

# Conflict Resolution FAQ

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## Introduction

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This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handout was designed to provide the public sector and members of the public more detailed information and insight around common conflict challenges. This is a brief list of FAQs and is not meant to be exhaustive.

These questions come from public sector employees and members of the public with whom we work. We tried our best to answer them. While the responses represent some best practices that we are aware of, note that every conflict situation is different. There is no one way to “do” conflict resolution. Complex cultural, social, and organizational norms, as well as individual differences, preferences, and needs are present in every conflict. Conflict resolution approaches need to be tailored to each situation.

**OCDR regularly updates this document and welcomes additional questions as well as improvement ideas.** Please contact Jessica Shryack, OCDR Assistant Director, with your feedback at [jessica.shryack1@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.shryack1@state.mn.us).

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## General Questions

### Why is conflict so difficult to navigate?

Conflict is complex which is one reason it is difficult to navigate. There are many models that can help you gain clarity and make sense of the confusion. The SCARF model (Rock, 2008) is one model that describes basic motivations that affect how people react in conflict situations. When a motivation is threatened, people may reactively lash out or try to avoid conflict at all costs. David Rock describes these motivations as:

- **Status**—our relative importance to others
- **Certainty**—our ability to predict the future or outcomes
- **Autonomy**—our sense of control over events
- **Relatedness**—how safe we feel with others
- **Fairness**—how fair we perceive the exchanges between people to be

Conflicts – including those difficult conversations that can be awkward, uncomfortable, or even threatening – engage those primary motivations. Rock notes that social needs are “treated in much the same way in the brain as the need for food and water.” If you were hungry and someone didn’t allow you to eat, you would be outraged. That’s what happens when we perceive a threat to one of our primary motivations.

Here is an example:

- Suraya is often motivated by status – she wants others to perceive her as having a key role in the organization and thus feels threatened when others don’t acknowledge her authority. Wren is highly motivated by autonomy. When Wren is working on a project and Suraya tells her what to do with no information or conversation, Wren shuts down and stops speaking to Suraya. When Suraya feels she isn’t acknowledged or listened to, she gets angry. This workplace conflict could be deescalated if both parties acknowledged what they needed from the other person. Then they could find ways of interacting that worked better for both of them, leading to fewer disagreements.

You can talk to someone even about highly triggering topics by using [a very simple conversational formula](#): “I am seeing...I am noticing...and I am wondering...” Using these statements in a difficult conversation can make the other person less defensive, even if their deep values and motivations are being triggered.

Next time you are in a conflict, ask yourself, “What motivation is being triggered?” and “What need does the other person have that I am not seeing?” You can also try out the Lenski conversation model to get to a better place about a difficult topic.

### **I am upset and don’t feel like listening to the other person’s side. What should I do?**

Being unwilling to listen to another person’s story or reasoning is normal. In conflict, we can get very focused on our own story of the conflict. We dwell on the all the ways we were wronged and blame others for the hurt we feel. Tami Lenski describes this as our “Stuck Story” – our narrative of the conflict where others are the source of the problem. It can be very hard to listen when we are deep in our Stuck Story!

A first step to getting unstuck is realizing that our narrative is not the only one that matters. Even when we are convinced we are right, we can say to ourselves “it never hurts to learn more about someone else’s experience.” Remember, listening and understanding someone’s views is not the same as agreeing with them. You are simply learning more about the issues to set a foundation for deeper dialogue and problem solving. If you are upset, you may need to take a break before you can listen fully. It is OK to say, “I want to be a good listener in this conversation, could we take a break and continue this conversation in 15 minutes (or set up a time to continue talking)?”

We developed a simple model to describe the behaviors needed to listen effectively and in a way that helps resolve conflict.

Review this table and see if there are behaviors that you don’t do now that would help you be a better listener in a conflict situation. For example, if you often judge what someone else is saying rather than simply listen, next time you are in a heated situation, try to suspend your judgment and see if that helps.

