



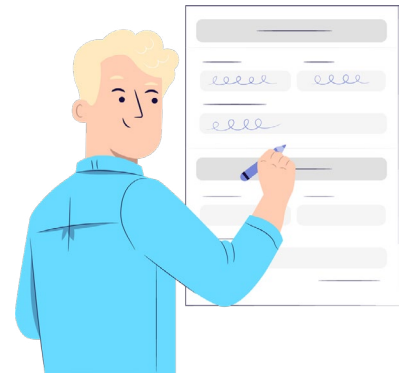
Conflict Resolution

WORKSHEET

Introduction

If you work in an HR operations or administration role, you're often the first point of contact when people have questions, concerns, or complaints, especially during moments of change or tension. This worksheet helps you practice conflict-diffusing language so you can respond calmly and constructively, even when emotions run high.

The scenarios included in this worksheet reflect common situations you might encounter, but the specifics may look different depending on your role, organization, or who you're supporting. Use these examples as a starting point and feel free to adapt the language or approach to fit your environment.



How to use this worksheet

- 1 **Read** each scenario.
- 2 **Reflect** on what might be driving the reaction (pressure, confusion, etc.).
- 3 **Review** the sample prompt that reframes the situation. Use the space provided to write your own alternative prompt or response.
- 4 Use this sheet to **create** a toolkit of go-to phrases that help you stay calm, helpful, and clear.



To guide your response, follow this simple three-step structure:

1. Acknowledge the emotion or experience: "I can see this has been frustrating."
2. Offer clarity or assistance: "Let's walk through the process together."
3. Suggest a next step or set a boundary if needed: "I'll pass your feedback on to the team who made the update."

Scenario 1: Payroll or Tax Document Escalation

Situation

An employee reaches out in frustration because their tax details were wrong on their pay stub, and they don't know who to contact.

Considering underlying drivers

They might feel anxious about finances or fear the issue won't be taken seriously. The confusion about who to contact is likely adding to their stress.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

"I can see how frustrating this must be, especially when it is about something as important as pay. While the payroll team handles those updates, I'm happy to contact them on your behalf and make sure it's sorted out. I'll keep you in the loop. Even if there is no final answer yet, I'll share any updates or progress by the end of the day so that you are not left waiting."

YOUR RESPONSE

Scenario 2: Missed Training or Compliance Deadline

Situation

An employee receives a warning for missing a mandatory training session and blames HR for not sending reminders.

Considering underlying drivers

They may be embarrassed, overwhelmed with other priorities, or unaware of previous reminders, leading to defensiveness.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

"It sounds like this came as a surprise, and I understand why that is upsetting. Let's take a look at what reminders were sent and how we can help you catch up on the training. I'll also share this feedback with the team so we can improve reminders."

YOUR RESPONSE

Scenario 3: Disciplinary Meeting Invite

Situation

An employee receives an invite to a disciplinary meeting and immediately storms into HR, accusing the department of targeting them unfairly.

Considering underlying drivers

They may feel shocked, vulnerable, or embarrassed. Their reaction is likely driven by fear of consequences or not feeling heard.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

"I understand this may have caught you off guard, and that is completely valid. This meeting is a chance to talk things through and hear your side as well; not a judgment, but part of the process. Let's go through the process together so you know what to expect."

YOUR RESPONSE

Scenario 4: Friction Over Policy Interpretation

Situation

An employee disagrees with how a policy was explained to them—for example, needing documentation for sick leave—and claims, “That’s not what I was told before.”

Considering underlying drivers

They might feel caught off guard, believe they’re being treated unfairly, or be recalling a past precedent that no longer applies.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

"I understand that this feels confusing, especially if you have heard something different before. Let’s take a look at the policy together so we are both clear, and I can double-check if any updates have been made recently."

YOUR RESPONSE

Scenario 5: Frustration with Employee Self-Service Tools

Situation

An employee is trying to update their emergency contact or banking info in the HRIS system and keeps getting error messages. They say, "This system is a nightmare!"

Considering underlying drivers

They may feel helpless, worried about accuracy, or frustrated by unfamiliar technology — especially if they're on a deadline or dealing with other stress.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

"Those tools can definitely be tricky if you're not using them all the time. I can either walk you through it or raise a ticket with our systems team to fix any technical issues, whichever works better for you."

YOUR RESPONSE

Reflection

Use this section to explore how you handle conflict and how you want to approach it in the future.

- 1 What tone of voice, body language, or mindset is helpful in defusing these types of conflict?

(Think about moments when you stayed calm or helped someone feel heard. What did you say that worked?)

- 2 What do you tend to feel or think when conflict shows up at work?

(Do you freeze, go into “fix-it” mode, or get defensive? Noticing your pattern can help you shift out of it.)

- 3 What helps you respond instead of react in the moment?

(Consider a grounding phrase, a pause, or a mindset you return to.)

- 4 Sometimes, you don’t have time to prepare your responses during conflict. What strategies can you implement to ensure you respond to conflict calmly and professionally?

Tips & Tricks

Use these simple strategies to stay calm, constructive, and clear.

1

Focus on understanding the situation, not determining who is “right.” This creates space for clarification rather than confrontation.

2

Emotions drive behavior. Acknowledging frustration, confusion, or stress can ease tension and help people feel heard.

3

You don’t have to solve everything, but following through on small promises like sending a follow-up email shows reliability and care.

4

Not every problem needs a quick solution. Sometimes people just need to be heard. Focus on guiding the conversation, not controlling the outcome.

5

Reframe it as a shared challenge. This helps others move away from “me versus you” thinking. Invite them to problem-solve as a team.