

# What Do I Do When...?

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Adding tools to your conflict  
resolution toolkit

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# What Do I Do When...?

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# Preplanning

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Preplanning to avoid conflict
  - Roles
  - Rapport building
  - Laying ground rules
  - Setting the environment

# What Do I Do When...?

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## ■ Roles

- Who is the *facilitator*?
- Who is the *empathic listener*?
- Who is the *timekeeper*?
- Who is the *notetaker*?

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Role of the facilitator
  - Keeps the participants focused
  - Establishes ground rules
  - Manages the process
  - Maintains objectivity
  - Addresses the journey, not the destination
  - Asks clarifying questions designed to move the discussion forward in a dispute resolution

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Role of the empathic listener
  - Listens for the feelings behind the words
  - Listens for what is not being said
  - Rephrase what you think you heard to be sure you are reading the emotion correctly
  - Keeps the spotlight on the speaker
  - Peels the onion
  - Gets “permission” to respond/react

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Role of the timekeeper
  - Establishes the duration of the problem solving session at the outset of the meeting
  - Notifies the team of the midway point
  - Notifies the team when the last 10 or 15 minutes of the session are approaching so the team can bring the session to a close and plan their next steps.
  - Honors the obligations of all participants.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Role of the notekeeper
  - Records the participants, including contact information, if appropriate
  - Records minutes of the meeting objectively\* (no loaded language)
  - Records the action plan (who, what, when)
  - Provides copies to all participants

Minutes can be recorded on chart paper or regular paper. If on chart paper the notes should be transcribed and distributed to participants within 48 hours.



# What Do I Do When...?

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## ■ Rapport Building

### ■ Why?

- Disputes originate in relationships.
- Disputes are often the result of misunderstanding and assuming.
- Disputes can be resolved and future conflicts avoided when understanding and rapport exist.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Rapport Building (Building Affiliation)
  - How?
    - Introductions (Don't overlook this simple strategy.)
    - Dialogue
    - Common experiences
    - Find links with others. Look for *structural connections*.

Fisher & Shapiro, Beyond Reason

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Rapport Building (Building Affiliation)
  - How?
    - Reduce personal distance (body language)
    - Make eye contact
    - Treat the other stakeholder as a colleague
    - Avoid dominating the discussion

Fisher & Shapiro, Beyond Reason

# What Do I Do When...?

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## ■ Rapport Building

- Having rapport does not mean agreement on all issues. It means having a common ground from which to deal with disagreements.
- Rapport does mean preserving the dignity of all stakeholders.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Laying the ground rules.
  - Why?
    - Gives participants parameters.
    - Provides a reference for the facilitator.
    - Helps to ensure effective communication.
    - Reduces personal attacks, problem admiration, “war stories” and “history lessons”.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Laying the ground rules.
  - Examples:
    - All comments are addressed to the facilitator.
    - Address issues not individuals.
    - Only agenda items will be addressed.
    - Other issues can be put in the parking lot.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Setting the environment
  - Space should be well-lit.
  - Space should be comfortably heated or cooled.
  - Stakeholders should be seated so they can see and hear one another.
  - Ensure privacy.
  - Make all participants aware of the location of restrooms and drinking fountains (or provide water).

# What Do I Do When...?

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## The Meeting



# What Do I Do When...?

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Effective facilitation of conflict resolution sessions/IEP meetings/problem solving sessions.

- Getting everyone on the same page
- Agenda setting
- Avoiding/minimizing “problem admiration”
- Developing action plans

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Strategies for getting all participants on the same page
  - Ice breakers
  - Plus/Delta
  - Consensogram
  - Review of current plan (IEP, intervention plan, 504 plan, etc.)

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Agenda setting
  - Establish purpose for the session
  - Provide opportunity for stakeholders to express areas of concern they want to see addressed
  - Post items so they are visible for all participants (notetaker can assist with this)
  - Get agreement on basic issues

# What Do I Do When...?

## When the best of plans doesn't work.

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Dealing with hostile and passively resistant stakeholders.

- De-escalation strategies
  - Break time
  - Rule reminders
  - Body language
  - Active listening

(These strategies work anywhere, anytime. Don't think it has to be a structured setting to employ these techniques.)

# What Do I Do When...?

## When the best of plans doesn't work.

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Dealing with hostile and passively resistant stakeholders.

- Garnering participation of all stakeholders.
  - Index cards
  - “Either-Or” strategy.
  - Consensogram
  - Post-it notes

# What Do I Do When...?

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## ■ Avoiding/Minimizing

- If an issue is important to one or more stakeholders it needs to be addressed, even if others view it as inconsequential.
- Each person's perception is his reality.
- Issues that are avoided or minimized will grow and become roadblocks to successful conflict resolution.

# What Do I Do When...?

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- Problem Admiration
  - Handwringing
  - Overstating
  - Piling on
  - Beating the proverbial dead horse

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts in Conflict Resolution

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1. Don't lie

1. Do be truthful, tactful, professional and sensitive to the listener.



# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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2. Don't get emotional.

2. Do maintain a calm and professional demeanor.

Wear your game face.

In the words of General Tommy Franks, "Save your emotions until you can afford them."

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts for Conflict Resolution

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3. Don't make "piecrust promises".

"I promise I will call you every day at 3:15."

3. Do offer reasonable and "do-able" accommodations.  
If a request by another participant isn't reasonable or possible, explain why and offer an alternative.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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4. Don't use loaded language.
- avoid ultimatums
  - stay away from emotionally laden descriptors

4. Use objective terminology.
- State parameters.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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5. Don't paint with a broad brush.

5. Do be specific.  
Cite specific incidents, events or circumstances.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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6. Don't assume you have all the information.

6. Do ask for specifics.  
Do ask clarifying questions.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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7. Don't wallow in problem admiration.

7. Do state the concern factually and discuss how it affects the situation with which you are dealing.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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8. Don't give every concern the same amount of weight

8. Do prioritize.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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9. Don't assume everyone has the same priority.

9. Do ask other stakeholders what they consider most important.  
Look for patterns.  
Look for common threads between all sides.



# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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10. Don't get locked into a "my way or else" mindset.

10. Do be willing to compromise.  
Do be flexible.  
Do consider trial periods.  
Do have several options in mind.  
Do be open to new alternatives.  
Do seek consensus.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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11. Don't be a naysayer.

“That won't work.”

“We tried that once  
and ....”

11. Do be prepared to  
consider options and  
suggestions that are  
out of your comfort  
zone.

Do be prepared to  
offer alternatives.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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12. Don't be a passive participant.

12. Do offer your perspective.  
Do share your concerns.  
Do give your opinion.  
Do offer your expertise.

# What Do I Do When...?

## Do's and Don'ts of Conflict Resolution

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13. Don't disregard the positives.

13. Do start with what is working well.

Do share incidences when a situation turned out well.

Do use the strengths of an individual or group to build an intervention.

# What Do I Do When...?

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## Debriefing

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## Debriefing

Helping team members in the aftermath of a highly charged interaction

Repairing and improving rapport of all stakeholders

# What Do I Do When...”

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- Debrief the stakeholders\*
  - How do you feel about the process?
  - How do you feel about the outcome?
  - What went well?
  - What would you do differently?
  - Is the resolution sustainable?

\* Can be done in person, by phone or by having participants complete an evaluation form. Involve all stakeholders, not just the one's in your office or department.

# What Do I Do When...?

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## *Resources*

*Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services*

*Fisher, Roger and Shapiro, Daniel. Beyond Reason, Using Emotions as You Negotiate, Penguin Group, New York. 2005.*

*Nonviolent Crisis Prevention Training, CPI*



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