

Hello everyone

There are many reasons why people come to clubs as visitors and then do not join. One of the issues I have experienced is there may be palpable conflict within the club which, for some guests, is a deterrent. **Conflict resolution is challenging however, when handled correctly can strengthen club relations.**

Often, when dealing with conflict, it can be difficult to manage our emotions. We can feel hurt, disrespected, ignored or many other emotions. It is challenging to set our emotions aside and critically assess the situation. When our emotions are in control we are most likely not able to rationally negotiate a clear path through the crisis and form a resolution.

Some tips to manage this are:

- **Apply the 4 Way Test** – if we cannot first identify if the issue and facts are the truth and fair to all concerned it can be difficult to navigate a way through.
- **Analyse what role you played** in this and acknowledge it.
- **Address the issue, not the person.** Blaming, finger pointing, name calling, etc will create a barrier to growth as the person will feel attacked and will disconnect. Use “I feel (insert emotion).....when (insert behaviour).....” statements, eg, I feel disrespected when people speak over the top of me. This is a far more beneficial and engaging form of communication.
- **Actively listen, do not listen to respond.** Often when we are listening to someone we are distracted by formulating our response rather than hearing what the person is actually saying. Take the time to listen first. Once they have stopped talking and you have all of the information then formulate your response. This may be a simple reflective statement acknowledging that you have heard and understood what they have said. This can be very powerful as the speaker feels valued and heard.
- **Don't be stubborn** – sometimes, when emotions are high, it can be difficult to see things from a different perspective. It is important to keep our minds open to opportunities rather than cut off our nose to spite our face. This is can damaging to individuals and clubs.

Ultimately, conflict resolution with club members is a club matter and needs to be managed internally.
Steps to conflict resolution

- **Go direct – address the issue directly with the person**, do not gossip about it amongst other members, this will only expand the issue.
- **If going direct does not achieve a positive outcome, raise the issue with the Club President/Board for support and assistance.** They may choose to reach out to the district for guidance and advice. The board may also investigate the issue and make recommendations.
- **Actively participate in mediation if it is required.**

These are very simplistic steps and are just a guide to promote conflict resolution. District leaders are available to offer support when required. **Resolving conflict in clubs quickly results in a better shared experience of all members. This, in turn, creates a fun environment that people want to be part of. At the end of the day, remember the big picture. We are all here to make a difference in the world.**

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