



**Bowls Alberta**

# **How To Handle Conflict The Right Way**

2024

## **Introduction**

Conflict is a natural occurrence in any organization, including Bowls Alberta and its member clubs. Understanding how to manage conflict constructively is essential to uphold our mission of providing leadership, guidance, coordination, and development services that advance the sport of lawn bowls in Alberta. By implementing effective conflict management strategies, we can cultivate a welcoming and inclusive lawn bowls culture that fosters collaboration and allows all participants to achieve their goals. This report outlines four strategies for managing conflict in alignment with Bowls Alberta's mission, vision, and values.

## **1. Understand the Nature of Conflict**

### **1.1. Acknowledge the Conflict**

The first step in managing conflict is to recognize its existence. Acknowledging conflict allows members to understand that disagreements can arise and need to be addressed respectfully and transparently. Ignoring conflict can lead to tensions that undermine our goal of fostering an inclusive environment for all bowlers.

### **1.2. Assess the Situation**

Before addressing a conflict, it is vital to assess the situation objectively. This involves gathering relevant information, understanding the different perspectives of those involved, and identifying underlying needs or concerns. By taking this approach, we honor our commitment to integrity and ensure that the resolution process is respectful and fair.

## **2. Communicate Openly and Honestly**

### **2.1. Foster a Safe Environment**

Creating a safe and welcoming environment for open communication is crucial in resolving conflicts. All members should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings without fear of retaliation or judgment. Establishing ground rules for respectful dialogue helps create this environment and fosters a fun and safe atmosphere for everyone involved.

### **2.2. Use “I” Statements**

When discussing conflicts, members should use “I” statements to express their feelings and perspectives. For example, instead of saying, “You always overlook my suggestions,” one could say, “I feel unheard when my suggestions aren’t considered.” This approach reduces defensiveness and promotes a more constructive dialogue among members, aligning with our values of respect and integrity.

## **3. Seek Common Ground**

### **3.1. Identify Shared Goals**

Finding common ground is essential for effective conflict resolution. Members should work together to identify shared goals or interests that can serve as a basis for collaboration. Focusing on these commonalities helps shift the conversation from opposition to partnership, allowing all participants to feel included and valued.

### **3.2. Explore Compromise Solutions**

Once shared goals are identified, members can collaboratively explore potential solutions that address everyone's needs. Compromise may involve each party being willing to make concessions to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. Brainstorming solutions together fosters collaboration and strengthens the sense of community among our members.

## **4. Follow Up and Reflect**

### **4.1. Review the Resolution**

After reaching a resolution, it is essential to review the outcome with all parties involved. This ensures that everyone understands the agreement and is committed to following through. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to address any lingering concerns, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and integrity.

### **4.2. Reflect on the Process**

Finally, reflecting on the conflict resolution process helps members learn and grow from the experience. Participants should consider what worked well, what could have been improved, and how these lessons can be applied in future conflicts. This reflection supports our vision of cultivating a lawn bowls culture that brings people together and promotes personal development within our community.

## **Conclusion**

Managing conflict effectively is essential for Bowls Alberta and its member clubs to uphold our mission, vision, and values. By understanding the nature of conflict, communicating openly, seeking common ground, and reflecting on resolutions, we can foster a positive and collaborative environment for all participants. Implementing these strategies not only enhances our community but also ensures that we honor the trust of our members by being responsible stewards of the sport of lawn bowls in Alberta.