

# SaferCommunity

## HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

Conflict is normal but when it occurs it can often feel difficult to manage or resolve. During the conflict you may feel personally attacked, scared and or angry and you may not know what to do. This factsheet is designed to give you some strategies and tips about how you can work towards conflict resolution.

**Conflict** is a normal part of life and is typically a result of a clash of interest. The basis of conflict may vary but it is always a part of society. The basis of conflict may be personal, racial, class, political and international.

**Common situations that can lead to conflict:**

- Differences with room mates
- Disagreement with the views of others
- Miscommunication with partners, roommates, colleagues, peers, landlords
- Challenges with teaching staff, university staff
- Clashes of opinion when in discussion and things get too personal.

Learning how to manage and resolve conflict is an important skill.

**Conflict resolution** is the process in which two or more parties work towards a solution to a problem or dispute.



### SAFER COMMUNITY

Safer Community provides advice, support and referrals if you witness or experience unacceptable or concerning behaviour.

P: 03 9479 8988

E: [safercommunity@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:safercommunity@latrobe.edu.au)

W: [latrobe.edu.au/safercommunity](http://latrobe.edu.au/safercommunity)

Offices: Bundoora PE level 2, Bendigo SSC

## Conflict Resolution

You can often prevent minor conflicts from becoming more serious by changing the way in which you communicate.

Conflict can be an opportunity and not just a threat.

There are two common reasons why people get into conflict:

- They do not communicate clearly or listen respectfully.
- They have different needs or interests that without some negotiation, do not easily co-exist.

It is possible to look in a different way to how you communicate with others so that you can turn conflict into an opportunity to achieve clearer communication and thus bring about change.



### Guidelines for good communication

- Send clear messages – verbal communication and your body language both count. Think about what you want to say and how it may be understood (or misunderstood).
- Receive messages – what is heard is part fact and part feeling and so you need to be clear on both levels. When you are listening, pay attention to both facts and feelings.

- Acknowledge messages – you can only be sure that you have communicated what you meant to communicate when your listener gives you acknowledgement confirming their understanding. As a listener, summarise what you have heard and ask questions to seek clarification if part of the message seems unclear.

### TIPS TO AVOID CONFLICT

- Respect the other person's needs as well as your own.
- Tackle problems by speaking directly with the other person.
- Separate the problem from the person.
- Speak without interrupting the other.
- Negotiate and compromise.
- Acknowledge when you are wrong or make a mistake.
- Express how you feel or how a situation has impacted you.

### Common strategies to manage *your* response to conflict.

Often anger can be a response to conflict. In order to appropriately manage your response, it is important to understand, control and recognise your anger. To manage conflict, anger and tension it is important to breathe and to take time out to calm down. The more time you give yourself the less intense they're likely to be.

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## De-Escalation

When conflict is escalating, and the other person is getting angry or verbally aggressive it is important to remember:

- stay calm.
- anger may be a sign that the person is distressed, fearful or frustrated.
- it is not possible to reason or problem solve with someone who is enraged.
- effective communication skills are the key to settling, resolving, and de-escalating a situation.

Use the strategies below to de-escalate a situation:

- **Listen** to what the issue is and the person's concerns.
- **Offer** reflective comments to show that you have heard what their concerns are.
- **Wait** until the person has released their frustration and explained how they are feeling.
- **Look** and maintain appropriate eye contact to connect with the person.
- **Incline** your head slightly, to show you are listening and give you a non-threatening posture.
- **Nod** to confirm that you are listening and have understood.
- **Express** empathy to show you have understood.

It is not your job to stop the person being angry, but these steps may help to make the person feel calmer. It is only then that you can look at how to deal with the situation and their concerns.

If you feel unsafe at any time call for help, from someone nearby, Police or Security.

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## SUPPORT & REFERRALS

### Immediate assistance

On campus: Security 24/7 on 9479 2222

Off campus: Triple Zero on 000

### Reporting

On campus: Safer Community provide expert advice and assistance to help you to resolve your concerns, call 9479 8988, email [safercommunity@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:safercommunity@latrobe.edu.au), visit Bundoora PE level 2 or Bendigo SSC or go to [www.latrobe.edu.au/safercommunity](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/safercommunity)

Off campus: Victoria Police, find your local Police station online at [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au)

### Personal support

Student Counselling call 9479 2956 or submit a request for an appointment online.

La Trobe University Crisis Line offers out of hours crisis support to students, call 1300 146 307 or text 0488 884 100.

Student Complaints lodge concerns (about any aspect of University) formally online.

La Trobe Student Association (LTSA) offer free advocacy and legal advice services.

International Student Services provide a range of supports to international students.