

Helpful Ideas for Communicating When Conflict Is Present

- Share data and descriptions, not value judgments or interpretations.
- Use active listening skills.
- Focus on the present, not what has been or might be.
- Agree when those of a different viewpoint are right.
- Own your ideas and feelings; use “I” as much as possible.
- Guard against too much openness.
- Make constructive use of silence; provide and demand time to think.
- Delay making judgments or decisions.
- Explain, do not defend.
- Be sensitive to nonverbal clues and messages.
- Recognize and request rewording of questions that have no answers, that are rhetorical, or that include commands or directions.
- Avoid the use of superlatives and absolutes (“most,” “best,” “always,” “never”).
- Assume the motives of others are honorable.
- Discourage preaching and teaching behaviors.