

Managing conflict.

Conflict can occur when opposing points of view come head to head.

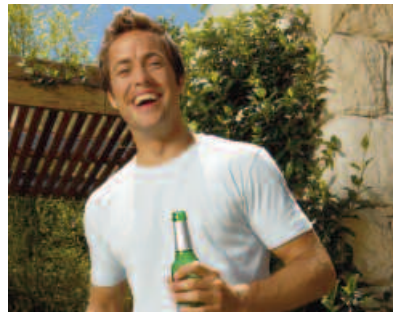
Although conflict is a normal part of our relationships and is perfectly healthy if handled well, it sometimes escalates and becomes destructive.

We often feel strong emotions when conflict begins to heat up. For many people, it is hard to keep a clear head while experiencing strong feelings. It's also much harder to listen to the other person's point of view. Some people aim to "win at all costs". Others want to retreat and hide, either physically and/or emotionally. It's normal for people to respond differently to conflict - it often has something to do with the way we are brought up. One common thread, however, is that our communication patterns when dealing with conflict can become destructive.

When conflict escalates to a certain point, it becomes almost impossible to consider the other person's point of view. This might be the time to bring in a third person, such as a counsellor or mediator. Mensline Australia can refer you to agencies that offer these services in your area.

When dealing with conflict in your life, it's important to note the following points:

- Abuse - in any form - is never acceptable. We should never abuse other people, just as we should not accept abuse from other people.
- The responsibility of our own communication lies with us alone. No one "makes" us say or do anything. We have a choice in how we react.
- Restricting another's options through either physical or emotional control is never acceptable. If this is what you are doing, or if this is being done to you, it might be time to talk to someone about it.
- Physical violence against anyone is destructive and illegal. If violence is a part of the conflict in your life it's important to seek help immediately.



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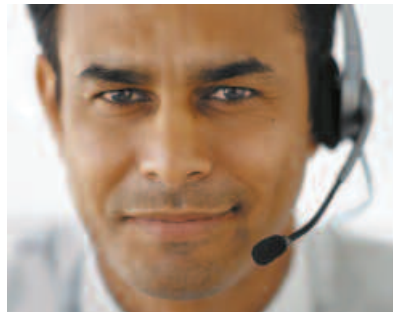
Some questions worth asking yourself about the conflict in your life:

- Do the people involved feel heard or shut out?
- Is the conflict leading to compromise or a “win-lose” situation?
- Is the communication respectful or destructive?
- Are you listening and responding, or just reacting?
- Does this communication have positive or negative results?

Some useful tips for handling conflict:

- Listen to the other person’s point of view and make sure you understand it correctly.
- Respect the other person’s point of view.
- Work out where you can compromise - what is the most important and least important thing to you both in relation to this particular situation.
- Try to keep your communication respectful. Refrain from using sarcasm or insults.
- Make “I” statements such as: “When you say that, I feel...” No one can argue with how you feel.
- If things are heating up, ask for time out. Come back to the discussion at a later time when both of you are calmer.
- If old patterns of communication aren’t working, try new ones.
- Try to communicate through a different medium eg. letters or email.

1300 78 99 78
www.menslineaus.org.au



The only service of its kind, Mensline Australia provides confidential telephone counselling, information and referral to specifically enable men to enhance their relationships and manage the challenges associated with disruptions to their family life or primary relationships.

Managed through Crisis Support Services Inc, Mensline Australia is a national service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the cost of a local call.

Mensline Australia was established in September 2001 as part of the Commonwealth Government’s Men and Family Relationships initiative. Since then, the service has been overwhelmed by calls from men around the country wanting to talk about their relationships.

Talk it over
**Mens
Line**
AUSTRALIA


crisis support services

Mensline Australia
is managed by Crisis Support Services