

# Managing conflict and leading difficult conversations

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# Ground rules for today

- 'Chatham House' rule
  - Respect others' views
  - Phones on silent
  - Finish when we say we'll finish
  - What else?
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# Aims, outcome and Introductions

- **Aim** is to share tips and hints to support the conflict/difficult conversations that peers encounter when supporting councils as part of SLI.
  - **Outcome** is to capture these-any good advice to offer others and any actions required from LGA
  - **Intro** - Name, Council, role, How long have you been a councillor and Issues you would like to cover
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# What sort of difficult conversations do you have and why?

1. In your role as a member in a council?
  2. In your role as a peer?
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# Storm in a teacup?

## Table Discussion

Reflect on a situation where you as a peer have had two vocal groups or individuals with differing views on a situation that needs to be addressed.

- How was the conflict resolved?
  - How did you feel about the outcome?
  - How did the others involved feel about the outcome?
  - Could the situation have been handled differently?
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# Conflict, root causes and being a peer

- Conflict is everywhere. It is not something we can choose to have or not have. It just is
  - A conflict may be about a particular subject but is, in fact, a combination of factors. It may also be a symptom of a more deep routed concern or fear
  - Commodities/ Possessions - Money, objects
  - Principles – Morals, Politics, Religion, Personal reputation
  - Territory – Location, Status, Privacy, Responsibility, Identity
  - Relationships - Power struggles, clashes of personality, misuse or abuse of power, misunderstanding
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- How does this manifest itself in your peer work?

# Individual styles of conflict

- Street fighter
- Expressive creator
- Amiable pacifier
- Analytical thinker

Which one are you ?

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# Conflict resolution - skills

- Empathy
  - Active listening
  - Assertiveness
  - Problem-solving
  - Facilitation
  - Tenacity
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# Exercise

- Imagine you are facilitating a Corporate Peer Challenge session with opposition Members and you are confronted with the following characters.
    - A noisy participant who insists on shouting people down when they disagree with him?
    - A persistently quiet participant who looks attentive but rarely says anything without being prompted?
    - A participant who has a tendency to use inappropriate humour to the irritation of some members of the group?
  - Identify the tactics you would employ to deal with each person.
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# You can prevent group conflict if...

- People are prepared to listen first and talk/act second
- Everyone's contribution is respected and valued
- Those in dispute are willing to amend their viewpoint in the light of others' suggestions
- Questions are used positively to encourage others to elaborate on their thoughts
- Those involved look to build on ideas and identify areas of common ground

# Leading difficult conversations

- Preparation is key
- Be yourself – no defensiveness/ hidden agendas
- Listen first and talk second – understand and address their concerns
- Maintain your assertiveness ... appropriately
- Share your experiences & feelings to establish empathy
- Explore options together – is there another option to achieve the desired outcome?
- Keep people and problems separate

# Tactics in influencing

- Recognise what might affect you when trying to influence
- Present thoughts, ideas and arguments clearly and succinctly
- Avoid certain behaviours, e.g. irritators, defend/ attack spirals
- Be tactical: Is this the right time, place, approach?
- Test others' understanding
- Use language which will help gain support

# Reflections

What might you do differently after today?