

Conversations in Mentoring

Resolving Conflict

Context

Finding a “sweet spot” in terms of how you interact with coworkers, including supervisors and senior management, will involve reflection, negotiation, and compromise. Often, the root cause of conflict stems from a few typical challenges:

- Poor communication or different communication styles
- Different values or interests
- Mismatched personalities
- Competition for resources (space, work hours, promotions)
- Different understanding around effort or quality of work

Approaches and strategies

- Before reacting or responding, work to identify the root cause of the conflict.
- Do a quick rating of how important “winning” this conflict is.
- Before reacting or responding, try to understand the other person’s point of view.
- Be mindful of your tone and body language.

Considerations and goals toward a more effective practice

- Which root cause gives you the most problems? How does naming this maybe help you anticipate it or deal with it differently?
- How easy do you find it to walk away from conflict? What if, before you walk away, you ask to come back and talk about it when “heads are cooler”?
- How would it feel to circle back (at least within a week) and apologize for your part in the conflict?

