

# Commonly Used Terms

## **Active listening**

People in conflict are often more concerned with winning the argument than listening attentively. Active listening is a structured form of communication that focuses the attention on the speaker in order to improve mutual understanding and facilitate problem solving.

## **Active speaking**

Active speaking is a communication process whereby a speaker appeals to another individual's higher self - the deepest level of humanity within each individual where dignity, integrity and compassion resonate the strongest. Often the key to achieving this is for the speaker to come from a place of respect, compassion and understanding. Active speaking is a courageous, creative act that usually requires the speaker to rise above their fears and concerns and speak from their own highest sense of self.

## **Adversarial versus cooperative approaches to conflict**

Adversarial approaches to settle disputes occur when parties in conflict perceive themselves as opponents competing for mutually incompatible outcomes. By contrast, the cooperative or problem-solving approach involves both sides collaborating - merging resources to seek solutions that address everyone's interests and are mutually beneficial.

## **Advocating for common ground**

Advocating for a process Versus advocating for one side.

## **Common ground approach**

is the method we use to resolve disputes, whereby the parties involved understand and honor their differences and find a mutually beneficial agreement based on their shared interests - their common ground. It is sometimes called the cooperative, collaborative or win-win approach and it can be applied to all kinds of conflict, from small everyday ones between individuals to the larger ones that divide communities.

## **Common ground media**

uses communication mediums such as radio, TV, film, print and Internet to facilitate transforming conflict into cooperative action. The aim is to show that contentious problems can be examined in ways that inform and entertain, while promoting the search for solutions.

## **Conflict and violence are not the same thing**

Whereas conflict is not inherently negative or damaging, and can in fact produce positive outcomes, violence always results in injury and destruction.

## **Conflict management**

generally involves taking action to keep a conflict from escalating further - it implies the ability to control the intensity of a conflict and its effects through negotiation, intervention, institutional mechanisms and other traditional diplomatic methods. It usually does not usually address the

deep-rooted issues that may be at the cause of the conflict originally or attempt bring about a solution.

### **Conflict resolution**

seeks to resolve the incompatibilities of interests and behaviours that constitute the conflict by recognizing and addressing the underlying issues, finding a mutually acceptable process and establishing relatively harmonious relationships and outcomes.

### **Conflict management versus conflict resolution**

Conflict management involves taking action to keep a conflict from escalating further. It usually does not address the deep-rooted issues that may be at the cause of the conflict or attempt to bring about a solution. Conflict resolution, by contrast, seeks to resolve the deep-rooted issues at the heart of conflict.

### **Conflict transformation**

aims at shifting how individuals and communities perceive and accommodate their differences, away from adversarial (win-lose) approaches toward collaborative (win-win) problem-solving. Transforming a conflict is a long-term process that engages a society on multiple levels to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that empower people to coexist peacefully. Overcoming fear and distrust, dealing with stereotypes and perceptions, and learning how to communicate effectively are important steps in redefining relationships to bring forth social justice and equality for parties in conflict.

### **Impartiality versus neutrality**

You can be impartial, if not completely neutral. Being impartial is working with people on both sides - our hearts might go out to those we feel have been wronged, naturally - however, our work is to bring people to the table to talk, to get them into dialogue about what they can do to improve the situation.

### **Peacebuilding**

refers to activities that go beyond crisis intervention or conflict management, such as long-term development that focuses on developing social, governmental and non-governmental (including religious) mechanisms that favor nonviolent, constructive means of resolving differences. Peacebuilding is an approach to post-conflict settings that recognizes the need for reconciliation, developing a capacity for conflict resolution, and working towards a sustainable peace. It involves a full range of approaches, processes, and stages needed for transformation toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance structures. Peacebuilding is distinct from both peacemaking and peacekeeping as it is proactive in dealing with conflict, rather than reactive.

### **Peacemaking**

is the official or unofficial diplomatic effort intended to end the bloodshed between contending parties embroiled in conflict. The objective is to move a violent conflict into a nonviolent stage, where differences are normally then settled through negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. International organizations serve as peacemakers and act as neutral third parties or provide other non-violent channels of dispute resolution, such as international courts.

## **Peacekeeping**

refers to a military operation undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute. Its purpose is to monitor and facilitate implementing an agreement and supporting diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement. It often involves ambiguous situations requiring peacekeepers to enforce cease-fire agreements and protect non-combatants while maintaining neutrality. The U.N. divides peacekeeping into three broad categories: 1) helping maintain cease-fires, 2) implementing comprehensive settlements, and 3) protecting humanitarian operations.

## **Perceptions versus reality**

The absolute reality of a conflict situation is often less important than what each party's perception of that situation is. For example, while there may be no actual stated threat of violence between groups, the simple perception of a threat may be enough to bring one or both disputants to action.

## **Positions versus interests**

Positions are points of view that are generally more specific and narrower in scope than interests. Interests tend to be fundamental needs, while a position is often a statement of opinion about how to achieve that need.

## **Reframing**

Reframing, or creating a new context, is a technique of shifting perceptions. In mediation and negotiation, this method is used to recast a conflict in neutral terms to break deadlocks or stalemates and make further progress in attaining a joint resolution.

## **Structural violence**

is human suffering that is caused by the exploitive or unjust nature in which social, political, legal, cultural and economic institutions are constructed. Structural violence is difficult to see with the naked eye because it has become embedded in ever-present human civil structures and normalized by stable institutions and regular experience. Examples include poverty, hunger, homelessness, discrimination due to race, gender, sexual orientation.

## **Track I diplomacy**

involves direct government-to-government interaction on the official level. Typical Track I activities include traditional diplomacy, official negotiations, and the use of international organizations. The participants stand as representatives of their respective states and reflect the official positions of their governments during discussions

## **Track "One and a Half" diplomacy**

refers to situations when official representatives give authority to non-state actors (or official actors serving in an unofficial capacity) to participate, negotiate or facilitate on behalf of the official state actors. It also refers to non-state individuals who serve as intermediaries between official and non-official actors in difficult conflict situations. It is generally used to prepare key stakeholders before and during the official negotiation process by building consensus and support for agreements, both between parties in conflict and within their prospective constituencies.

**Track II diplomacy**

generally involves informal interaction with influential unofficial actors from civil society, business or religious communities, and local leaders and politicians who are considered to be experts in the area or issue being discussed. It generally seeks to supplement Track I diplomacy by working with middle and lower levels of society and often involves non-traditional methods, such as facilitating dialogue mechanisms and meetings that include participants from both government and non-government institutions.

**Track III diplomacy**

is essentially "people to people" diplomacy undertaken by both individuals and private groups from non-government international organizations that are dedicated to promoting specific causes, universal ideals and norms, and enacting systematic social change. This type of diplomacy often involves organizing meetings and conferences, generating media exposure, and political and legal advocacy for people and communities who are largely marginalized from political power centers and are unable to achieve positive change without outside assistance.