

# CLINICAL STAFF AND FACULTY CONFLICT RESPONSE MATRIX

People often engage in conflict reactively and employ strategies that can make the situation worse. Intentionally choosing your conflict response can deescalate conflict and help you get what you want.

Adapted from Mediation Training Institute, Conflict Dynamics Profile, Eckerd College Leadership Development Institute, <https://www.conflictdynamics.org>

		Constructive	Destructive
Active	Perspective Taking	Putting yourself in the other person's shoes and trying to understand their perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> A colleague who recently has been missing many shifts shares that they lost a relative, and you understand their absences.</li> </ul>	<b>Winning at all Costs</b> <p>Focusing on getting your way despite potentially hurting relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> Everyone in your unit supports moving in one direction, but you disagree and decide to do it your way despite their protests.</li> </ul>
	Creating Solutions	Brainstorming collaboratively with the other person to generate new solutions to a problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You work with a colleague to creatively determine how to allocate limited supplies.</li> </ul>	<b>Displaying Anger</b> <p>Demonstrating visible signs of anger, e.g., yelling, cursing, pounding fist on table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> In a meeting or huddle, you raise your voice at a colleague when they interrupt you.</li> </ul>
	Expressing Emotions	Directly and honestly communicating your feelings about the situation to the other person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You express worry to a colleague about how the staffing shortage will impact patient care.</li> </ul>	<b>Demeaning Others</b> <p>Putting down the other person in a conflict, e.g., using eye rolls or sarcasm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> A colleague proposes an idea, and you scoff, "That's a terrible idea."</li> </ul>
	Reaching Out	Making the first move to restart communication after it has broken down or stalled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You invite someone with whom you have had an icy relationship to coffee.</li> </ul>	<b>Retaliating</b> <p>Getting even or getting back at the other person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You dislike the way someone spoke to you, so you exclude them from informal meetings.</li> </ul>
	Reflective Thinking	Analyzing the situation, weighing pros and cons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You think through going on a job search vs. trying to improve your current work environment.</li> </ul>	<b>Avoiding</b> <p>Keeping your distance and acting aloof in conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> After a bad interaction with a colleague, you minimize interactions rather than speak directly with them.</li> </ul>
Passive	Delay Responding	First cooling down from a highly emotional state before re-engaging with the conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You wait for your anger to subside before talking to a colleague who did something that offended you.</li> </ul>	<b>Yielding</b> <p>Giving in to the other person and letting them have their way, rather than facing the conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You do not share your opinion and simply go along with a colleague's idea even though you know it is problematic.</li> </ul>
	Adapting	Being flexible and considering a range of potential solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> A new leader requires a different process for charting so you learn and implement it.</li> </ul>	<b>Hiding Emotions</b> <p>Repressing your feelings, may lead to outburst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> You do not communicate your frustration to a colleague who does not complete their tasks.</li> </ul>
	Use the Ombuds Office	Getting consult from an impartial, confidential resource to best understand your options for both passive and active conflict engagement strategies	<b>Self-Criticizing</b> <p>Replaying what you did wrong over and over</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Example:</i> After a blow-up with a colleague, you keep kicking yourself for what you did.</li> </ul>