

Dealing with Conflict in Your Personal and Work Life: Conflict with friends

How you handle conflict affects your relationships with others and your overall wellbeing. This series includes tips on how to handle conflict with friends, family, co-workers, and others.

This is the fourth in a six-part series of articles on dealing with conflict which starts with ["Understanding conflict."](#) Read the previous article, ["Conflict with family."](#)

Conflict with friends

Conflicts with friends can have many causes, from personality differences to busy schedules that make it hard to get together. But the underlying cause is often that two people have different expectations of a friendship, so you may need to clarify these to resolve a disagreement. Here are some tips:

Be honest. Let your friend know if you can't afford to eat in the restaurants they prefer or if there are times you can't go to the movies because you've set aside that time for family. Honesty will allow you to explore other ways to keep the friendship strong.

Ask your friends about their expectations. Try to get a better sense of the situation if a friend never seems able to talk when you call. Ask if they'd prefer that you call at a different time or send an email when you have news.

Expect that your relationship will change. Conflicts often arise between friends because people's lives change and the relationship is bound to change. You may be able to avoid misunderstandings by accepting that some amount of change is natural over time.

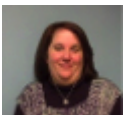
Consider group settings for keeping in touch with some friends. If a friendship is important to you but involves conflicts you can't resolve, keep in touch with the friend at parties or other occasions that will limit your one-on-one time.

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Use special occasions as an opportunity to heal past conflicts. Many people lose touch with friends because of youthful disagreements that seem less important as they get older. A good way to begin to heal these conflicts is to call or send a card or an email message on a special day, such as a birthday or holiday, that says, "I've missed you and want to let you know I'm thinking about you today."

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Last Reviewed Apr 2018

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