

The image features a large, solid red speech bubble centered on a white background. The speech bubble has a pointed bottom and a thin white border. Inside the bubble, the words "Difficult Conversations" are written in a clean, white, sans-serif font. The background is decorated with faint, light gray concentric circles and dashed lines, creating a subtle pattern.

# Difficult Conversations

## Types of conflicts

- **Providing feedback in supervision**
- **Disagreement between colleagues**
- **Conflict between ethics and the organization**
- **Managing day to day conflicts**
- **Frustrated clients**

# Ethics of conflict resolution

- **Value:** Importance of Human Relationships  
**Ethical Principle:** Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.
- Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.
- **Value:** Integrity  
**Ethical Principle:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

# Ethics of conflict resolution

- **Value:** Integrity  
**Ethical Principle:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.
- Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

# Ethics of conflict resolution

- **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**
- NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards
- **2.01 Respect**
- (a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- (b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

## Ethics of conflict resolution

- **2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues**
- (a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.
- (b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

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# Conflict Styles

- **Know your conflict style**
- **There is default style and styles you adapt in different situations**
- **You can adapt your style and learn**

# Conflict Styles

- **Competing**
- **Collaborating**
- **Compromising**
- **Avoiding**
- **Accommodating**



A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text "What is your style?".

What is your  
style?

- **Take quiz picturing your interactions at work**
- **Instructions are on the screen**

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text "Do you know what makes you reactive?".

Do you know  
what makes you  
reactive?

- **Words?**
- **Situations?**
- **Particular Conflict?**
- **Person?**
- **Diagnosis?**

# Colleague

- Prepped yourself to be ready for your reaction
- Prepped ready for defensiveness
- Take it to the balcony

## When to take the next steps

Have I had a one-on-one conversation with the person and communicated my feelings and/or concerns? (Specifically and they are understood)

How is this conflict going to impact others? What ethical issue (if any) is involved).

Is it my responsibility to report the issue?

Have I put myself in the other persons situation?

Have I truly heard their concerns?

How do you know  
you are good to  
go and in the  
green zone?



Yellow! What  
should you  
watch for?



What is the red zone?



A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text "Client agenda". The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left. The background features faint, curved lines in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

Client agenda



A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'Supervision agenda'. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

# Supervision agenda

# Empathy

- You can feel and communicate that you understand their frustration.
- You want to convey this to another person
- Examples of statements
  - “I can see how important this is to you.”
  - “I understand this can be frustrating.”
  - “I know this process can be confusing.”
  - “I’m sorry to see that you’re in this situation.”
  - “I’d like to help you if I can.”
  - “Let’s see if we can solve this together.”

# Attention

- People are frustrated and reaching out and want your attention.
- Examples of statements
  - "I will listen as carefully as I can."
  - "I will pay attention to your concerns."
  - "Tell me what's going on."
  - "Tell me more!"
- Examples of non-verbal attention
  - Have good "eye contact" (keeping your eyes focused on the person)
  - Nod your head up and down to show that you are attentive to their concerns
  - Lean in to pay closer attention
  - Put your hand near them, such as on the table beside them
- **DO NOT PHYSICALLY TOUCH A PERSON**

# Respect

- Anyone has a quality you can respect and it helps to communicate it to them.
- Examples
  - “I can see that you are a hard worker.”
  - “I respect your commitment to solving this problem.”
  - “I respect your efforts on this.”
  - “I respect your success at accomplishing \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “You have important skills that we need here.”

## Key points

- Do not lie/don't promise what you cannot deliver
- You do not have to listen forever
- Don't agree or disagree
- Do not defend
- Do not take it personally
  
- There are extreme high risks time that you may have to change some of these, but this is when you are past being able to prevent a dangerous situation.

# Reboot the Brain

- Emotional reflection
  - Remain calm
  - Label the emotion
  - Use You statements
  - Keep it simple

**EXAMPLE:** You are angry/You are frustrated/You are disrespected