1. Create space	2. Listen for deeper understanding	3. Respond to build trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space for attentive listening</li> <li>• Focus on the conversation</li> <li>• Use appropriate listening body language</li> <li>• Be aware of eye contact/facial expressions</li> <li>• Don’t multitask</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspend judgement</li> <li>• Suspend the desire to rebut &amp; argue</li> <li>• Get curious! Ask questions!</li> <li>• Identify underlying interests</li> <li>• Pay attention to values and feelings at play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframe to clarify meaning</li> <li>• Acknowledge feelings and challenges</li> <li>• Express areas of agreement and disagreement</li> <li>• Show appreciation for the exchange</li> <li>• [Maybe - identify next steps]</li> </ul>

Listening to understand without distractions or judgment is one of *the* keys to resolving conflict. It goes a long way to helping de-escalate yourself and others.

For complex issues, more intentional process may be needed. For example, you might consider setting up a structured conversation or series of conversations at a specific time and in a neutral place, which provides the kind of environment that supports a hard conversation. Consider using a trained facilitator when issues are very complex or entrenched.

### What questions can I ask to better understand others’ stories and perspective?

A key goal in conflict situations is to better understand the needs and interests or “stories” of each party in the conflict. If needs and interests are not understood or are skimmed over in the interest of quickly solving a conflict, the resolution ultimately may be unsatisfactory to one or more parties or may be short-lived. Questions or prompt that can help people open up about their needs and interests include:

- Say more about that.
- Help me understand your concern about that.

- I'm hearing that [...] is very important for you. Do I have that right?
- I'm understanding that [...]. What kind of impact is that having on you?
- What is that experience like for you?
- If things were suddenly better, what would that look like for you? What would have changed?
- (If people have many concerns and have trouble homing in on one thing): What do you most want me to understand? OR, Of the things you have mentioned, which of these is impacting you the most right now? What does that impact look like?

Asking "yes"/"no" questions or asking people "why" questions can limit conversation or make people defensive.

It's important to get to the deeper meaning behind questions so you can develop an accurate understanding of the issues and help parties create a tailored approach to the conflict that meets their deeper needs and interests.

### **How do I get myself out of an emotionally intense reaction and move into a problem-solving mindset?**

In conflict, we have a tendency toward fight, flight, or freeze as our sympathetic nervous system goes into overdrive. The "fight" impulse drives us to want to win an argument at all costs and the flight impulse causes us to give up and walk away. Without the creativity of more than your own thinking, you won't come up with the best solution, or the solution will be short-lived. We may try to stick to our own short-term gains, but in the process, we create animosity in the other party. This hurts the relationship and the ability to solve problems in the future.

There are many questions you can ask yourself to get out of a "win-lose" mindset and focus more on the problem and potential for solutions:

- "Why are they presenting the issue in this way?"
- "Why am I reacting strongly? What is important to me right now?"
- "What assumptions am I making?"
- "What need are they expressing?"
- "What do I not know yet?"
- "What do I wish were different?"
- "Who else can I talk to gain perspective on this issue?"

By choosing to ask yourself questions that get at your own and others' reactions and needs, you can help yourself calm down and focus on solving the problem effectively.

Here are some additional actions you can take to regain a problem-solving mindset:

- Take a break. If you have been dealing with the issue every day for a week, let it go for a couple days and focus on something else. Come back to it with fresh perspective.
- Walk it out. Walking does wonders to change our perspective. Take a walk around the block. Have a walking meeting with a trusted colleague whom you can confide in to process the situation.
- Talk to a conflict resolution expert to gain perspective - 30 minutes on the phone might be all you need to gain new insight.

## Having a difficult conversation makes me nervous! How can I calm down before or during the conversation?

There are many techniques you can use to stay calm before and during a difficult conversation:

- **Connect to a shared purpose before the conversation.** Even having the conversation means you both want to resolve it. Say that. Acknowledge that you do have a shared goal and keep coming back to that if things get stuck.
- **Get grounded** by feeling your feet connecting to the ground and breathing deeply for five to ten cycles of breath.
- **Calm down using 4-4-4-4 “box breathing”** where you inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold for 4 seconds.
- **Disconnect from the situation** before you get into it, or while you are in it. Think, “This is not about me. It’s not personal.” This can help you see the situation – and your own part in the conflict – more clearly.
- **If things get heated, take a break.** You can ask for a few minutes or to come back to the conversation at another time.
- **Don’t put too much pressure on yourself.** You probably won’t solve everything in one conversation.
- **You may feel nervous, but someone needs to take the first step.** If nothing changes, conflicts tend to get worse, not better, over time.

