



Conflict Resolution/Mediation Checklist for Managers

Workplace conflict is inevitable – whether it arises from personality differences, communication breakdowns, or mismatched expectations. The good news is that many of these disputes can be addressed and resolved internally with the right strategy and support.

To assist managers and business owners in navigating these challenges effectively, Strategic HR Australia has developed a practical step-by-step checklist to help you approach disputes with confidence, fairness, and professionalism.

Refer to this checklist whenever you're faced with a workplace conflict that requires resolution.

Before You Begin: Is This Conflict Ready for Mediation?

Not all disputes are suitable for internal resolution. Use this quick self-check before proceeding:

- Do you have a basic understanding of the issue?
- Are both parties open to discussing the matter?
- Is there no serious risk to physical or psychological safety?
- Are you neutral and not involved in the conflict?
- Is the issue appropriate for a manager to handle internally?

If you've answered "no" to any of these, or you're unsure, we recommend seeking guidance from a trained mediator.

When You're Ready, Follow These Steps

Step 1: Identify and Respond Early

- Notice signs of tension (withdrawal, gossip, drop in performance).
- Act quickly to invite private conversations before the issue escalates.
- Confirm you're the right person to handle the matter (neutral and not involved).

Step 2: Prepare for the Conversation

- Choose a neutral, quiet location.
- Allow enough time, don't rush the meeting.
- Review any relevant documentation (e.g. rosters, emails, prior incidents).
- Set a calm, respectful tone – this is about resolving, not blaming.

Step 3: Hold a Preliminary Meeting with Each Person

- Listen without judgement – ask open-ended questions.
- Clarify each person's perspective and desired outcome.
- Maintain confidentiality – don't disclose information without consent.
- Encourage respect, not retaliation.

Step 4: Facilitate a Joint Mediation Session (if appropriate)

Before holding a joint session, assess whether a power imbalance, emotional safety, or history of conflict could make this approach inappropriate. If unsure, seek expert guidance.

- Set ground rules (e.g. no interrupting, respectful tone).
- Allow each party to speak **and** be heard.
- Explore common ground and shared interests.
- Guide parties toward a mutual solution or agreement.
- If required, contact an independent, trained Mediator to facilitate the process professionally.

Step 5: Document and Follow Up

- Summarise what was agreed in writing (even informally).
- Confirm any changes to duties, expectations or reporting lines.
- Set a follow-up check-in date.
- Monitor the situation for signs of improvement or recurrence.
- Consider whether the broader team has been affected and whether any follow-up communication or clarification is needed to rebuild trust or reinforce behavioural standards.

When to Escalate

We believe you will find the above checklist helpful. However, If the conflict involves allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or misconduct, seek expert HR or legal advice. *These matters carry legal risk and require a procedurally sound response.* Or if internal resolution is unsuccessful, we recommend bringing in a trained Mediator.

Our Director, Elisia, is a nationally certified Mediator, registered on the National Mediator Register (Ref No: 101-9408), with deep expertise in managing complex and sensitive workplace matters.

Get in touch for confidential support and tailored guidance to protect yourself and your business from risky and non-compliant outcomes.



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