

Conflict Management Scenario

President: You have asked the sectional rep to help facilitate a tough situation in your chapter. You have a strong opinion about the situation, but you are concerned that the chapter may split if everyone doesn't buy-in to a reasonable solution. You must introduce the sectional rep at the beginning of the meeting.

As a Sectional Rep, you have been asked by the president and several chapter officers to facilitate a meeting to resolve a dispute. The current pledge trainer was given the money from last semester's pledge trainer for initiation fees (about \$500). However, during her move over the summer, the money disappeared. Now it is midway through the fall semester and the chapter has realized that this has occurred. Unfortunately, the chapter is in the middle of a fund-raising drive and this will really set the chapter back. The president will introduce you at the meeting. Make sure you set some ground rules before you begin the discussion.

A group: You believe the pledge trainer is irresponsible towards her duties and needs to take the responsibility for the lost of the money. You will propose actions that will punish the pledgemaster.

B group: You believe that the pledge trainer acted in good faith to help register the pledges. You think that everyone should pitch in together to recover from this unfortunate mistake. It upsets you that people have said such mean things about the pledge trainer.

Pledge Trainer: You have looked everywhere and had some of your friends look throughout your apartment to find the money. You are short on cash and short on time. You are worried that the chapter will ask you to either pay for it or conduct a fund-raiser.

Assertive Communication Scenario

Staff Member: You have just attended a regular chapter meeting in order to promote the next Sectional Conference. During the meeting you noticed that during the good of the order, the sergeant at arms was yelling at the pledges to be quiet but not saying anything to the brothers who were actually the ones starting the commotion. One pledge, who seemed on the verge of tears, left the meeting early. Even though you are not the sectional rep to the chapter, you feel it is your obligation to bring this to the attention of the appropriate person. You ask to speak to the president in private after the meeting. Your goal is to have the president acknowledge the problem and seek out an advisor or the sectional rep as a resource, if necessary.

President: A member of the sectional staff has just visited your meeting and asked to speak to you. You're not quite sure why. You are intimidated and defensive toward the staff member because you had a bad experience last year when an alumnus came to visit and tried to tell the officers how to run the chapter.

Scenario: Changing Relationship Roles from Active to Alumnus

Setting - a telephone call or a chance encounter

Active: Hi, How's it going?

Staff: Okay, how are you?

Active: I'm glad we have a chance to talk. We're planning a really cool party this weekend and we thought of you because it was so cool last year when you made up that APO dance. Man, you were toasted!

Staff: Yeah I did some crazy stuff last year. [Self-disclosure]

Active: Hey you're staff now, right?

Staff: Yeah I just started

Active: Can you do us a favor and get the Sectional Chair off our backs about that dumb alcohol policy? [Free Information]

Staff: What do you mean?

Active: Well the chair told us that National says we can't serve alcohol with pledges around but we have some really cool pledges this year. We want to invite them to our parties too.

Staff, Well actually, the chair asked me to work with the chapter to help you with the alcohol policy this year.

Active: Cool! So you'll come to the party?

Staff: Well, I'd like to come talk to the officers about the policy. I don't think it's a good idea to serve alcohol with the pledges around this weekend.

Active: Why the heck not? You're starting to sound rather high and mighty for someone who could drink with the best of us.

Staff. Well I do enjoy drinking [Fogging]. However, you voted on the alcohol policy at convention because it will protect the chapter. You know how Dean Casey was threatening us last year. I just don't think having pledges at a party with alcohol is a good idea. [Broken Record]

Active: C'mon. You saw the amount of booze people were drinking at convention. We only voted on the alcohol policy so we wouldn't get sued or something if someone couldn't hold their liquor. Besides Dean Casey will never know about this party. Jay's parents are going to be away and his house is 2 miles from campus. [Free information]

Staff: Jay does have a great house [fogging]. But aren't you worried that Jack will get out of control again. Jay's parents won't be too happy when Jack pukes all over their rug like he did at the post-banquet party last year.

Active: No problem. We're not inviting Jack. It's just a few of us with our littles. You know you're a lot less fun these days since you graduated.

Staff: What is it about caring about what happens to you and the chapter that makes you think that I'm not fun anymore? [Negative inquiry]

Active: I dunno. You just sound all high and mighty or something.

Staff: Well I guess I do sound superior but I'm kind of new at this [Negative assertion]. I just want you guys to be safe. Some stuff I need to do as a staff member isn't as fun as I thought, but

I think I'm actually helping the chapter by making sure that you are safe and you think twice before doing something that will jeopardize the members and the chapter.[Self-disclosure]

Active: Oh, I see.

Staff: Look. I'd really like to meet with the Exec Comm sometime to catch up with the chapter and answer any questions about the alcohol policy [Broken Record] Can you promise me that you'll think about not having pledges at the party Saturday?

Active: Oh I'll think about it.

Staff: Seriously, if you are still willing to have me, I'll come by for a beer. But I'd like to try and help the chapter get in better with Dean Casey and the sectional chair. Okay? [workable compromise]

Active: Okay.

Ten Tips for Coaching

1. Expect the Best
2. Listen before Speaking, Think before Acting
3. Focus on the Point (Objective)
4. Change what they do, not who they are
5. Model the behavior you desire
6. Adapt your approach to the person
7. Provide for courtesy and respect
8. Appeal to self-interest
9. Celebrate success
10. Cut losses with remorse, not guilt

Adapted from
Deep, Sam and Sussman, Lyle (1992). *What to say to get what you want*. Reading, MA:
Addison-Wesley.

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Facilitating Conflict Resolution

1. Need to be asked/accept offer
2. Agree upon ground rules
3. Understand the problem
4. Ensure everyone shares responsibility for the solution and there is recourse to bind it
5. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak
6. Emphasize common agreements, Acknowledge progress toward solution
7. Determine the seriousness of objections
8. Everyone must win something

Adapted from

Career Press (1993). *How to manage conflict, Second edition*. Hawthorne, NJ: Career Press.
Bolton, Robert (1979) *People Skills*. New York: Simon & Schuster

Assertive Communication Techniques

Assertive Communication is working through conflict, manipulation, confrontation and "mistakes" courteously and respecting others' assertive rights.

Assertive rights: You have the right to judge your own behavior, thoughts and emotions and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.

Broken Record

Persistently sticking to your position

Workable Compromise

What are you willing to give to get what you want?

Self-Disclosure

How you feel, think or react to free information

Free Information

Listen - especially to what they mean besides to what they say

Fogging

Agree with the truth, in principle or a possible truth

Negative Assertion

Admit your mistakes and move on

Negative Inquiry

Ask for more information about the behavior that bothers them

Adapted from

Smith, Manuel J. (1975). *When I say no, I feel guilty.*: New York: Bantam Books..