

Harnessing Emotional Intelligence for Conflict Resolution

Since the 1995 publication of "[Emotional Intelligence](#)" by Daniel Goleman which brought to life the framework proposed by researchers Mayer and Salovey, Emotional Intelligence has gained popularity in the



workplace. According to a Truity.com blog post almost three-quarters of employers value emotional intelligence (EQ) more highly than regular intelligence (IQ) when hiring and promoting employees. In addition, employers use EQ to manage conflict with tact by helping employees recognize and regulate their emotions, understand others' perspectives, and communicate effectively.

You may already be familiar with the five core components of EQ: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. When employees know and use the elements of EQ to manage conflict it creates a favorable environment to resolve problems before they escalate. By using EQ to manage conflict

with tact, employers can improve employee motivation, social skills, productivity, and communication, while minimizing the number of conflicts in the workplace.

Here's an example of how emotional intelligence can be used to manage a conflict in the workplace:

Scenario: Two employees, Jack and Jill, are working on a project together. Jack is frustrated with Jill because he feels like she is not contributing enough to the project. Jill, on the other hand, feels like Jack is being too demanding and not giving her enough space to work.

Using Emotional Intelligence: In this scenario, both Jack and Jill can use emotional intelligence to manage their conflict. Jack can use his self-awareness to recognize that he is feeling frustrated and that his frustration is causing him to be more demanding than he should be. He can then use his self-regulation to control his emotions and communicate more effectively with Jill. Jill can use her empathy to understand Jack's perspective and her social skills to communicate her own perspective in a way that is not confrontational.

Tactful Communication: Both Jack and Jill can use tactful communication to express their opinions and feelings without offending each other. For example, Jack can say something like, "I'm feeling frustrated because I feel like we're not making enough progress on this project. Can we talk about how we can work together more effectively?" Jill can respond by saying something like, "I understand that you're feeling frustrated, but I need some space to work on my part of the project. Can we set some clear expectations for what we each need to do?"

By using emotional intelligence and tactful communication, Jack and Jill can work together more effectively and resolve their conflict in a way that benefits both people.

Here are 5 practical ways to encourage employees to use EQ to manage conflict with tact.

- **Use Active Listening.** Active listening is an essential component of EQ and an excellent tool to use in conflict resolution. Consider what happens when both parties pay attention to the other person, ask clarifying questions, and summarize key points in the conversation. These actions go a long way to ensuring people feel heard and their perspective is understood.
- **Self-Management.** Maintaining emotional control is critical when dealing with conflict. By using self-management techniques such as deep breathing, taking a break, or reframing the situation, you can regulate your emotions and respond more effectively to conflict.
- **Empathy.** Empathy is a critical component of emotional intelligence that enables individuals to connect genuinely with others and understand their emotions and perspectives. By putting yourself in the other person's shoes, you can gain a better understanding of their point of view and work towards a mutually beneficial solution.
- **Social Intelligence.** Social intelligence involves understanding social situations and adapting your behavior accordingly. By using social intelligence, you can communicate more effectively, build stronger relationships, and resolve conflicts more efficiently.
- **Building Trust.** As author Patrick Lencioni tells us, "Trust is knowing that when a team member does push you, they're doing it because they care about the team." When people on the team trust each other, they are honest, transparent, and reliable. This creates a safe environment for resolving conflicts.

Everyone comes to work with different experiences and backgrounds, so disagreements will happen. When we learn and apply the components of EQ, we can find solutions to disputes that are mutually beneficial to build a healthy and happy workplace.

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