Volunteer Centre Merton

Tips for Handling Conflicts

- Write down how you feel to help you focus your thoughts

- Recognise any tactics ie stonewalling or attacks – the more you recognise what is being done the less likely you are to do the same

- Silence is good – pause and say nothing from time to time – give yourself time to think

- If you want more time to think – slow the conversation down by playing it back – check you have understood what is being said by repeating it

- Take some time out

- Listen – ask constructive questions to encourage opening up. Sometimes people are confrontational just because they want to be heard, but have bottled things up for too long. Consider what they say, and respond proactively

- Acknowledge the points being made. This can "take the sting out" of the issue

- Apologise – if the other person feels they have been "wronged", acknowledge their feelings and say "sorry".

- Agree wherever possible – by focusing on where you agree it takes away the emphasis on where you don't

- Get as many "Yes's" as possible – ask questions which require a yes answer eg "Are you saying…..   Yes". This creates a positive climate in which to work towards a resolution

- Make "I" statements, not "You" statements – talk about how you feel.

- Don't use the "But" word – say "Yes, and…."

- Ask the other person for their advice – "What would you do if…."

- Ask "What would make this fair?" If the other person's view seems unreasonable, try "You must have good reasons for thinking that is a fair solution. I would like to hear them".