

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



Many people believe that conflicts are unhealthy, undesirable and need to be avoided at all costs. It is assumed that conflicts are abnormal and a result of personality problems or differences. This is entirely untrue. **Conflicts can be healthy and can produce desirable outcomes.** Conflict is also very normal and inevitable. It is also important to remember that conflict should NOT be avoided and always managed. When we begin to understand conflicts we are able to preserve and strengthen our work relationships; improve our own productivity by reducing the time and energy spent on handling conflicts; reduce stress in our lives; and help get better results from the conflicts we do have.

## PREVENT CONFLICT

- When angry, separate yourself from the situation and take a break.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Focus on the issue, NOT your position about the issue.
- Work to develop common agreement with the individual.
- Communicate your feelings assertively, NOT aggressively.
- Focus on areas of common interest and agreements, instead of areas of disagreement and opposition.
- Accept and respect that individual opinions may differ, don't try to force compliance, work to develop common agreement
- Avoid jumping to conclusions or making assumptions about what another is thinking or feeling.
- Listen without interrupting and ask for feedback if needed to assure a clear understanding of the issue.

## MANAGE CONFLICT

- Be impartial-strive to be fair.
- Each party to state what they think the problem is and not side-track to other issues.
- Each party should restate what the other said which helps people put themselves in the others' shoes.
- Each party should confirm the accuracy of the re-statement, which gives the opportunity for corrections or clarifications to further the understanding of the other party.
- Identify mutual needs of goals that each party identified.
- Ask each party for a sincere, practical solution now that they understand the other's side better.
- See if the parties can agree to one of the offered solutions. If not, try an alternative solution to see what works better.
- Set a review date to make sure the accepted solution is working to see if each party is living up to its agreement.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

- McKinley Health Education Unit.....333-2714
- McKinley Mental Health Unit.....333-2705
- The Counseling Center.....333-3704
- Office for Student Conflict Resolution.....333-3680