

Managing Conflict within Committees

Conflict is a natural part of any group dynamics, and when managed effectively, it can lead to improved collaboration and better decision-making within a Committee.

Healthy conflict within a committee is to be expected. All members of your Committee will be passionate about netball and volunteering their time to help.

You should be able to have robust and respectful conversations where members can express their opinions and have a say in decisions. Here are a few hints to ensure this is possible:

Build Connection

A Committee is just like any other team, and should be united and connected. Spend time getting to know each other and understand why each member has volunteered. Learn how each member likes to receive feedback and be valued and encourage opportunities to strengthen relationships and build trust.

Create a Positive Culture

Foster a positive and inclusive Committee culture. When members feel valued and supported, conflicts are less likely to arise, and the group can better navigate and resolve any challenges that do arise.

Establish Ground Rules

Develop and agree upon a set of ground rules that govern the Committee's behaviour and interactions. These rules can include guidelines for respectful communication, active listening, confidentiality and constructive feedback.

Promote Open Communication

Encourage open and honest communication within the Committee. Create an atmosphere where members feel comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns without fear of judgment.

Define and Understand Roles

Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each Committee member to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts arising from unclear expectations. There are examples of position descriptions in the Beyond the Court Toolkit.

Address Issues Promptly

Deal with conflicts as soon as they arise, rather than letting them fester. Addressing issues promptly can prevent them from escalating and becoming more difficult to resolve.

Encourage Empathy

Foster empathy among Committee members. Encourage them to consider each other's perspectives and understand the underlying reasons for disagreements.

Focus on Solutions

Shift the focus from blaming to problem-solving. Encourage Committee members to propose solutions rather than dwelling on the issues.

Keep it Neutral

When discussing conflicts, use neutral and non-confrontational language which is respectful and avoids escalating conflicts. Focus on the specific behaviours or issues rather than making it personal. Eg Instead of saying “You’re disorganised,” use “I’ve noticed some inconsistencies with the way tasks are organised”.

Seek Common Ground

Always go back to the Club or Association’s values and purpose. Committee members have agreed to volunteer because they believe in these. Identify areas of agreement and common goals among committee members. Emphasise shared objectives to create a foundation for collaboration and compromise.

Establish a Conflict Resolution Process

Develop a clear process for resolving conflicts within the Committee. This could involve a structured discussion, mediation, or escalation to higher authorities if necessary. You might like to refer to the Netball NSW Grievance and Dispute Resolution Procedures ([linked here](#)) to assist with this.

Learn from Conflicts

Treat conflicts as opportunities for growth and improvement. After resolving a conflict, reflect on the experience and consider how the Committee can learn from it to prevent similar issues in the future. At the end of the process, agree on how all parties will move forward from this point.