

# [Conflict cannot be resolved with violence essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/conflict-cannot-be-resolved-with-violence-essay-sample/)

Alhamdulillah, first of all i would like to thank to ALLAH as finally i were able to finish my assignment that have been given by Mr. Anthony Gerard’s lecturer. This task had been done with my own with the reseach in the internet and few books eventhough a little bit problem were happened while doing this assignment. Luckily , all the problems can be settel down and i were able to adapt properly and wisely.

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Definition of conflict
Conflict means to clash with someone, something is a fight or disagreement between two people or groups that different in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs, through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. It can also originate from past rivalries and personality differences. Other causes of conflict include trying to negotiate before the timing is right or at a time before the needed information is available. An example of conflict is to disagree with someone over opposite opinions or is an argument over parenting styles. Conflicts can be cognitive, affective, or a blend of both.

A definition of conflict involves fighting, war, trade embargos and so on. For others, it may be a difference in opinion, perspective or personality.

From the above definition, it is obvious that a conflict has the following components: A conflict is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which people perceive a threat (physical, emotional, power, status, etc.) to their well-being A conflict is caused by the differences and clash of personalities – attitudes, beliefs, values and needs.

A conflict arises when people try to make others change their actions or to gain an unfair advantage.
A conflict arises when one party refuses to accept the fact that the other party holds something as a value rather than a preference.
Participants in conflicts tend to respond on the basis of their perceptions of the situation, rather than an objective review of it.
Creative problem-solving strategies are essential to positive approaches to conflict management.

Types of conflict
Here is a quick list of the most common types of conflict. There are : Interdependence Conflicts. A person’s job depends on someone else’s cooperation, output or input. A classic example is when a salesperson is constantly late in uploading monthly sales figures to the computer system and that may in turn cause the accountant to be late with her own reports. Differences in Style. People have different styles when doing their work. For example, one person may be very task oriented and may just want to get the work done quickly. Others may be more concerned with having it done in a very artistic way or some may even want to include other people in the project. Differences in Background/Gender. Conflicts may arise between people because of differences in educational backgrounds, personal experiences, ethnic heritage, gender or political preferences. Differences in Leadership. Leaders themselves have different styles – some may be more open and empowering while others may be more direct and dictatorial. It can be challenging for team members when the move from one team to another to move to the different leadership ‘ tune’. Differences in Personality. This type of conflict is often the most challenging. It is fueled by emotions and perceptions about others’ motives and character. A perception of one working harder than the other.

One person blaming another for past mistakes.
Rebellious jealousy because it looks like you are playing favorites. Not happy or thinks it’s unfair with the type of work assigned to them. Personality clash. For example, a systematic vs. unorganized approach to the job, or a sensitive person vs. insensitive person.

Disagreements – one person feels it should be done one way, and another feels it should be done another way. This could be based on ideas, goals, process discrepancies, etc. Inappropriate dress for work. It might be too revealing or unprofessional. Personal hygiene.

Problem if conflicts are not resolved immediately

As managers, we need to be aware of how conflict arises and how to manage conflict. If unhealthy conflict is allowed to develop, the spin off effects can result in lasting damage to relationships and the business. Conflict normally involves opposing views on one or more of the following:

Conflict management implemented within a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company’s overall goals. A conflict taking place in the workplace that tends to involve different levels of emotional involvement than other conflicts. Within this simple definition there are several important understandings that emerge:

Disagreement – Generally, we are aware there is some level of difference in the positions of the two (or more) parties involved in the conflict. But the true disagreement versus the perceived disagreement may be quite different from one another. In fact, conflict tends to be accompanied by significant levels of misunderstanding that exaggerate the perceived disagreement considerably. If we can understand the true areas of disagreement, this will help us solve the right problems and manage the true needs of the parties.