## I am trying to use good listening skills and reframing, but the conflict isn’t getting resolved. What should I do?

If it’s hard to understand *where the other party is coming from* – or your attempts at understanding are rejected - it’s possible that you aren’t seeing a deeper need the other party has. They may say that they are worried about X, but the underlying issue is connected to an identity or value they hold dear, which involves more emotion and can make the conflict harder to resolve.

If that’s the case, it’s especially important to be patient and listen more than we speak. Even using simple validating language like, “I hear you. That sounds important. Can you say more about that?” can help someone open up about the deeper issues at play.

If the other person *isn’t understanding you*, acknowledging this gap should be done as early as possible. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, one way to make sure that someone is understanding you is to check for understanding and then paraphrase back to the other person what you heard them say so you can offer corrections.

- *A misunderstanding occurs:* “It seems that you are hearing me say \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, I hope that the main take-away from our conversation is \_\_\_\_\_. Does that make sense?”
- *The misperception persists:* “I have tried to communicate in a few different ways that I mean \_\_\_\_\_. It seems like my message isn’t coming across. Is there anything in what I have said that’s confusing or unclear?”

If after multiple attempts the misperception persists, it may be that there is an overall lack of trust in the relationship, which can be addressed directly. For example:

- *Dealing with trust:* “I am trying to communicate\_\_\_\_\_ and it still seems like there’s a misunderstanding. Is there anything getting in the way of your ability to trust what I am saying?”

In all cases:

- try to keep using good listening and reframing skills;
- avoid taking the issue personally; and
- stay focused on what you and they need to solve the problem.

If nothing you are trying is working, take a break and come back to the conversation when you have had time to look at the issue with fresh eyes. You may also consider talking to a work mentor, your supervisor, an HR representative with skills in conflict resolution, or another trusted professional before engaging in the conversation again.

Some conflicts are not ripe for resolution. There could be dynamics beyond the control of the parties that are driving the core concerns. It could be that individuals are not truly invested in getting to a resolution. Or it could be that the timing isn’t right to address the issue. If you have tried reasonable steps to resolving your issue and it isn’t working, it is time to elevate the concern to supervisors or others who can help you.

### **How should conflict resolution practice be adapted for people who are neurodivergent?**

Neurodiversity covers a broad range of cognitive differences, including autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), specific learning disabilities or some other information processing difference. Research and best practices on neurodiversity in the workplace are emerging, but there is little research on how to adapt conflict resolution skills to situations in which neurodiverse individuals are involved. Because conflict resolution includes so many different practices – mediation, facilitated dialogues, circle practice – best practices are difficult to pinpoint.

However, a few tips to consider:

- as a general good practice for all conversations, ask participants if they have any suggestions for how to set up and structure the conversation. This gives participants the opportunity to share their needs without disclosing any specifics of their circumstances.
- if scheduling a conflict-related conversation, provide a brief agenda in advance to help people feel prepared – for example, describe the conversation’s goals and what information you need to move forward;
- keep communications as brief and direct as possible;
- consider that one-to-one eye contact can feel overwhelming to some;
- people on the autism spectrum may feel more overwhelmed than neurotypical people by highly emotional conversations, so you may need to take a break and come back to a conversation if emotions are running high;
- people with ADHD may be more impulsive than others in a conflict situation; this shouldn’t be viewed as intentionally escalating a conflict or thwarting a resolution process.

OCDR will update this FAQ information as more research and practice information is available. In general, if you have techniques that work well for neurodivergent audiences you encounter, lean on your own knowledge and experience base.

## Workplace-Specific Questions

### Why is it important to address workplace conflicts quickly and directly?

Not all interactions will feel respectful from your perspective, and your colleagues or supervisees may not know what impact they are having on you unless you talk to them about it.

Most conflict can be addressed through direct conversations, even though that can feel challenging or uncomfortable. Ideally, each employee takes responsibility for addressing conflict directly with the other party as early as possible after an incident where one employee feels discomfort, disrespect, or that work can't get done until issues are resolved.

