

Constructive Conflict in the Workplace

A quick guide to help you prepare, listen,
and respond with confidence

1. Constructive Conflict: The 4-Part Assertive Statement

Structure your thoughts so they're clear,
respectful, and solution-oriented:

1. **I notice...** (Share the facts)
2. **I feel...** (Name your emotion)
3. **I need...** (State your request)
4. **I'd like...** (Propose a collaborative way forward)

Example: "I notice deadlines keep shifting. I feel stressed when that happens. I need clearer timelines. I'd like us to agree on a weekly check-in."

2. If Someone Brings Conflict to You

Responding with openness shows maturity and
keeps dialogue safe. Try one of these:

- **Acknowledge:** "Thanks for bringing this up — I appreciate your honesty."
- **Clarify:** "Can you tell me more about what you meant when you said...?"
- **Own your part:** "I see how that impacted you. I'll work on adjusting my approach."
- **Collaborate:** "Let's think of one change that could help both of us."

3. Digging Deeper

Sometimes the source of conflict isn't clear. In
many cases, asking great questions can become
your workplace superpower! These questions
can help you slow down and signal your respect
for the person you're in conflict with:

- "Can you help me understand what's most important to you in this situation?"
- "When this happened, how did it affect you?"
- "What would feel like a good outcome for you?"
- "Is there something I might be missing or overlooking here?"

4. Reflect Afterward

- What went well in how I listened and responded?
- What will I do differently next time?
- Did the conversation strengthen trust or clarity?

Quick Reminder

Conflict isn't a failure — it's a chance to build
understanding and stronger working relationships.