Parties involved – There are often disparities in our sense of who is involved in the conflict. Sometimes, people are surprised to learn they are a party to the conflict, while other times we are shocked to learn we are not included in the disagreement. On many occasions, people who are seen as part of the social system (e. g., work team, family, company) are influenced to participate in the dispute, whether they would personally define the situation in that way or not. In the above example, people very readily “ take sides” based upon current perceptions of the issues, past issues and relationships, roles within the organization, and other factors. The parties involved can become an elusive concept to define.

Perceived threat – People respond to the perceived threat, rather than the true threat, facing them. Thus, while perception doesn’t become reality per se, people’s behaviors, feelings and ongoing responses become modified by that evolving sense of the threat they confront. If we can work to understand the true threat (issues) and develop strategies (solutions) that manage it (agreement), we are acting constructively to manage the conflict.

Needs, interests or concerns – There is a tendency to narrowly define “ the problem” as one of substance, task, and near-term viability. However, workplace conflicts tend to be far more complex than that, for they involve ongoing relationships with complex, emotional components. Simply stated, there are always procedural needs and psychological needs to be addressed within the conflict, in addition to the substantive needs that are generally presented. And the durability of the interests and concerns of the parties transcends the immediate presenting situation. Any efforts to resolve conflicts effectively must take these points into account.

So, is it still a simple definition of conflict? We think so, but we must respect that within its elegant simplicity lies a complex set of issues to address. Therefore, it is not surprising that satisfactory resolution of most conflicts can prove so challenging and time consuming to address.

Conflicts occur when people (or other parties) perceive that, as a consequence of a disagreement, there is a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Although conflict is a normal part of organization life, providing numerous opportunities for growth through improved understanding and insight, there is a tendency to view conflict as a negative experience caused by abnormally difficult circumstances. Disputants tend to perceive limited options and finite resources available in seeking solutions, rather than multiple possibilities that may exist ‘ outside the box’ in which we are problem-solving.

Conflict Resolution Menu

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Why do we tend to avoid dealing with Conflict?

A few points are worth reiterating before proceeding:

A conflict is more than a mere disagreement – it is a situation in which people perceive a threat (physical, emotional, power, status, etc.) to their well-being. As such, it is a meaningful experience in people’s lives, not to be shrugged off by a mere, “ it will pass…” Participants in conflicts tend to respond on the basis of their perceptions of the situation, rather than an objective review of it. As such, people filter their perceptions (and reactions) through their values, culture, beliefs, information, experience, gender, and other variables. Conflict responses are both filled with ideas and feelings that can be very strong and powerful guides to our sense of possible solutions. As in any problem, conflicts contain substantive, procedural, and psychological dimensions to be negotiated.

In order to best understand the threat perceived by those engaged in a conflict, we need to consider all of these dimensions. Conflicts are normal experiences within the work environment. They are also, to a large degree, predictable and expectable situations that naturally arise as we go about managing complex and stressful projects in which we are significantly invested. As such, if we develop procedures for identifying conflicts likely to arise, as well as systems through which we can constructively manage conflicts, we may be able to discover new opportunities to transform conflict into a productive learning experience. Creative problem-solving strategies are essential to positive approaches to conflict management. We need to transform the situation from one in which it is ‘ my way or the highway’ into one in which we entertain new possibilities that have been otherwise elusive. Return to About Conflict Menu

Conflict is Normal: Anticipating Conflicts Likely to Arise in the Workplace Consider your own work environment for a moment:

What are some key sources of conflict in our workplace?
When do they tend to occur?
How do people respond to these conflicts as they arise?
When we solve problems, do we do so for the moment, or do we put in place systems for addressing these types of concerns in the future? In reflecting upon your answers to these questions, you may begin to understand what we mean by anticipating conflicts likely to arise in the workplace: Normal, healthy organizations will experience their share of conflict, and workplaces experiencing a certain amount of dysfunction will experience it in greater quantities. Anticipating conflicts is useful in either situation for transforming these situations into opportunities for growth and learning. Consider…

Are there seasonal peaks in our workload that tend to occur annually? Chart the occurrence of such challenges, and consider whether they can be managed as a normal period of stress and transition. For example, a school had a large population of students who arrived after long bus rides without breakfast, who tended to arrive at school ready to fight. The school identified 10 minutes at the start of the day to give these students a healthy snack, and worked with teachers to pull out students who weren’t yet ready for school before they became disruptive. After food and a little counseling, students entered their classrooms in a better frame of mind (and body) to participate.

Do we have channels for expressing normal problems and concerns in a predictable, reliable manner? Staff meeting should be used as a tool for effective problem-solving in a range of situations, including anticipated conflicts. If such channels are perceived by staff as closed, unsafe, and non-productive, they will be replaced by gossip, ‘ end runs’ and back-biting.

Are there certain factors in the environment that make problems worse, especially at times of conflict? Take stock of your processes for managing during stressful times. Look at how phones are routed, noise is managed, client lines are queued, distractions are managed, etc. Often, our response during times of stress is to meet less frequently, because ‘ we have no time to meet.’ And we continue to do things the way we’ve been doing them, because ‘ we have no time to create new procedures.’ This approach dooms us to repeat the same errors, rather than to learn from the opportunities. Examine your systems for managing problems, including dispute resolution systems, and use times of “ harmony” to identify process improvements that can be implemented in times of stress. Return to About Conflict Menu

Conflict Styles and Their Consequences
Conflict is often best understood by examining the consequences of various behaviors at moments in time. These behaviors are usefully categorized according to conflict styles. Each style is a way to meet one’s needs in a dispute but may impact other people in different ways.

Competing is a style in which one’s own needs are advocated over the needs of others. It relies on an aggressive style of communication, low regard for future relationships, and the exercise of coercive power. Those using a competitive style tend to seek control over a discussion, in both substance and ground rules. They fear that loss of such control will result in solutions that fail to meet their needs. Competing tends to result in responses that increase the level of threat. Accommodating, also known as smoothing, is the opposite of competing. Persons using this style yield their needs to those of others, trying to be diplomatic. They tend to allow the needs of the group to overwhelm their own, which may not ever be stated, as preserving the relationship is seen as most important. Avoiding is a common response to the negative perception of conflict. “ Perhaps if we don’t bring it up, it will blow over,” we say to ourselves. But, generally, all that happens is that feelings get pent up, views go unexpressed, and the conflict festers until it becomes too big to ignore.

Like a cancer that may well have been cured if treated early, the conflict grows and spreads until it kills the relationship. Because needs and concerns go unexpressed, people are often confused, wondering what went wrong in a relationship. Compromising is an approach to conflict in which people gain and give in a series of tradeoffs. While satisfactory, compromise is generally not satisfying. We each remain shaped by our individual perceptions of our needs and don’t necessarily understand the other side very well. We often retain a lack of trust and avoid risk-taking involved in more collaborative behaviors. Collaborating is the pooling of individual needs and goals toward a common goal. Often called “ win-win problem-solving,” collaboration requires assertive communication and cooperation in order to achieve a better solution than either individual could have achieved alone. It offers the chance for consensus, the integration of needs, and the potential to exceed the “ budget of possibilities” that previously limited our views of the conflict.

It brings new time, energy, and ideas to resolve the dispute meaningfully By understanding each style and its consequences, we may normalize the results of our behaviors in various situations. This is not to say, “ Thou shalt collaborate” in a moralizing way, but to indicate the expected consequences of each approach: If we use a competing style, we might force the others to accept ‘ our’ solution, but this acceptance may be accompanied by fear and resentment. If we accommodate, the relationship may proceed smoothly, but we may build up frustrations that our needs are going unmet. If we compromise, we may feel OK about the outcome, but still harbor resentments in the future. If we collaborate, we may not gain a better solution than a compromise might have yielded, but we are more likely to feel better about our chances for future understanding and goodwill. And if we avoid discussing the conflict at all, both parties may remain clueless about the real underlying issues and concerns, only to be dealing with them in the future. If you’d like further insights into the conflict styles you tend to use take the Situational Conflict Styles Assessment Exercise on this site. If you have further questions contact us!

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How we Respond to Conflict: Thoughts, Feelings, and Physical Responses 1 In addition to the behavioral responses summarized by the various conflict styles, we have emotional, cognitive and physical responses to conflict. These are important windows into our experience during conflict, for they frequently tell us more about what is the true source of threat that we perceive; by understanding our thoughts, feelings and physical responses to conflict, we may get better insights into the best potential solutions to the situation.

Emotional responses: These are the feelings we experience in conflict, ranging from anger and fear to despair and confusion. Emotional responses are often misunderstood, as people tend to believe that others feel the same as they do. Thus, differing emotional responses are confusing and, at times, threatening.

Cognitive responses: These are our ideas and thoughts about a conflict, often present as inner voices or internal observers in the midst of a situation. Through sub-vocalization (i. e., self-talk), we come to understand these cognitive responses. For example, we might think any of the following things in response to another person taking a parking spot just as we are ready to park: “ That jerk! Who does he think he is! What a sense of entitlement!”

or:

“ I wonder if he realizes what he has done. He seems lost in his own thoughts. I hope he is okay.”

or:

“ What am I supposed to do? Now I’m going to be late for my meeting… Should I say something to him? What if he gets mad at me?”

Such differing cognitive responses contribute to emotional and behavioral responses, where self-talk can either promote a positive or negative feedback loop in the situation.

Physical responses: These responses can play an important role in our ability to meet our needs in the conflict. They include heightened stress, bodily tension, increased perspiration, tunnel vision, shallow or accelerated breathing, nausea, and rapid heartbeat. These responses are similar to those we experience in high-anxiety situations, and they may be managed through stress management techniques. Establishing a calmer environment in which emotions can be managed is more likely if the physical response is addressed effectively. Return to About Conflict Menu

1 Adapted from Harry Webne-Behrman, The Practice of Facilitation: Managing Group Process and Solving Problems, Quorum Books, Greenwood Publishing, 1998, by permission of the author. All rights reserved.

The Role of Perceptions in Conflict
As noted in our basic definition of conflict, we define conflict as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. One key element of this definition is the idea that each party may have a different perception of any given situation. We can anticipate having such differences due to a number of factors that create “ perceptual filters” that influence our responses to the situation:

Culture, race, and ethnicity: 2 Our varying cultural backgrounds influence us to hold certain beliefs about the social structure of our world, as well as the role of conflict in that experience. We may have learned to value substantive, procedural and psychological needs differently as a result, thus influencing our willingness to engage in various modes of negotiation and efforts to manage the conflict Gender and sexuality: 3 Men and women often perceive situations somewhat differently, based on both their experiences in the world (which relates to power and privilege, as do race and ethnicity) and socialization patterns that reinforce the importance of relationships vs. task, substance vs. process, immediacy vs. long-term outcomes. As a result, men and women will often approach conflictive situations with differing mindsets about the desired outcomes from the situation, as well as the set of possible solutions that may exist. Knowledge (general and situational): Parties respond to given conflicts on the basis of the knowledge they may have about the issue at hand.

This includes situation-specific knowledge (i. e., “ Do I understand what is going on here?”) and general knowledge (i. e., “ Have I experienced this type of situation before?” or “ Have I studied about similar situations before?”). Such information can influence the person’s willingness to engage in efforts to manage the conflict, either reinforcing confidence to deal with the dilemma or undermining one’s willingness to flexibly consider alternatives. Impressions of the Messenger: If the person sharing the message – the messenger – is perceived to be a threat (powerful, scary, unknown, etc.), this can influence our responses to the overall situation being experienced. For example, if a big scary-looking guy is approaching me rapidly, yelling “ Get out of the way!” I may respond differently than if a diminutive, calm person would express the same message to me. As well, if I knew either one of them previously, I might respond differently based upon that prior sense of their credibility: I am more inclined to listen with respect to someone I view as credible than if the message comes from someone who lacks credibility and integrity in my mind.

