

Guidelines for Handling Reported Conflict

1. Always listen compassionately, but objectively, knowing that there are usually two sides to a conflict.
 - Refuse to take sides and don't take up a personal offense.
 - As much as possible, support established leaders.
2. Clarify details. Review history of situation, including staff's responses, attitudes, and attempts at resolving conflict.
3. Determine stage of conflict and help appropriately
 - Tension development – overlook a fault, forgive (personal)
Avoid starting a quarrel (Pro 17:14; cf. 26:17)
Forgive grievances out of love (Col 3:13, Eph 4:32).
Clarify (Jas 1:19 quick to listen, slow to speak, Prov 18:13)
 - Injustice collection – piling up a list of offenses
 - Whirlpool effect – pulling others into the conflict, causing division
 - Confrontation - obvious verbal or non verbal conflict
4. Try to help individuals solve the problem at the lowest level. Focus first on face to face discussion, understanding, and personal reconciliation. (Mtt 18) (Know and use YWAM's Justice and Reconciliation Guidelines)
 - Face to face
 - Face to face with a witness
 - Face to face with leaders
 - Higher level of leadership if appeal is necessary
5. Coach the individual in some "how tos" for resolving conflict face to face
 - Prepare your heart –confess own sins, forgive other
 - Go at the right time and right place
 - Go in genuine humility
 - Go with the right motive – a goal of reconciliation
 - Confess in the circle of confession
 - Listen in humility; Listen to understand; Listen to learn
 - Be ready to respond with kindness and be ready to change
6. If some "moral failure" is involved, you must report to the appropriate organizational leaders, but initial confrontation face to face is always appropriate (*see "must report" situations below)
7. Offer support – prayer, feedback, & coaching on next steps
8. Be willing to be a mediator between staff members or leaders as needed or arrange for someone else appropriate.
9. Recognize your own strengths as well as your limits. Get advice when you need it or refer to someone with the necessary experience or skill.
10. Whenever there is a need for follow-up, make sure that either a leader or a pastoral care giver has been identified to follow up.
11. Intentionally seek out an appropriate person for regular debriefing after being involved with handling a conflict. Know how to let go of burdens.

*"Must report" situations

- A person is a danger to himself or others
- Financial embezzlement or theft
- Reported cases of sexual immorality
- Hidden addictions such as pornography, pills, or alcohol
- Abusive leadership – use Justice and Reconciliation Guidelines
- Legally required reporting issues