

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FACILITATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS AT YOUR THEATRE



Conflict gets a bad reputation. When you think of conflict, you probably imagine angry arguments, but conflict doesn't have to be as dramatic as that. Conflict arises when differing expectations, opinions, or understandings go head-to-head. Which means that conflict is important, and often necessary, in making sure that people are aligned and in agreement. Even though conflict is important, you should do your best to eliminate conflict that arises from misunderstood roles and responsibilities.

TYPES OF RESOLUTIONS

IMMEDIATE

There might be times where you need to step in immediately upon recognizing the conflict in order to diffuse it. Gather everyone involved for a meeting and listen to all parties before speaking. Do not take sides. Do the right thing. Remind both sides of the importance of teamwork at your theatre and in making it a great workplace for everyone.

QUICK FIX

If it seems like a short conversation can adequately address the conflict, conduct a 5 step clearing process:

- 1) Get the facts: what happened?
- 2) Hear everyone's perspectives: what was the cause?
- 3) Gauge feelings: what emotions were triggered by this?
- 4) Determine everyone's roles in the situation: who was involved, and why?
- 5) Identify the outcome that everyone is hoping is the result from this conflict resolution: what needs to happen for that desired outcome to become a reality?

LONG-TERM

For conflicts that will take some time to resolve, consider the following components for a successful mediation:

- 1) Avoid anger. Help everyone keep a level head and find a win-win solution.
- 2) Find a common goal. The only way conflict can be resolved is if everyone winds up feeling that they're all on the same team.
- 3) Divide and conquer. Give everyone responsibilities in resolving the conflict and reaching the desired outcome.



Anytime a conflict is addressed by your staff, be sure to praise a positive resolution. Recognize those who were involved in turning an issue into an opportunity.