



## T7. STEPS AND HINTS FOR MANAGING DIFFERENCES AND RESOLVING CONFLICT<sup>a</sup>

Created for the *CanMEDS Teaching and Assessment Tools Guide* by S Glover Takahashi, D Martin and D Richardson.  
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Step	Process	HINTS	SAMPLE responses
1.	Identify the need for a conversation	<b>1A. Initiator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify possible sources of misunderstanding and conflict.</li> <li>Focus on issues, not personalities.</li> <li>Think about timing.</li> <li>Ask for help when you need it.</li> </ul> <b>1B. Responder</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Step 2</li> </ul>	"I am having some difficulty interpreting how the schedule was made, can you help me understand?" "Help me to understand how you see ..." "I am frustrated with the timeline being suggested, what about yourself?" "I am curious about how you view ..." "Is this a good time to talk?" "Happy to talk"
2.	Actively listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to understand other opinions and perspectives.</li> <li>Use nonverbal communication, such as eye contact and nodding to show the speaker you are engaged.</li> <li>Listening to others, helps them listen to you.</li> <li>Listening authentically means you are genuinely curious and care, not just because you are supposed to.</li> <li>Do not interrupt when others are talking, listen until they are finished.</li> <li>Assume others have good intentions too.</li> <li>Listen for potential solutions.</li> </ul>	"Tell me more" "What else?" "Help me understand"
3.	Seek and acknowledge others' viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize your understanding of other viewpoints before sharing your viewpoint or asking questions.</li> <li>Recognize viewpoints are not right or wrong, not better or worse, just different.</li> <li>Watch personalizing others' viewpoints</li> <li>Ask questions, before making assumptions about others intentions or motivations.</li> <li>Watch your "blind spots" (your facial expression, tone, body posture.</li> <li>Acknowledgement and understanding are not the same as agreement.</li> </ul>	"Let me see if I understand what you are saying..." "Sounds like we agree that ..." "Help me understand why this is important to you" "Help me understand the sticking points for you"
4.	Share your viewpoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present your concerns as your viewpoint, not the truth</li> <li>Share what is important to you about your views, intentions, feelings and contributions</li> <li>Take time to reflect on your own actions and contributions to the situation</li> <li>Share all relevant information that is important to the situation</li> <li>Be open to feedback</li> </ul>	"Here's how I view the situation ..." "It was not my intention to ... it was my intention ..." "How can I rebuild trust?"
5.	Seek common ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given what you have learned about the other person's story, how can you move forward together?</li> <li>Highlight shared interests.</li> <li>Reframe problems into potential solutions.</li> <li>Mistakes should be acknowledged without shame or blame.</li> <li>Be open to the possibility that you may be wrong.</li> <li>Make others your partner in finding solutions.</li> <li>Offer and accept apologies if appropriate.</li> <li>There is always common ground; ask others to help find it if you are at an impasse.</li> </ul>	"I think we can both agree that we are not happy with the current situation." "Who needs to benefit from this decision?" "What can we agree to about this situation?" "I am wondering if ...it would make sense, we could try, we should speak to,"
6.	Reach agreement on next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine what information is still needed to reach a solution.</li> <li>Clarify who will develop and/or implement the move-forward plan and how and when this will be done.</li> <li>Confirm who/how decisions or directions will be made.</li> <li>Establish who is responsible for follow-up steps.</li> <li>Solutions can involve accommodation and compromise.</li> </ul>	"So we've agreed that before making a final decision we need more information. John, you are going to..." "Let us recap where we are."

<sup>a</sup> Glover Takahashi, adapted from Rogers DA, Lingard L, Boehler ML, Espin S, Mellinger JD, Schindler N, Klingensmith M. Surgeons managing conflict in the operating room: defining the educational need and identifying effective behaviours. *Am J Surg*. 2013;205(2):15-30.