Conflict Plan

## Purpose

This tool supports City government practitioners responding to conflict in engagement. To learn more, review the Managing Disagreements guide at [engagement-toolkit.phila.gov](https://phila.sharepoint.com/sites/Teams-CAO-ServiceDesignStudio/Shared%20Documents/General/Projects/In-progress/MOCEVS%20ECE%20Toolkit/ECE%20Toolkit/08%20Prototyping/Content/Guides/3.0%20Working%20Together/engagement-toolkit.phila.gov).

## Instructions

Set aside 30 minutes to build your plan for responding to conflict. Find a comfortable space to think and prepare to sit with questions about your engagement.

## Disagreement

What disagreement is occurring in your engagement? You may also anticipate disagreements in future engagements or reflect on disagreements from past engagements.

Is this disagreement causing tension or conflict in your engagement? To learn more about feeling understood, affirmed, and valued in engagement, review the Reducing Harmful Practices guide at [engagement-toolkit](http://www.phila.gov/engagement-toolkit).phila.gov

* **Productive tension:** Collaborators are feeling understood, affirmed, and valued.
* **Unproductive conflict:** Collaborators are feeling misunderstood, disrespected, and undervalued.

## Tension

If the disagreement in your engagement is causing productive tension, lean into self-reflection.

Why are you feeling tension? For example, you may feel tension when community members communicate interests and needs that fall outside the scope of your engagement.

What can you learn from that feeling? For example, you may learn that you need to clarify your control within City government and the engagement.

## Conflict

If the disagreement in your engagement is causing unproductive conflict, you may need to de-escalate the conversation.

Before the conflict, did you set expectations about expecting and accepting disagreement? Why or why not?

Before the conflict, did you introduce active listening practices to your collaborators? Why or why not?

During the conflict, how can you reset expectations about disagreement and reintroduce active listening practices? Consider pausing the conversation to do so.

During the conflict, which of these de-escalation strategies can you use? Consider using a combination of strategies when necessary.

* Affirming diverse perspectives by practicing active listening.
* Summarizing differing perspectives verbally or in a shared document.
  + Asking collaborators to summarize each other’s perspectives.
  + Highlighting similarities to focus the conversation.
* Pausing for reflection on what collaborators are feeling and why.
  + Asking collaborators to share in pairs or small groups after pausing for reflection.
* Pausing to refocus by moving around, taking deep breathes, and stretching.
  + Reintroducing your shared goals after pausing.
* Directing the conversation with a parking lot, or shared document that holds topics to return to later.
  + Returning to conversations with collaborators at the end of the engagement or in the future.
* Other:

After the conflict, who do you need to follow up with? Consider checking in with those collaborators one-on-one or in small groups.

After the conflict, what lessons did you learn about responding to conflict? Consider lessons about yourself, your work, and the community.