The benefits of addressing conflict early are:

- resolving the issue so that you can get back to work;
- gaining confidence in expressing what you need and want at work;
- building a rapport with the other party so you can resolve future conflicts right away;
- improving your relationship with the other party, if that is important to you; and/or
- preventing a conflict from escalating, leading to stress, anxiety, missed work, etc.

Some symptoms of not addressing conflict can include:

- unclear or negative communications – or lack of communication - that lead to ineffective decisions and working relationships;
- people who need to be at the table are not invited to participate in important meetings and projects;
- team members avoid interacting, even when it hurts a workplace project, strategic goal or outcome;
- escalation of complaints, bickering, and taking sides; a small conflict escalates into a bigger conflict; and/or
- team members don't want to come to work, actively seek other employment, or leave the workplace.

### How can I make sure I am contributing to a healthy workplace culture?

A healthy workplace culture is key to helping employees look forward to work and avoid unnecessary conflict that interrupts an effective and efficient work environment.

Healthy workplace behaviors include:

- keeping an open mind and trying your best to avoid making assumptions about others when you notice you hold different beliefs, have different work styles, or communicate differently;
- being open to the ideas and experiences of everyone in the workplace;
- welcoming new employees;
- thanking and appreciating people;
- collaborating, asking for advice;
- using someone's preferred pronouns and name;
- resolving differences quickly.

OCDR provides resources for resolving conflicts in organizations on our [Organizational Conflict Management webpage](#).

If you are a State of Minnesota employee, see [Human Resources \(HR\)/Labor Relations \(LR\) #1432 Respectful Workplace Policy](#) for guidance on workplace behaviors to avoid.

### **How do I have a hard conversation with an employee I supervise. What should I do?**

Here is one example of how to have a difficult conversation with someone you supervise:

1. Express your concern using “I” statements. During the conversation, use these phrases to structure what you want to say:
  - “Here’s what I’m noticing...[state the issue from your perspective].”
  - “Here’s how this impacts me...[share how you are feeling or experiencing the issue]
  - “And here’s what I’m wondering...[state your concern clearly but be willing to listen].”
  - Ask the person to share their experience and perspective. Listen, then try to articulate their concern in your own words to show you understand their point of view. Ask them if you are understanding them correctly.
2. Discuss what the desired future looks like.
  - Describe what you want to see happen to move forward.
  - Ask the other party to describe what they want to see happen to move forward.
3. Decide on next steps. You might be able to put a plan in place to address your concerns, or you might need more discussion.
4. Set up a time to check in in a few weeks about changes you and they are seeing.

If you approach a difficult conversation with the goal of convincing others you are right or making them change their behavior to what you want it to be, the discussion is not likely to go well. A learning conversation allows you to share what you know and feel while the other person does the same.

If you come to agreement about next steps, make sure to follow through. This shows you are committed to resolving the conflict and to working together more effectively in the future. You are also modeling effective follow through and care for employees.

### **I think I offended someone at work and now we are in conflict. What should I do?**

It may make sense to ask the other party or parties involved if you have done anything to create difficulty between you. State that you are interested in making things right. Ask about their perception or interpretation of your behavior or the issue. You can then admit your mistake, commit to using more productive behavior in the future, and focus on how you would like to interact together going forward.



## **I am a manager supervising former peers. While I appreciate a collaborative approach, I also feel the need to assert my authority. Do I really need to use a collaborative approach in every situation?**

There is a conventional view that in hierarchical organizations authority means forcing people to behave in the ways you want them to. But we can also think about asserting authority as:

- Being trusted to make wise decisions
- Being consistent
- Treating people fairly
- Listening well to the concerns of others
- Setting clear expectations
- Clearly defining roles
- Helping people do their best work
- Helping a team thrive
- Implementing policy and procedure in a logical, fair, and efficient manner
- Creating a team culture of trust and respect
- Inspiring teams to reach new heights, even when it is hard

Moving from a peer role to a supervisor role is a good time to think about what kind of supervisor you want to be and how to gain the trust of your direct reports. You can even talk about this dilemma with them and describe the different needs you are trying to balance. For example, you might say, “I need to ensure everyone is accountable to the policy. At the same time, I want to help you do your best work in the way that make sense for you. How do we get there?” Using a collaborative approach most of the time – and reserving a more top-down approach for the rare occasions that that makes sense - can work for you by preventing unnecessary conflict over the long-term.

