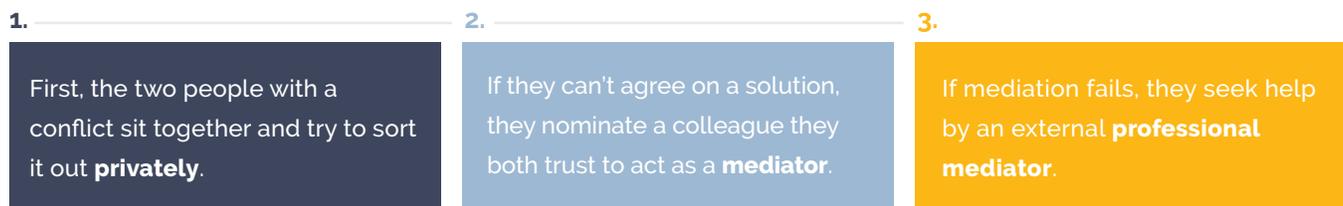


Conflict Resolution

"Conflict is resolved not through compromise, but through invention." - Mary Parker Follett

In most workplaces, people raise a dispute they have with a co-worker with their boss to settle the issue. The majority of workplace disagreements are instead best addressed between the people having conflict.

We suggest this process.



For challenging conversations, it can be really important to understand how you feel and what your underlying needs are. Using the steps of nonviolent communication can be helpful. This [NVC communication primer](#) is a great way to prepare for a challenging conversation. During the conversation it can be useful to go through the steps from the [NVC communication primer](#) in roughly reverse order of the doc, as laid out below.

Focus on

- 01.** A brief view on the factual observations. You don't need depth. Don't spend time getting agreement on 'the facts'. Note what can be shared without judgment or evaluation.
- 02.** Empathize with the other person. Consider the emotions and needs they might be experiencing.
- 03.** Once you understand what is going on for the other person and they feel understood, then you can share your feelings and needs.
- 04.** Avoid 'finger pointy' words, even finger pointy feeling words, wherever possible.
- 05.** Make a concrete request for action to meet the need just identified. Be clear and specific. Request, don't demand. An example might be... "If you could help with... or if you could avoid.... It would really make a difference for me.

Mediator best practices

- Stay neutral and don't impose a decision. Ask good questions an support the participants in communicating to arrive at their own solution.
- Get agreement that everyone is focused on building authentic **Connection, Honesty, and Empathy**. Notice if any are obviously missing.
- The focus is for the participants to hear and understand each other's perspective. Don't focus on solving the problem too soon. When we truly listen and internalize each other's thoughts well, resolution has a better chance of happening effectively in the relationship.
- 'Chunk' the conversation into bite-sized pieces. Do this by stopping for reflection and response often. The more intense the conversation, the smaller the 'chunks' should be.
- Encourage both parties to keep chunks small by stopping themselves or each other.
- Help participants move first to their [feelings](#), and then to the [universal needs](#) underneath their feelings.
- Support roughly equal talking time.

Chunking

Chunking the issues is more helpful than lumping problems into a larger explanation. Give each other a chance to bring up an issue using a brief description and then listen to the other person's ideas and reflections on the topic. Handling issues in bite-sizes means that there is a better chance of understanding them, feeling heard and therefore resolving them. Long diatribes rarely resolve problems and are more likely to feel like a personal attack. Pacing and pausing matters in conflict resolution.

Adapted from the [Gini Handbook](#) & [Newt Bailey's Communication Dojo](#)