

Practicing Conflict Management

The following scenarios present tough interpersonal situations that might arise at work. Read through each scenario and write down your ideas for how to deal with them—or better, yet, act them out with a colleague—remembering to consider the four principles discussed in the lesson: acknowledging common ground, avoiding conflict-based language, building awareness of emotional responses, and employing empathy.

Scenario 1: The Collaborating Teacher

Justine has recently started collaborating with Caroline, a new teacher. They sat together to plan out their objectives and roles and seemed to be on the same page. However, once the unit started, Caroline interrupted Justine in front of the students any time that it was Justine's turn to lead the instruction. Justine didn't want to create a scene in front of the students but felt extremely frustrated that Caroline wasn't trusting or accepting her method of instruction. How would you advise Justine to deal with this situation with Caroline? Write out some specific options for what Caroline could say.

Conflict Management Advice:

Scenario 2: The School Committee

Taylor has recently been put on an "implementing district goals" committee with other members of the school administration and faculty. At the first meeting, people were talking over each other, yelling, and focusing on personal disagreements rather than conceptual ones. Taylor has a reputation for being even-keeled and the faculty committee head asked Taylor to lead the next meeting with the goal of better cooperation among the group. What advice would give Taylor for facilitating that meeting to minimize conflict and maximize collaboration?

Conflict Management Advice:**Scenario 3: The Library Aide**

Carlos recently hired a new library aide. At first, their working relationship is solid—the aide asks questions for clarification, is kind to students, and seems happy to be in the library. However, after a few weeks, Carlos begins to notice that the quality of her work, which had been strong, is slipping: books are incorrectly shelved; she skips key principles during the student helper orientation; and, new materials are stacking up, unprocessed. Carlos wants to maintain their positive relationship, but also knows he must confront the aide about these issues. How would you recommend Carlos approach the situation?

Conflict Management Advice: