conflict on the job

Conflict is a normal part of work. Employees have different backgrounds, experiences, and work styles. Most of us resolve conflicts every day through communication and negotiation. But what if you’re having trouble resolving conflict with someone and it becomes chronic? What can be done?

point of view, HR’s informal mediation program

During informal mediation, an impartial mediator (i.e., someone with no stake in the issue) sits down with people in conflict and helps them come up with solutions. With the help of the mediator, each person gets to share his or her “point of view” uninterrupted. The mediator doesn’t decide who is right or wrong; instead, the mediator helps people understand the conflict and brainstorm options to solve it. If the participants are able to create their own solutions to the conflict, the mediator helps draft a written summary, a copy of which each participant will receive.

key elements

University Mediators – All mediators are UA faculty, staff, or appointed professionals who have received mediation training.

Informal – Mediation is similar to a conversation. The mediator simply helps the conversation stay civil and helps the participants craft a solution to their conflict.

Voluntary – No one can be compelled to participate in mediation or to agree to a particular solution.

Impartial – Mediators don’t take sides or make decisions the way a judge or arbitrator would. They stay neutral and help people come up with their own solutions to resolve conflict.

Confidential – Confidentiality is maintained unless there is a threat of harm to self or others or allegations of discrimination.

informal mediation examples

- Disagreements have arisen between project team members due to differing work styles.
- An employee would like a flexible work schedule, but his supervisor has not been open to the idea.
- A supervisor values a long-term employee’s work but is having a difficult time getting the employee’s buy-in regarding organizational changes.
- Two faculty members are no longer speaking because of conflict over a potential merger.
- Two employees were friends, but things have become tense since one became the other’s supervisor.

ineligible for informal mediation*

- Workplace Violence
- Discrimination Complaints
- Involuntary Terminations
- Compensation
- Promotion and Tenure

*Additional issues may be ineligible, at the discretion of HR.
For more information about HR’s informal mediation program,

visit our website

www.hr.arizona.edu/point-of-view

You can also contact the Program Coordinator at 520/621-9449 or pointofview@email.arizona.edu