

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is a normal aspect of human relationships. Ag producers may face conflicts with their family members, co-workers, and others. If conflict is mismanaged, it can lead to a negative and stressful experience. It will affect work performance, productivity, and relationship with others. However, if it is handled skillfully, it will be an opportunity for growth and understanding. How you handle potential conflict, that is, conflict management, is a key to being a successful farmer, rancher, and allied ag producer.

## What is Conflict Management?

“Conflict management can be defined as the process of dealing with (perceived) incompatibilities or disagreements arising from, for example, diverging opinions, objectives, and needs.” (de Wit, 2016)



## Four Different Levels of Conflict

Identifying the level of the conflict is crucial for conflict management. Ask yourself what is the cause of your conflict? And categorize them by the following diagram.



## Communication tips

- **Before getting into conflict, ask the following questions to yourself (Bausch, 2022)**
  1. Is there a real disagreement?
  2. Is the disagreement something worth being emotional about?
  3. Are you willing to address the conflict?  
If so, how flexible and cooperative can you be, and for how long?

**To learn more, visit <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/sow-well/>**

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## Communication tips

- **Using neutral language**

Neutral language promotes equal and constructive conversation. Use “I” language instead of “you” language to avoid offending the other person.

- **Focusing on the issue, not the person.**

Focusing on how to solve the problems and framing yourself and others as an ally to solve the problem.

- **Leave the past behind.**

Past is something you cannot change, so focus on the conflict you are facing at the moment.

- **Being aware and respectful of differences**

Acknowledge that other people have different stances and those people with different personalities may handle the same problem differently.

- **Being a good listener**

To understand the other party’s position or interests in the matter, pay attention to what they say and understand what is the reason behind their position.

- **Setting time to cool-down**

If you notice that you are getting into a temper, take a break, and take deep breath to clear your mind.

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