

Co-operantics

Co-operative skills for everyone

DEALING WITH WORKPLACE TENSIONS

Tensions between individuals inevitably arise from time to time. The following guidelines can be used by both the individuals concerned, and by other members of the group.

Be constructive

Instead of trying to 'win' seek changes that will make both sides happier

Be specific

- Talk about action and behaviour, not personality
- Examine facts, not assertions and accusations
- Discuss examples, not generalizations

Be clear about feelings

- *“I feel angry”* not *“you really get up my nose”*
- *“I feel disappointed”* not *“you’ve let me down”*
- *“I feel nervous”* not *“you make me jumpy”*

Be clear about demands

- Be specific about who you want to do something
- Be specific about what action you want them to perform
- Ask them to start or increase doing the thing you want (not to stop doing the thing you don't want)

Explain why

If you ask someone to change their behaviour, make sure they understand the reason:

When you did ... (concrete example)

I feel ... (acknowledge feeling)

And I want you to do ... (specific, positive request)

Because ... (explanation or reason)