

## Conflict Resolution and Interpersonal Group Dynamics

In many circumstances, conflict escalates when an individual or group perceives their needs are not being met. When Family Councils come together, the discussion of concerns and may lead to disagreement amongst members. It is common to see people respond in the following ways to protect their own needs:

**Defending:** defending their behaviour or defending their character

**Attacking:** criticizing someone else's behaviour, using insults and minimizing opposing views

**Ignoring:** refusing to acknowledge other perspectives or the needs of others

The effects of conflict escalation in Family Councils include:

- Distrust and lack of transparency
- Membership turnover
- Communication breakdowns
- Undermining of other's feelings, beliefs and values
- Minimal engagement and participation

*Family Councils are encouraged to use the **CLAIM** model to respond to an escalated person or group.*

### The CLAIM Model:

CLAIM is an acronym whose letters each stand for a de-escalation principle or practice.



**Centre Yourself:** Remain calm and avoid reacting react impulsively

**Listen:** Listen and think about what underlies the actions and demands

**Acknowledge:** Reflect on what has been said and confirm your understanding

**Invite:** Ask questions to give the speaker an opportunity to express themselves

**Move forward:** Be open to discussing ideas on how to solve the problem

With the **CLAIM** model, Family Council members can further listen and discover what's beneath the surface. Oftentimes there are underlying factors at play when interactions get heated. Some of the underlying factors. More information for going beyond the surface can be found on the next page.

### Going Beyond the Surface with Active Listening

Active Listening is the practice of engaging closely with what a speaker is saying and indicating understanding, typically by asking relevant questions, using gestures, and summarizing. When a conflict arises, Family Councils can practice active listening alongside the steps in **CLAIM** to garner a better understanding of what's important to those involved, which often includes their interests, values, and feelings.

## Interests

Before passing judgment, those listening should take a moment to unpack the interests at play. It is imperative to acknowledge the difference types of interests that exist to meaningfully understand another's position.

- **Substantive interests:** Geared towards results and connected to practical things such as resources, benefits, time, and money.
- **Psychological Interests:** Deeply rooted in emotions and thought processes including the need to feel respected, having a voice and protecting one's ego.
- **Procedural interests:** Connected to how procedures are executed and maintained. This includes things such as fairness, transparency, and confidentiality.

## Values

Values are the beliefs that hold great significance in an individual's everyday life. Values aren't always visible to others; so, active listening can be used to interpret expressed actions, words, and behaviours.

**Personal values** differ from person to person values. While some values are recognized as universal rules of conduct and morality, others may be informed by culture, location, upbringing, and life experiences.

Our lives are shaped by what values we choose to prioritize and adapt. They can be desirable goals that motivate actions, shape personalities and influence decisions.



## Feelings

When listening to someone who is upset, active listening can be used as a pure form to acknowledge feelings.

While coming to a resolution often takes time, respecting and empathizing with feelings can make a big difference for each party's willingness to compromise and the eventual outcome.

When feelings aren't recognized in a disagreement, it may lead to mistrust, impatience, animosity, and indifference. When feelings are considered, individuals may feel empowered, encouraged, centred and safe.