

# **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**Parents as Partners presentation  
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**For assistance in the resolution of conflict contact:**

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## **BASIC STRUCTURES OF A SCHOOL COUNCIL**

**ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL:**

**BY-LAWS:**

**STRUCTURE AND FORMAT FOR MEETINGS:**

**COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION:**

## HELPFUL HINTS IN DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

1. **Know thyself** – Reflect on your personality. Are you confrontational? Avoid confrontation? Competitive? Don't like to give in? Empathetic? Good listener? Defensive? Can you be assertive without being aggressive? Do you know your triggers? Strengths and weaknesses?
2. **Empathy** – Try to see the situation through their eyes.
3. **Remove the personal element from the issues** – Don't take it personally – focus on the issue not the attitude, tone, or language directed towards you.
4. **Be prepared** – Have all of the information that you need going into the interaction. If you don't have it – Get it. Are there issues that reoccur at your school: combined classes, lice, behaviour, allergies, reporting student progress. Do you have research that supports combined classes, addresses the lice issue, on nut-free schools, your school's behavioural policy? Good information is a great leveler.
5. **Keep a note pad by the phone** – Really helpful as a reference to what they have said at the time or in the future. It can also work as an insertion and reinforces the importance of what they have said.
6. **LEAPPS** –
  - L – Listen** – Listen for understanding and see if you can determine their deeper interests.
  - E - Empathize** – See through their eyes.
  - A – Ask** – Ask clarifying questions. This helps to connect you with the other person and helps you begin the problem solving process.
  - A – Analyze** – Try to determine your objectives early – worth hanging in there at the time even though they are quite abusive? Can you calm them down? Is there a possibility of solving the problem now? Can you get them to a stage where problem solving can begin? Do you need more information so that you can get back to them? Should you cut them off? i.e. mentally unstable, on drugs, impaired, totally unreasonable.
  - P – Paraphrase** – This can help to create understanding and show them you are listening, but be careful with this one – do not go into overkill.
  - P – Problem Solve** – Steps in problem solving – identify problem, find root cause, generate solutions, choose best one, act on it.
  - S – Summarize** – as confirmation and for closure.
7. **Insertions** – To break the flow of a tirade, you may wish to use insertions. "Excuse me; I just need to make sure that I have all of your information correct ..."
8. **Patience** – will be required
9. **Remain calm, be firm** – Keep your emotions in check, but you don't have to be a jellyfish.
10. **Not everything has to be resolved right now** – Don't put undue pressure on yourself to solve the problem immediately. It might require more information and most complex problems do take time.
11. **You can take a time out** – "You know, I want to work with you to try and resolve this situation, but when you are swearing and yelling at me, I don't think that we will be able to resolve this. Please feel free to call me tomorrow, and we can try again at that time."
12. **Humour** – can be a great tool to bring levels of emotion down, but be careful in how you use it.

## Quick Reference for Coping with Difficult People

Behavior Name	Typical Actions	Positive Intent	Basic Coping Strategy
Sherman Tanks	Pushy, abrupt, and even hostile. Attack until others move out of the way or accept their view of the world. Aggravated by too much discussion or friendly chat.	Get it done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold your ground, but don't fight back.</li> <li>2. Interrupt the attack by repeating name.</li> <li>3. Restate the problem.</li> <li>4. State your own opinions forcefully.</li> <li>5. Be ready to be friendly.</li> </ol>
Snipers	Hide in crowds. Use jokes and sarcasm to sidetrack, humiliate, and embarrass people. May roll eyes to distract you. Can become tanks if exposed. Friendly snipers use humor to get attention from the group.	<p>Get it done</p> <p>Get appreciated</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surface the attack immediately</li> <li>2. Ask about intent and relevancy.</li> <li>3. Seek group consensus of criticism.</li> <li>4. Solve the problem, if any exists.</li> <li>5. Resolve on-going problems in private.</li> </ol>
Exploders	Feel thwarted and threatened so they "act out" through tantrums. May storm out of the room or attack others verbally without explanation. May cry or look silently enraged.	Get appreciated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give them time to run down.</li> <li>2. Get their attention.</li> <li>3. Show that you take them seriously.</li> <li>4. Reduce intensity. Take a break.</li> <li>5. Identify and solve underlying problems.</li> </ol>
Know-it-all Experts	Extremely confident in their abilities. Very accurate and thorough. Tend to ignore other opinions. Quick to criticize and pick at others. Don't like to be contradicted.	Get it done	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be prepared and know your stuff.</li> <li>2. Listen and acknowledge respectfully.</li> <li>3. Present your views indirectly.</li> <li>4. Turn them into mentors.</li> </ol>
Think-they-know-it-alls	Act like experts. Charismatic or enthusiastic talkers. Like to pontificate about subject in front of others, even though they are not really experts. Tend to be generalists in many fields.	Get appreciated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give them a little attention.</li> <li>2. Clarify for specifics.</li> <li>3. State facts or alternative opinions.</li> <li>4. Allow them to save face.</li> <li>5. Break the cycle.</li> </ol>

Super-agreeables	Try to please everyone by doing what is asked while sometimes feeling put upon. Over-commit so much that they perform poorly. Use humor to reveal issues.	Get along	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make it safe to be honest.</li> <li>2. Talk personally and honestly.</li> <li>3. Help them learn to plan realistically.</li> <li>4. Ensure commitment.</li> <li>5. Strengthen the relationship.</li> </ol>
Indecisives	Avoid making decisions for fear of harming a personal relationship. Hint or beat around the bush to remain honest. Try to postpone decisions until they are not necessary.	Get along	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a comfort zone.</li> <li>2. Surface the issues.</li> <li>3. Help them problem solve.</li> <li>4. Reassure, then ensure follow through.</li> <li>5. Strengthen the relationship.</li> </ol>
Unresponsives	Withdraw from others when frustrated. Stop talking although they appear angry. Wash hands of decision rather than try to influence it. Don't like to rush into action without understanding the background and the details of a project.	Get it right	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be prepared to wait.</li> <li>2. Ask open-ended questions expectantly.</li> <li>3. Avoid filling quiet pauses with talk.</li> <li>4. Help break the tension.</li> <li>5. Guess.</li> <li>6. Show the future.</li> </ol>
Negativists	Feel hopeless to enact change. Destroy morale. React strongly to problem solving or process changes. Sound bitterer and more hopeless than complainers.	Get it right	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Avoid getting drawn in.</li> <li>2. Don't argue.</li> <li>3. Explore the problem before solutions.</li> <li>4. Describe the worst case situation.</li> <li>5. Use them as a resource.</li> <li>6. Wait for them, but be prepared to act.</li> </ol>
Complainers	Whine and speak in generalizations about problems. Focus on problems, not solutions. Believe someone else should fix the problem.	Get it right	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen for the main points</li> <li>2. Acknowledge, interrupt and get specific.</li> <li>3. Don't agree or apologize. State facts.</li> <li>4. Switch to problem solving.</li> <li>5. Draw the line. How should this end?</li> </ol>

Compiled from "Dealing with People You Can't Stand" by Dr. Rick Brinkman and Dr. Rick Kirschner and "Coping with Difficult People" by Dr. Robert M. Bramson.