

Mediating Conflict Between Others

“Checklist”

General Preparation:

Allow enough time for both people to cool down prior to the meeting and set aside enough time in your schedule allowing for unanticipated concerns that may come up.

As a supervisor, respect that people have different ways of approaching conflict. Some avoid it, some compete with each other, some try to accommodate and give in to others and some try to collaborate and find win-win solutions.

- Meet with the both people together. Let each briefly summarize their point of view, without comment, interruption or attack by the other person. This should include their viewpoint as to what they think is causing the conflict. Encourage listening skills from both people as well as them using tips we shared relating to having crucial conversations.
- Encourage them to focus on the behaviors and actions that have caused the conflict without getting personal or attaching intent. This would include using the Situation, Behavior and Impact model.
- As the supervisor, take responsibility for any contributions you've made to create or add to the conflict. These would include duplications or unnecessary overlaps in work assignments, lack of clarity in employee responsibilities, unclear policies, allocation of resources, barriers, or anything else you can think of that would help them work together more effectively.
- Ask each person to identify what the other employee can do more of, less of, stop and/or start. Model and encourage both people to use CPR (Clarifying, Paraphrasing and Reflecting) with each other. Clarifying involves asking clarifying questions to understand the other person's perspective better. Paraphrase is sharing with the other person what you hear them saying (but put in your own words). This

demonstrates respect that you are listening and have really heard what they've said. Reflecting is being aware of, and sensitive to, non-verbals and the messages they convey.

- Both people should discuss and commit to making the changes necessary to resolve the conflict. This may include committing to treating each other with more respect and greater tolerance for differences.
- Try not to choose sides. However, if they don't resolve it or remain stuck, you may need to choose a position based on each's alignment with workplace goals, objectives, policies or other factors that affect the conflict.
- If one or both people are still having problems, you may need to refer them to the Service's CORE PLUS program which is under the DOI Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR). Contact the Human Resources Employee Relations Specialist in your Region for more details on this program.
- If you feel it may be an issue that only one person might be having as they are wrestling with a personal issue may be affecting their work, another option is letting them know about the Employee Assistance Program. Information on this program is also available through your Regional HR Office.
- Eventually, if both people cannot resolve the conflict, and performance or work station efficiency is affected, disciplinary action may be appropriate. If the conflict elevates to this point, make sure you are working with an Employee Relations Specialist in your Regional Human Resource office.
- Assure both people that you have faith and confidence in their ability to work through this. Set a time to review progress and follow up.