

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SUBTOPICS.

- Definitions.
- Levels and types of conflicts.
- Examples of common conflicts in school, and how to respectively manage them.

DEFINITIONS

- **CONFLICT:**

- a disagreement, often violent, between two or more opposing individual(s) or group.

- Conflict can also be defined as an incompatibility, as in two things that cannot be accomplished at the same time, for instance, having two lectures scheduled to happen at the same time.

- ① Conflict is an inevitable part of life, meaning in one way or the other we all must experience conflict at some point.
- ② The way we are raised up by our respective communities, we therefore have acquired different (but specific) way of dealing with a situation in a particular way, in reference to beliefs, ideas and opinions.
- ③ Therefore, conflict emerges when we are faced with a challenge in a totally different scenario that we are not used to, hence the way of handling similar case traditionally may not apply.

RESOLUTION:

process of solving a conflict.

WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

LEVELS AND TYPES OF CONFLICTS

There are two levels of conflicts, and in each level there are types of conflicts

At the INDIVIDUAL LEVEL there is **intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts.**

at the GROUP LEVEL there is **intragroup and intergroup conflicts.**

INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICT:

refers to conflict within an individual. This experience takes place in a person's mind. It is psychological, involving values, thoughts, principles and emotions. For example, choosing a career course, a child deciding whether to call "it" a mug or cup, psychosomatic disorder like hand going numb before a war.

This type of conflict can be quite difficult to handle if incase a person cannot resolve his own inner struggles. Hence causing severe depression.

Dealing with inner conflict – empower oneself, make positive changes in life, individual counseling.

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT:

conflict between two individuals. This normally occurs because of individual differences (every person is unique on his own way, including identical twins).

Ironically, these differences are the ones responsible for facilitating personal growth and relationships with others.

Dealing with interpersonal conflict – each party should adjusting his own qualities so as to include the other one. A mediator can really help when it comes to such modifications.

INTRAGROUP CONFLICT:

conflict within a group, among group members. For instance, when ODM member fight during there own internal elections.

It starts when two individuals of the same group disagree (the interpersonal conflict), then because they are in a group they tend to acquire a following, and before you know it, it is chaos all over.

Dealing with intragroup conflict – group leader is the only hope. Therefore, it is important that the group leader doesn't choose side, and use his intelligence to resolve the matter peacefully. Because if he fails, the group will loose her members and eventually collapse.

INTERGROUP CONFLICT:

This is conflict between or among different groups within an organisation. For instance, after new constitution was inaugurated, the senate and MCAs were established, keeping in mind that there were the MPs. So there was a fight among all these offices pertaining duties as to who should do what. This was a big challenge and as a result common Kenyans couldn't get quality services as they deserved.

Commonly, these groups fight because they are difference, and also it is a competition – fighting for fame and popularity.

Dealing with intergroup conflict – when such a conflict draws back the organization's productivity, then the conflict management should come up with a solution fast. As prevention is always better than cure, to prevent such intergroup (also intragroup) conflict, there should be a clear understanding of the institution's rules, regulations and bureaucracy.

Conflicts are a natural part of human interaction. People in conflicts, whether at the individual or group level, perceive that their goals or interests are contradicted by the goals or interests of the other party.

The formal termination of such a conflict begins with the elimination of the perceived incompatibility between the opposing parties through negotiation by their representatives — that is, a conflict resolution process. But this is only part of the long-term reconciliation process, which requires the formation of peaceful relations based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of mutual needs.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON CONFLICTS IN SCHOOL.

Room mates disagreeing: solution – on the first day of entering into a room, after introductions it is important that you come up with “house” rules. Like duty roaster, using another person’s items, “exiles”, etc etc. and because you all are grown ups, there is no need of including punishments, even though punishments may also be included.

Communication is very important, as one may be doing a mistake without knowing, so as good room mate you should inform him so he understands. **NOTE**, not just informing and keeping quiet, you should inform and give an alternative.

Student strike: solution – first students should understand that violent strike that lead to destruction of property has never and will never-even in million years to come- be a perfect way to getting whatever you need. As evidenced in all schools that have destroyed property in the name of striking, what admin simply did is to suspend all students indefinitely, then fine students when they return. And at the end, whatever students were demonstrating about shall all have been forgotten about, even when the issue that led to strike was genuinely.

Dealing with issues that if not handled correctly in due time may lead to strike – it is duty of students' leaders to keep on reminding the admin about the issues. Whenever the matter is raised, from there it is upto the student leader and admin to come up with a way forward.

NOTE that, the final solution will not always be the way you envisioned it. But all in all, that solution is always the best for the development of an institution where you as a student are included.

Slogan “you are here for a reason, and a season”

Conflict in school can range from petty annoyance that doesn't disrupt academic schedules, to full scale confrontation disrupting the whole institution.

Handling conflict is a skill that anyone can develop just by taking time and listening to conflicting parties without making assumptions about what other people might be thinking or feeling.

It is the way conflict is handled that makes the outcome positive or negative. If handled correctly, conflict can create a good learning experience. If handled ineffectively, conflict can quickly escalate to physical and emotional violence.

Effective implementation of conflict management strategies requires various SKILLS and ABILITIES for addressing conflict.

- ① **Orientation skills** including values, beliefs and attitude that are compatible with effective conflict management. They include; understanding own values and beliefs, understanding how beliefs about justice and respect affect how we deal with conflict.
- ② **Perception skills** include the understanding that conflict lies not in objective reality, but in the perception that individuals have of that situation, circumstance.

Emotional skills include behaviours to manage emotions and feelings such as anger, frustration, hurt, fear, confusion, etc. they are; recognizing one's emotions, recognizing other's emotions, able to strategically express emotions, able to control negative emotions – anger (relaxation techniques), able to talk about emotions rather than acting them out.

- ④ **Communication skill** include listening and speaking which allows for more effective exchange of facts and feeling. They include, listening, use of non defensive language.
- ④ **Creative thinking skill** enables an individual to find new ways to view and addressing challenges as they arise. Creating new options. Not being rigid –resistant to change.
- ④ **Critical thinking skills** (problem solving) include analyzing the situation.

Martin Luther King Jr

“PEOPLE FAIL TO GET ALONG BECAUSE THEY FEAR EACH OTHER, THEY FEAR EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER, THEY DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT COMMUNICATED WITH EACH OTHER.”

Five conflict management styles :

AVOIDING; ACCOMMODATING;
COOPERATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
(collaboration and consensus)
;COMPROMISING ;COMPETING.

They are all appropriate depending on the situation.