



COLLABORATIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Collaborative conflict resolution can change a dispute originally perceived as win-lose to one that is perceived as win-win. Before discussing a specific collaborative conflict resolution method that we can use in various conflict situations, we'll review collaborative conflict resolution as it relates to communication competence.

Collaboration and Communication Competence

Collaboration requires the motivation to engage in this somewhat difficult win-win approach to conflict, knowledge about collaboration, and communication skills that are used in an effective and appropriate manner. Our motivation to engage in collaborative win-win conflict resolution rests on the assumption that its use will be rewarding for ourselves and our partners. Our knowledge of collaboration involves understanding that differences in beliefs, attitudes, and preferences may not necessarily be in conflict. In other words, collaboration assumes that perceived polar opposites may be compatible. As previously mentioned, collaborative win-win conflict resolution requires using many of the communication skills in this book. Table 11.3, "Collaborative Conflict Resolution Skills," shows these skills and their use in collaborative win-win conflict resolution.

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A Collaborative Conflict Resolution Method

The following collaborative conflict resolution method has four steps that concern people, interests, options, and criteria. Specifically, the four steps entail separating people from the problem ("People"), focusing on interests, not positions ("Interests"), generating a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do ("Options"), and insisting that the results be based on some objective standard ("Criteria").¹⁰