

Conflict Resolution



3 Key Takeaways

— 1 —

Conflict is a disagreement that has emotion attached to it.



— 2 —

Conflict is to be expected with any team, and when effectively managed, can help with team cohesion.



— 3 —

Conflict is best resolved with face-to-face communication rather than through emails, text messages, or phone calls.



The Basics

- A conflict is a natural disagreement that is attached to emotion.
- Conflict varies in degrees of severity from a squabble to an argument, or possibly even a physical altercation.
- Conflict is inevitable, especially in competitive sports, and when teams effectively navigate it, the results can be positive.
- Establishing guidelines for behavior in a variety of environments is crucial. A safe atmosphere with active listening, empathy, and transparency in decision making is important for a healthy, team environment.
- Working through conflict creates opportunities for personal growth and social-emotional development for athletes of any age as they also learn to manage their own emotions.
- Different styles of conflict resolution are relevant as different scenarios call for varied responses.
- The ideal form of conflict resolution occurs with face-to-face communication as opposed to indirect formats, such as text message or emails.
- There are 5 styles of conflict resolution:
 - a. *Avoiding: uncomfortable with conflict, pretending nothing happened*
 - b. *Giving in: agreeable and accommodating to needs of others, putting them above personal interests*
 - c. *Standing your ground: controlling the situation with demands or persuasion*
 - d. *Compromising: meeting halfway in order to move forward*
 - e. *Collaborating: working together toward a common goal*

"USA Weightlifter Learns to Face Conflict"

Abby Raymond, Team USA weightlifter and multi-time Weightlifting National Champion, learned the value of managing conflict and finding resolution after sustaining an injury during an intense training season. Up to this point, Abby had recurring feelings of mental stress, fatigue, distraction, and complacency, all indicators of burnout. As an elite athlete, she had learned to persevere through adversity, but this time, she chose to keep her feelings of burnout to herself because she was fearful of disappointing her coach and family.



Shortly after ignoring her body's signals indicating a need to slow down, Abby suffered a season-ending elbow injury. Her coach was disappointed that Abby had not been forthright about her feelings of fatigue and stress, and she promised to do a better job of anticipating these feelings moving forward.

Fortunately, the time away from training and competition allowed Abby time for mental and physical rest. With newfound clarity, she and her coach were able to communicate about what happened and what contributed to the injury, ultimately strengthening their relationship and overall communication skills.

Today, Abby practices a different approach to conflict than she did in the past. Now, she is quick to reach out to her coach and family when she begins to feel stress or burnout, or simply needs extra support. She also understands that effectively addressing conflict with face-to-face conversation helps to enhance team cohesion, increase motivation, and instill resilience.

AMBASSADOR STORY QUESTIONS

1. *What style of conflict resolution was most prevalent in the scenario? Avoiding, Giving in, Standing your ground, Compromising, or Collaborating? Explain your answer.*
2. *In the story about Abby Raymond, could you relate to how she decided to conceal her true feelings about burnout? What did she learn about conflict?*
3. *How did Abby's coach have a part in these conflicts? Was Abby's coach at fault for not having an awareness of her burnout?*