

Five common themes in workplace conflicts

Questions of allocation

- Money
- Workload
- Time

Questions of hierarchy

- Who should be appointed to a certain position?
- Who should have the final say?

Questions of structure

- Responsibilities and authority
- Routines, rules, order of priorities
- Future organizational structure

Questions of behavioural norms

- Conduct/communication, attitudes towards other employees
- Ways to perform tasks

Questions of conviction

- What should be the guiding perspective?

What kinds of measures are suitable for handling conflicts?

1. Should the intervention be at the individual, relational or system level, or should there be a combination of several levels?
2. Are there prerequisites for working on the conflict individually or in a group such that voluntary agreement can be achieved through new insights, changed attitudes or creative solutions? (dialogue-based measures)
3. Is there any reason to deal with the conflict using the formal procedures, rules, agreements, etc., that are in place at the workplace? Do any of the parties have rights that must be considered? (principle-based measures)
4. Are there arguments that speak in favor of dealing with the conflict using unilaterally determined measures such as orders, threats of sanctions, transfers, reorganization or other coercive measures? (power-based measures)

	Dialogue	Principles/Rights	Power
Individual level			
Relational level			
System level			

	Dialogue	Principles/Rights	Power
Individual level	Talks with employee Feedback Career planning talks Counseling, support Conflict coaching Supervision for manager Work on self-knowledge Further education/pro- ficiency training for employee or manager	Clarify frameworks, rules and limits for individual employees Develop job description Change job assignments and/or placement of employees Corrective talks Salary talks based on salary criteria	Orders Threat of sanctions Disciplinary reminder/ Warning Transfer Buying out Notice to quit/Dismissal
Relational level	Mediation (between two people) Group mediation Planning day for developing action plan for unsolved issues Common evaluation of outcomes of the change process	Decisions on disputes by the responsible manager Survey accompanied by recommendations regarding measures Investigation of facts Process based on labor laws Settlement based on formal rules and regulations	Judgement of points of conflict by a higher authority Transfer of the parties in conflict Dissolution of dysfunctional group
System level	Planning day to sort out roles, routines and mutual expectations Group dialogue about norms, goals, identity, strategies and division of roles Work on basic values Talks about action plan or the like Further education of staff	Develop job descriptions Develop routines, guidelines Education/information on rules, regulations and other frameworks in force Routine for psychosocial working environment rounds/review of operations Introduce working environment survey Guidelines for meeting formats Establish procedure for solving problems Employee manual or the like Management training program Policies and action plans Establish support resources	Introduce rules and regulations against the staff's will Reorganization Close-down