## **What if people in a conflict situation have different degrees of power? How does that impact the negotiation or resolution?**

There are multiple sources of power in a situation, including the following (Moore, 2003):

- Formal authority and legal prerogative
- Expertise on relevant subject matter
- Network/relational influence
- Resources (funding, time, personnel)
- Rewards and sanctions
- Procedural influence
- Definitional/framing influence
- Moral sway
- Nuisance
- Habitual inertia or preference for the status quo
- Charisma or other personal influential traits
- Perception of power, whether concretely founded or not

When people in a conflict situation have different levels of power, a facilitator can make sure each party has opportunities that provide power in the discussion, for example:

- Having enough time to speak
- Having access to the same information

- Having an opportunity to understand the ground rules and norms of communication
- Having an opportunity to prepare
- Feeling able to and confident in expressing their needs

It's also important to consider how power is perceived and used differently based on cultural norms. In a cross-cultural or intercultural situation, do your research on how people view power so you can respond appropriately.

### How does culture interact with conflict in the workplace?

[The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition \(CARLA\)](#) defines culture as the “shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.” Every person has a culture, and addressing conflict will look and feel differently based on each person's cultural beliefs, values, behavioral norms, and experiences.

Differences between people can sometimes be the *source* of conflict, simply because people approach workplace interactions differently. When we believe people *should* work, act, think, and feel like we do, we set ourselves up for disappointment and exacerbate conflict.

All workplaces will include a diversity of:

- communication styles;
- work styles;
- values, preferences, and needs;
- cultural beliefs, assumptions, approaches or expectations related to interpersonal interactions;
- and other differences.

People may interpret respect and “healthy” interaction showing up in all these ways, depending on cultural beliefs, norms, and expectations:

- talking or not talking;
- asking questions or not asking questions;
- sitting close to or far from others;
- deferring to authority or asserting authority;
- using physical gestures or not using them;
- and other differences.

Take cues from the person you are interacting with!

It is important to consider that our interpretation of what conflict and healthy interaction *should* look like may be related to our own cultural expectations. In that situation, it is best to bring your concern to the other party and have a conversation to find out more about their intention, your interpretation, your and their needs related to positive, healthy interactions, and how you both would like to move forward together. Note that this is especially important when your work is highly dependent on complex and ongoing collaboration (Jehn, 1995).

## I am a supervisor/manager/senior leader. How can I foster conflict resilience on my team?

There are a number of things you can do to help foster conflict resilience on your team.

1. **Establish team norms.** Use your team or organizational values, then flesh out what that means. If respect is a value, ask the team what respectful behavior looks like and ask if they can each commit to the behaviors they describe. (Note: This will only be effective if the leader also follows the norms and leads by example!)
2. **Use relationship-building techniques.** There are many examples of team-building techniques in this [Harvard Business Review article](#). If you support people in getting to know each other on a personal level, they will be better poised to address conflict when it comes up.
3. **Develop norms around handling conflict.** Talk to your team about the difference between simple disagreements – which can foster better relationships and lead to creative ideas if done well – to dysfunctional conflict, which should be prevented and interrupted when it happens. Let them decide together how to best resolve conflicts, ask for a personal commitment to the norms, and check in regularly to see what's working and what's not. If conflict is an ongoing issue, meet again, and do a reset. Be open, honest, and transparent about the importance of resolving conflict quickly and effectively and your expectations for doing so.

## My organization is going through a lot of change. How does that affect conflicts inside the organization?

Change is difficult – and often doesn't follow a predictable path. People often feel anxious about change, and this heightened sense of emotion may impact how quickly or intensely conflicts erupt. Leaders can help prevent unnecessary conflict by:

- **Communicating clearly** about changes and how they may affect employees
- **Involving employees** in decisions that affect them and that need their input (but don't ask employees for feedback if their feedback isn't needed or won't be used)
- **Providing a timeline** for the change process so it's clear what employees can expect

Doing this allows employees to:

- understand their role or others' roles in change
- know they are valued
- plan, control, and adjust as needed

When people know their role, feel valued, and can plan around change, they are less likely to feel anxious. Fewer negative emotions and less uncertainty means there is less room for conflict to erupt and take over.

