



# Conflict In The Workplace

Occasionally conflicts can arise in the workplace, and it is a good idea to be prepared to effectively handle such a situation. This document outlines some brief tips on how to navigate a conflict in the workplace. If you are experiencing a serious employment problem, you have support resources available to you. Please view the [GW Human Resources Policies](#). Get in touch with your department's [HR Representative](#) as well as Student Employment if you would like to speak about the issue.

## When Conflict Occurs...

- Stay calm. Do not contribute to escalating the situation.
- If you feel uncomfortable or attacked, take some time away from the situation before taking further action. Step away and come back to work out a solution later. Tell the other party that coming to a solution to the misunderstanding, difference of opinion, etc is important to you, but that you would like to collect your thoughts and set up a time to continue the conversation in a private location.

## Create a Plan to Address the Situation

- Before reacting, take some time to develop a plan for how to address it. To help you make a plan you may want to brainstorm some of the following questions:
  - How did the situation begin?
  - What might the other person be thinking or feeling? Are they also uncomfortable or hurt?
  - What would be helpful in resolving the situation? What would not be helpful?

## Communication Tips

- Do not confront the person in front of a big audience - wait for a time to chat one on-one in private.
- Stay calm. Getting emotional or defensive may escalate the situation, so try to communicate clearly and focus on the facts.
- Listen to the other person's point of view, and identify things you agree and disagree on. This can help both parties understand each other and work toward a solution.
- If you feel like the situation does not change or is getting worse, you can politely end the conversation and come back to it another time.

## Get Support

- If you do not feel comfortable addressing the situation by yourself, ask a supervisor or other trusted staff member for help.
- When bringing another person into the situation, do not ask them to pick sides. Try to stay focused on why you feel they could help, and ask for their support in helping you find a resolution.

## More Resources

[Handling Conflict in the Workplace](#)

[Diffusing Conflict in the Workplace](#)

[10 Tips for Tackling the Toughest Workplace Conflicts](#)