

Care Enough to Confront

1. **Confront ASAP.** When a relational breakdown occurs between two people on the team, address the issues immediately. Further delay and unresolved issues only complicate the team dynamics.
2. **Separate the team member from the wrong action.** Most team conflict issues are about a team member's action that undermines the work of the team: for example, failure to be on time, failure to complete an assigned portion of the work project on time, failure to contribute in a positive manner, failure to act on an agreed-upon project or lesson assessment. It is the team member's actions that need to be addressed, not the quality of the person.
3. **Give the team member the benefit of the doubt.** It is important not to assume you know why the person was late, failed to deliver the project, or didn't meet the deadline. Allow the person an opportunity to explain his or her actions.
4. **Avoid absolute words.** Avoid using such words as always and never ("You always let the team down," "You never show up on time," "You never contribute to our team"). These types of statements are rarely true and diminish the speaker's credibility.

5. **Avoid sarcasm.** Do not use phrases such as “I know you just think you are too good for us” or “Maybe if you would try just a bit harder you could get it right next time” or “Well, our team knows what you’ll be doing while we work on this—nothing!”

6. **Tell the team member how you feel about what was done wrong.** It is very important to let the team member know how his or her actions made you and/or the team feel. How does the action impact others? Often, offenders to the team norms and values do not fully realize the emotional wake they leave behind because of their actions or inactions in relation to team values and commitments.

7. **Keep a short account.** Every team encounters some adversity as members debate and argue about important practices and methods for the teaching and learning. Once the care enough to confront discussion is completed, everyone on the team must let it go, move on, and keep a short mental account of the issue. Team members who harbor long-term resentments will be toxic to the team’s growth.