## Our organization doesn't have a conflict management strategy. Where should we start?

A conflict management strategy needs to involve multiple interacting elements that support effective conflict management. Without mutually reinforcing elements, conflict management strategies will be less effective. For

example, it's good to have basic conflict resolution training available for employees, but if people don't know when to resolve conflicts or who to go to for support, the training can fall flat. Likewise, if there are detailed policies but no training on conflict resolution, people may have a hard time following the policies. A first step in understanding what's needed is doing an assessment. You can ask questions like, what conflicts come up routinely? How they are they handled? Are there policies in place and training to support the policies? Are there people employees can go to for informal support? Are there norms and expectations in place that are communicated routinely?

There are many good resources for getting started with a conflict management system. See OCDR's list of Recommended Resources on the [OCDR Organizational Conflict Management page](#) or [reach out to OCDR](#) for a consultation.

### **What if an interaction feels, seems, or clearly is an act of harassment, discrimination, or sexual harassment?**

If this is a case of sexual harassment or harassment or discrimination as defined by your organization and happened in the "workplace" as described by your organization, contact your HR representative to understand next steps. You may also want to review what [constitutes discrimination](#) according to the [Minnesota Department of Human Rights](#) and [file a complaint](#) if the issue is a case of discrimination.

If you are a State of Minnesota employee, see these policies:

- [Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Prohibited](#)

## Negotiation and Collaborative Problem-Solving

**I have been asked to lead a process to come up with collaborative solutions on a policy or program issue. But I am not sure it's worth the time and effort. What should I consider before saying yes?**

Many complex, multi-party issues can be tackled using a process that OCDR and others call “collaborative problem-solving (CPS).” We [define](#) this process as “as a systematic approach for people with different views and interests to find workable shared solutions to complex challenges.”

Sometimes this kind of process is ripe for coming to consensus and moving forward. Sometimes, though, it is wise to not engage in the work.

Think carefully before engaging in collaborative problem-solving if these issues are present:

- Few areas of potential agreement
- A key stakeholder refuses to participate
- Unrealistic deadline for reaching consensus
- Better option available (e.g., litigation)
- Convener wants to control process; facilitator not allowed to be autonomous
- Large power imbalances
- No way to fund consensus-building effort
- No pressure to collaborate or reach consensus (no deadline, no mandate, lack of stakeholder interest, etc.)

CPS is time-consuming and takes sustained energy to do well. It is best to engage in CPS when parties are, at least for the most part, willing, open, and ready to tackle tough issues in a collaborative environment.

### **What do you do when people don't want to be collaborative or are actively blocking collaboration?**

Sometimes you are working with someone who does not seem like a “good faith negotiator.” People may engage in false negotiation to improve their own options only, without an intention to collaborate on a solution.

How can you tell if someone is using deception in a conflict situation?

Tactics involved in a “false negotiation” include:

- habitual delays in resolving the issue;
- making extreme demands and minimal concessions;
- dominating the negotiation;
- paying lip service to being collaborative, while not acting collaboratively; and/or
- passing off duties to unauthorized delegates who can't actually make decisions.

In this situation, it may be helpful to:

- clarify how statements about being willing to negotiate are inconsistent with behavior; ask for a response;
- reflect on whether there is an appropriate accountability enforcement mechanism that could be used – agency policy or other mandate or higher-level leader that requires participation and collaboration;

- get a third-party (supervisor, HR, commissioner, etc.) to check in on the collaboration and ensure a solution can/is being developed; and/or
- requesting that the person consider the long-term consequences of not collaborating – not being invited to key discussions in the future, not receiving something they want in return, a more negative reputation, inability to complete key objectives.

Continuing to collaborate with someone who is not acting collaboratively helps no one but the false negotiator. When working with a false negotiator, it is best to communicate directly about the issue. Language you can use to create a more accurate understanding of a negotiator's purpose includes:

- "From what we have seen, your behavior hasn't been collaborative, even though you say you want to collaborate. I wonder if it was a conscious decision to withhold your true intention about this collaboration."
- "What reaction were you hoping you would get from me/us by using these tactics?"
- "I'm interested in helping you get what you want, but I also need my/our needs met. If you can't help us get there, I would suggest pursuing other non-collaborative options rather than continuing this process."

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