Conflict is a situation in which people or groups act out of a belief that they have incompatible and opposed goals, values, or interests.

Conflict is a normal and natural part of life. It arises in all parts of life because people have different goals, priorities, responsibilities, values, and backgrounds.

Conflict is inevitable.

Conflict has both destructive and constructive sides and consequences. Constructive conflict is creative and can lead to better relationships and better quality decisions.

Destructive conflict damages relationships, eroding respect and trust, and taking time and focus away from our mission of providing an exemplary education. Learn more:

- CEDR’s Conflict Management Toolbox - How can you manage conflict more constructively?
- Learn how to listen effectively.
- Explore interest-based negotiation.
- Learn how to have conversations about challenging issues.
- Contact CEDR to talk about help in increasing your skills or facilitating a conversation, meeting, or other problem-solving session.

Characteristics of Constructive and Destructive Conflict

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<th>Destructive Conflict</th>
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Each party attempts to "win"  Parties try to find a solution
Contentious tactics  Creative joint problem solving
Antagonism between parties increases  Considers dissenting opinions
Relationships deteriorate  Relationships remain respectful, may improve
Increasingly judgmental  Non-judgmental, exploratory discussions
High levels of anger, frustration  Little negative emotion
Effective communication declines  Communication is open and honest
Real issues are often not addressed  High quality outcomes, taking all
Conflict is avoided and left to fester  information and needs into account to the extent possible

Typical Costs of Destructive Conflict

Poorly handled, destructive conflict has high costs for you and for the functioning of your school, district, and area.

Financial costs

- Time spent on the conflict by employees, supervisors, parents, others
- Legal costs

Emotional costs:

- Low morale
- Increased stress

Damaged working relationships

Decreased trust

Reduced communication which leads to:

- low information flow
- continued conflicts based on poor communication and understanding
- lower quality decisions and ENERGY AND FOCUS ARE DISTRACTED FROM DoDEA'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION

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