

CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL

1. **SET A POSITIVE TONE. ASSUME THE BEST (GIVE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT).** We often build our biases, or experiences and our own wants and needs into a dark lens through which we look at others. The result is that we approach others with caution, as though we believe that they will do us harm. We tend to assume the worst and this assumption gets in the way of trust. Without trust, relationships are limited to contractual agreements, association based on project responsibilities, or proximity of workspaces.
2. **DESCRIBE THE SPECIFIC ISSUE THAT NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED.** Use neutral examples of the issue. “We have to discuss the tenure track opening we’ve been authorized to fill for next year. There are a number of different points of view about the specific research focus the junior member should bring to the table.”
3. **ASK THE OTHER PERSON TO TELL THEIR STORY.** Have them talk about their interests related to the issue. You need to describe your interests once the other person has done so, if you have not already described them in your statement of the issue. Note that *interests* are not solutions to the issue, but rather fears, needs, concerns that give us more information about the issue.
4. **DESCRIBE THE IMPACT OF THE ISSUE ON YOUR WORK AND ON THE ORGANIZATION.** This is where you get to talk about your interests as an individual, AND as an agent of the institution.
5. **WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP OPTIONS TO HELP ADDRESS ALL THE INTERESTS.** Think up as many ways to meet each other’s interests as possible. Use any of the brainstorming methodologies available, but be sure to brainstorm systematically to cover the interests.
6. **AGREE ON CRITERIA AND DECIDE RESOLUTION**
 - a. Develop criteria: once you’ve brainstormed options, you need to decide among them, or among packages of them. You need objective criteria to keep the decision-making from turning into (or back into) a fight.
 - b. Decide resolution. Which options can you employ to meet the interests?
7. **ASSIGN ACCOUNTABILITIES.** Do or revise project plan.
8. **MEET AND MONITOR:** schedule one or more follow up meetings to evaluate how the plan is working and make modifications to it as needed to keep things resolved moving forward.