Previous experiences: Some of us have had profound, significant life experiences that continue to influence our perceptions of current situations. These experiences may have left us fearful, lacking trust, and reluctant to take risks. On the other hand, previous experiences may have left us confident, willing to take chances and experience the unknown. Either way, we must acknowledge the role of previous experiences as elements of our perceptual filter in the current dilemma. These factors (along with others) conspire to form the perceptual filters through which we experience conflict. As a result, our reactions to the threat and dilemma posed by conflict should be anticipated to include varying understandings of the situation. This also means that we can anticipate that in many conflicts there will be significant misunderstanding of each other’s perceptions, needs and feelings. These challenges contribute to our emerging sense, during conflict, that the situation is overwhelming and unsolvable. As such, they become critical sources of potential understanding, insight and possibility.

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2 Much more can be said about this subject. We have posted an article as an additional resource: “ Managing Intercultural Conflicts Effectively,” by Stella Ting-Toomey, 1994.

3 This topic is well addressed in the writings of Professor Deborah Tannen, who has focused extensively on gender differences in communication. Why do we tend to avoid dealing with conflict? Engaging in dialogue and negotiation around conflict is something we tend to approach with fear and hesitation, afraid that the conversation will go worse than the conflict has gone thus far. All too often, we talk ourselves out of potential dialogue: “ Why should I talk to her? She’ll bite my head off and not listen to anything I have to say!”

OR

“ I should talk to him about this problem, but maybe it will go away on its
own. There’s no sense stirring up something that makes us both uncomfortable.”

OR

“ If I go to him, I’m making myself vulnerable. No, that’s his responsibility – he should come to me and ask me to talk!”

Our responses, as noted earlier, tend to include behaviors, feelings, thoughts and physical responses. If any of these responses indicates stress factors that make us reluctant to talk things out, we are more inclined to follow the pathway of avoidance. In addition, if we have history with the individuals involved in this conflict (i. e., we’ve tried to negotiate with them in the past, without success), it will “ filter” our perceptions of this situation and make us reluctant to negotiate.

In addition, consider that our society tends to reward alternative responses to conflict, rather than negotiation: People who aggressively pursue their needs, competing rather than collaborating, are often satisfied by others who prefer to accommodate. Managers and leaders are often rewarded for their aggressive, controlling approaches to problems, rather than taking a more compassionate approach to issues that may seem less decisive to the public or their staffs. In other circumstances, those who raise issues and concerns, even respectfully, are quickly perceived to be “ problem” clients or staff members… they tend to be avoided and minimized. In any of these approaches, negotiated solutions to conflicts are rarely modeled or held in high esteem.

Finally, we should keep in mind that negotiation requires profound courage on the part of all parties: It takes courage to honestly and clearly articulate your needs, and it takes courage to sit down and listen to your adversaries. It takes courage to look at your own role in the dispute, and it takes courage to approach others with a sense of empathy, openness and respect for their perspective. Collaborative approaches to conflict management require us to engage in the moment of dialogue in profound and meaningful ways, so it is understandable if we tend to avoid such situations until the balance of wisdom tips in favor of negotiation. [see video clip on “ Confronting Conflicts” for additional information (: windows media)]

To resolved
Objectives
Understanding Conflicts
The Elements of Workplace Conflict
Understanding Interdependence
Understanding Mutual Blame
Understanding Emotional Involvement
Understanding Negative Results
The Conflict Resolution Process
Reaching an Agreement
Finalizing the Agreement
After the Agreement
Response Styles
Avoiding Contests
Avoiding Taking Sides
Learning from a Conflict
Summary

Class Objectives
Distinguish between cognitive and affective conflicts.
List the four elements of workplace conflict.
Define interdependence.
Define mutual blame.
Define emotional involvement.
Describe negative results.
List the steps of the conflict resolution process.
Describe the problems of reaching an agreement.
Describe the necessary qualities of a final agreement.
Explain what to do after an agreement.
Explain the different response styles to conflict people have. Describe how to avoid contests.
Describe how to avoid taking sides.
Describe how a company can learn from conflicts.

