

PROBLEM SOLVING: THE BASICS

Conflict is something that we will all inevitably come across in our life. It's important that when you do experience conflict that you keep a few things in mind—first, **remain calm**—being aggressive or rude will never help solve problems. Be **objective** and **polite** (this encourages people to want to help you).

- ❑ **WRITE DOWN INCIDENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.** Review the history of your problem so you can clearly present your perspective. This will help you organize your thoughts and concerns.
- ❑ **BE CLEAR** about the nature of the problem and what reasonable solution(s) or option(s) you are hoping for.
- ❑ **DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!** Write down important information and always keep a record of all the steps you have taken to resolve your problem; who you have spoken to, and the dates & times.
- ❑ **KEEP COPIES** of all your correspondence (emails, letters, and even text messages) and forms.
- ❑ **ASK QUESTIONS** and make sure you understand the other person's point of view and any advice or instructions that you are given. Sending a follow-up email after a meeting is a great way to ensure clarity and have a written record of a verbal conversation.
- ❑ **BE PREPARED** for a meeting with instructors or staff by reviewing policies and procedures that relate to your problem, and know your facts.
- ❑ **DEAL WITH THINGS IMMEDIATELY!** Waiting to deal with a problem may create more problems in the future. Most appeals and other formal requests must be submitted within specific timelines.
- ❑ **STAY COOL!** Never try to solve a problem when you are angry - wait, cool off, and then try.
- ❑ **DON'T GIVE UP!** BCIT is a big and complex organization. Sometimes the first person you speak to may not be able to help you. Don't take it personally if they refer to someone else.
- ❑ **DON'T PANIC!** There are a lot of people at BCIT who want to help you.
- ❑ **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.** If you have exhausted all your options or if you don't know where to begin, contact the BCITSA Wellness Advocate.