Education Travel & Culture

A Non-profit Corporation for Student Exchange

Tips for Dealing with Conflict

Don't argue about who is right or wrong
DO explore each other's stories. There is no truth – only perception

Don't assume you have all the facts
DO be curious to find out what you might not know

Don't blame
DO find out how each of you contributed to the conflict, and determine what can be done differently by both sides to avoid the issue escalating again

Don't judge
DO try to stay open-minded

Don't assume they meant it or had bad intentions
DO disentangle *intent* from *impact* – look at it separately. Inquire about their intentions and reflect upon yours

Don't ignore the impact someone else's behavior has on you
DO explain how the action made you feel without blaming the other person

Don't get defensive if the other party makes accusations
DO listen past the accusations for the feelings

Don't ignore or hide your feelings and avoid venting
DO describe your feelings carefully – express them without judging, attributing or blaming (start with "I feel…")

Don’t ignore the other person’s feelings
DO acknowledge their feelings

Don’t focus solely on getting your point across
DO be a persistent listener. Listen from the inside out and give feedback on what you have heard

Don’t make statements disguised as questions
DO ask clarifying and open-ended questions starting like this:
Do you believe that …?
What do you mean by …?
What caused you to …?
What stopped you from …?

Don’t exaggerate by saying “Always” and “Never”
DO give the other person room to change