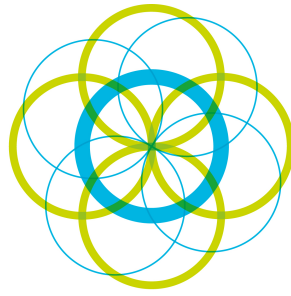


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10 WAYS TO PREVENT THE ESCALATION OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT FOR HR

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. ACT EARLY | As soon as you hear of workplace issues or conflict, do something. Waiting until something else occurs often leads to conflict escalating. Many claims are the result of failure of managers or HR to act at the early stages of conflict. Where possible act before grievances or claims are lodged. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. TAKE “MINOR” CONCERNS SERIOUSLY | Grievances and claims are often the result of a number of seemingly small or insignificant issues building up over time. Taking them seriously at the start can prevent the escalation of the issues. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. GATHER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE | Speak confidentiality to the managers and senior managers involved to get some background information where possible. Ensure your conversations are confidential. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. DIAGNOSE THE ISSUES BEFORE ACTING | The main diagnosis you need to make at this stage is the level of complexity of the issues. Simple issues can be resolved in-house, more complex issues are best resolved using professional mediators. This protects the organisation and the people involved. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. DETERMINE THE MOST EFFECTIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS | It is essential that workplace conflict resolution is carefully thought out and the most appropriate method is chosen. There are a number of different ways of resolving workplace conflict: mediation, team facilitation, individual conflict coaching, training, and team assessments. When issues are complex and involve a number of people, a combination of approaches often works best. |

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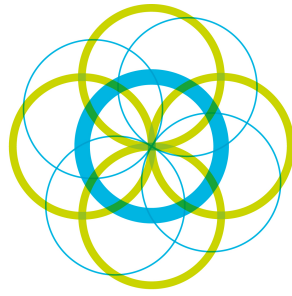
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| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. KEEP YOUR VIEWS TO YOURSELF | One of the greatest causes of the escalation of conflict is that HR practitioners express their view of the situation to one or more of the people involved or to a manager that passes on the information. This can exacerbate the situation and some individuals may feel justified in their positions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. SHOW EMPATHY | Regardless of how you think or feel about the issues, show empathy. Sometimes people in conflict just want to feel understood. It is not necessary to agree with someone to show them empathy. "I can see that this has really upset you." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. ADOPT A FUTURE-FOCUSED ATTITUDE | Focus on what you can do to assist in the future. We cannot change the past, however we can certainly impact the future. Being clear about what we would like to see happen and expressing this to others helps to impact the future. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. BE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC IN THE MESSAGES YOU DELIVER TO STAFF | People involved in workplace conflict are often hypersensitive. Ambiguous and vague messages can often be misconstrued and lead to the exacerbation of the conflict, as people try to work out how much support they have from the organisation, their manager and HR. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES | Educate your staff about the causes of workplace issues, conflict resolution skills, and most importantly encourage people to seek assistance at the first sign of issues. |

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WHEN TO CALL A PROFESSIONAL MEDIATOR

Many issues can be resolved in-house. There are some issues, however, that require the assistance of a professional mediator.

If the conflict involves one or more of the following we recommend you call in a professional mediator:

1. More than two people are involved
2. The issues are complex
3. There are suspected mental health issues
4. A formal grievance has been lodged
5. A workers' compensation or bullying claim has been lodged (in some circumstances mediation can be effective in resolving many of the issues surrounding these types of claims)

Call 1300 646 338 for confidential advice on how to resolve your workplace conflict.

Caryn Cridland is the Director of Mindful Mediation, a specialist workplace mediation, facilitation, coaching, and training organisation that provides services to leading organisations around Australia.

Caryn is a Registered Psychologist, Lawyer, Nationally Accredited Mediator, and Leadership Consultant. She has successfully resolved hundreds of workplace mediations at all levels of an organisations in many different industries.



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