

Key steps when receiving complaints and assessing behavioural disputes

When arguments arise at work it is often difficult for people at the centre of the conflict to describe to someone else exactly what is happening and how the experience is affecting them. Their counterpart may see things very differently. People raising issues feel wounded and become determined, and those responding feel attacked and take on a defensive demeanour. Under these circumstances the process of conflict diagnosis takes on major significance.

If people cannot resolve issues themselves, they are increasingly encouraged to look to others for advice and support – their managers, union officials, HR staff, and welfare officers. There is often little consistency of diagnosis and great variations in responses across these points of contact.

People raising issues should expect:

- To be heard
- To be encouraged to give out key information
- To explain the impact of what has been happening
- To get a response
- To be kept informed about what is happening next

The person receiving the issues needs to:

- Show they are listening
- Establish the presenting symptoms and, if possible, the cause
- Consult with key parties about the way forward
- Encourage a partnership, win/win approach
- Reality check and challenge where appropriate
- Establish the degree of seriousness
- Respond fairly and in a balanced way
- Take a proportionate response

The conflict analysis matrix[©]

This is an outline of how to ensure a high rapport, effective conversation happens when first listening to someone's account of a conflict they are involved in.

General	Content	Interaction	Process
Exploring conflict narratives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the scene and build rapport • Use structured questioning and reflective listening • Demonstrate impartiality and empathy • Agree a summary and key quote 	Listener draws from party: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What they believe has happened • What issues and concerns this raises for them • What has contributed to the situation • What practical outcomes they believe are desirable/achievable 	Listener draws from party: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they feeling • The impact the situation has had on them • How their working relations are currently and have been in the past • Their view of communication between the key parties 	Listener draws from party: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has already been attempted to resolve the situation • What for them would constitute a fair process • What they feel about a range of dispute resolution options

CMP Resolutions has a range of solutions to your needs

Our **Neutral Assessment** service identifies the route of conflict within teams displaying high levels of stress in order to recommend the most suitable effective options available. We also provide a **Bullying and Harassment Advisory Service** for parties with a complaint who are unsure what steps they wish to take next, as well as our highly praised **mediation and investigation services**. All areas are also available as a training course to assist you in setting up an in-house service.

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