



NELSON UNITED CHURCH

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGY

"It's us against the problem, not us against each other."

1. Anticipate conflict before it happens and recognise that it is an inevitable part of human relating.
2. Address possible tensions as soon as possible before open conflict develops.
3. Invite the other person(s) to talk face to face about what is bothering you. Plan a time to address the issue in an undisturbed location rather than a hurried conversation. Do not use email. Prepare for the meeting by taking notes about what you want to say and plan to consult this conflict resolution strategy.
4. Tell what is bothering you using "I messages." This helps to express how we feel without attacking or blaming. When we say "I" we are taking responsibility for the way we perceive the problem.
5. Practice reflective listening. Each person repeats back what they heard the other say. This fosters empathy and lets the other person know we care about their experience. Also, if in repeating what we heard the other person say, we do not "get it right" this gives the other person a chance to clarify themselves. Acknowledge the other person's feelings. When we hear our own words and feelings reflected back to us it meets our need to be heard.
6. Both parties take responsibility for their part in the conflict, avoid blame.
7. Brainstorm solutions and make requests. It may be helpful for the people involved to write out their expectations of one another, what they would like to change, and what they are willing to give in return.
8. Be open to the possibility that in some situations ending the relationship may be a healthy problem solving solution when it is the result of renegotiation.
9. Affirm, forgive or thank. Try to end the renegotiation session with a handshake or hug. This shows that we honor and value the others involved.
10. In some cases we may need to seek outside help in the form of conflict mediation. This may come from within the church if someone neutral is willing to mediate, or we may seek outside resources such as Nelson Good Neighbors Society.
11. Anyone in the congregation can make a formal complaint against another person or against a church body. Please refer to the Dispute Resolution Policy of the UCC which is available in the narthex as well as the church office.