address the coworker over email or text. It might help to discuss the conflict with the coworker face-to-face. If you do not deal with the conflict yourself, it may make the situation worse.

## LISTEN AND BE OPEN

When dealing with a coworker, you might get angry and not listen. When we get defensive, we tend to focus on our own point of view and not listen to others'. If you do this, you do not solve the conflict. You do not have to agree with your coworker, but you should at least listen, be respectful, and try to understand their point of view.

## STAY CALM WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN TO TALK

- It is normal to get emotional when there is a disagreement with a coworker. It is important to act professionally at work no matter how you are feeling on the inside. If you act out in anger, this will affect how others at work view you in the future.
- How can you stay calm when there is conflict?
  - Practice relaxation (see Relaxation Techniques resource)
  - Prepare for what you want to say and bring notes
  - Role play the "worst case scenario" with a friend or family member
  - Think positive

## KNOW WHEN TO GET HELP

- If you try to resolve the conflict with the coworker and it does not go well or makes the problem worse, seek help from your supervisor or Human Resources.
- If the coworker has mistreated you because of your gender, race, sexuality, religion, or age, sexually harassed you, or made any threats to you, talk with your supervisor and Human Resources immediately.

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