Workplace conflict will occur at times. Usually, it’s the result of differring perceptions and methods, where neither party is right or wrong. Managers need to make sure that these conflicts don’t come into the view of customers. If conflict is managed effectively and skillfully, cooperation will improve. Without effective conflict management, you cannot hope to improve performance, reduce stress, solve problems quickly, enhance teamwork, foster creativity, and increase staff morale.

To manage conflict effectively you must be a skilled communicator; an environment where open communication is allowed enables employees to discuss and resolve work issues. Ask questions and focus on problems as perceived. It may be as simple as conflicts about desk position, air temperature control, public address volume, or choice of background music, if that is what you have. Here are some points to consider:

– Acknowledge that a conflict exists. Find out what’s happening and be open about the problem. Ask both parties at the same time or you’ll risk the appearance of favoring one or the other. Communication that is clear, direct and honest is important.

– Let them express their views. Feelings of anger and hurt usually accompany conflict situations. Allow employees to express their emotions first, then move on to the problem solving. After the initial venting, let quiet discussion prevail.

– Define the problem. What is the problem, and what are the negative aspects on work and relationships? Is differing personalities the issue? Sometimes age difference feeds the conflict. Are there deeper underlying causes of conflict?

– Determine underlying needs. The goal is not to find who is right or wrong, but to reach a solution everybody can live with. Compromise is the rule, but sometimes you need to go beyond that. Look first for needs rather than solutions. Find out why each party is asking for their fix to the problem.

– Find common areas of agreement. Agree on the definition of the problem, and what the solution is, and understand the worst fears of the two parties. Some small changes can be helpful at the outset to give experience of some success.

Identify needs and find solutions to address those needs. Generate multiple alternatives, and determine which actions will be taken. Make sure both sides buy into actions. Silence indicates reserve, meaning no agreement. Seek to obtain real agreement from both sides. A veiled warning about continuing conflict may dampen the fire before it leads to serious actions.

– Determine follow-up you will take to monitor actions. Schedule a follow-up meeting in two weeks to determine how everybody is doing.

– What if conflict remains unresolved? Unresolved conflicts can be a disruption in operations, and other avenues may need to be explored. An outside facilitator may be able to shed light on possible solutions. When conflict becomes a performance issue, it may lead to coaching sessions, performance appraisals, or disciplinary action.

Anger – Dealing with anger, especially when it is directed to you, can be a challenge. Effective listening can help defuse anger, but when it is directed to you, it is difficult to respond definitively. Ask for staff backup to help regulate the situation. A person who is angry needs time to vent the steam that may have been building for some time. Show that you are paying attention. The person needs to know that someone is really listening to her point of view. In addition, the person needs to feel that you empathize with her and acknowledge that you understand the situation. Be attentive and patient, and the party will become less angry as she expresses herself. Be sincere as you honestly validate the situation causing anger. Finally, be calm as you hear sometimes inflammatory comments in the heat of the moment.

Conflict resolution resources ‘ The Conflict Resolution Center Int’l in Pittsburgh, PA is a non-profit organization promoting non-violent approaches to conflict resolution. They maintain an excellent library on line, and they offer various publications for those interested in these issues. Managing Conflict is the web page of Douglas Noll, attorney and peacemaker. His thesis is that peacemaking is the best route to follow. The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University deals with academic research into conflict management. Finally, CaseBreakers specializes in internet based criminal records and background chec

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