

Welcome back and I hope you all had a wonderful break.

As we reflect on the past year, I am hopeful we can say that 2022 has helped us grow in many ways and has given us greater confidence to address challenging situations.

Yes, we faced many unforeseen difficulties this past year, yet I have heard many say that looking back, they have been proud and empowered on how they addressed their challenges.

Some have even agreed that conflict is not always bad. When managed in a timely and constructive manner, it can result in more open communications, collaborative commitment to the outcome, decisions and overall goals, as well as greater personal satisfaction.

One of the key factors in ensuring “good conflict” outcomes is accountability.

I define accountability in the workplace when we take responsibility for our actions. It may appear that the conflict occurred because of someone else’s behavior and that indeed may be the case. However, accountability gives us the opportunity and self-confidence to ask ourselves: *Could we have contributed to the conflict?*

Conflict will escalate especially when no one takes responsibility. When we hold ourselves accountable, we take responsibility for *some* fault, sometimes even a greater portion than we deserve. We accept constructive feedback and welcome it to achieve a desired outcome.

This *Reach out initiative* encourages us to accept accountability when warranted.

How can we learn to become more accountable when faced with a conflict?

We first need to evaluate what happened and focus on the facts forcing ourselves *not to blame* but *to care enough to learn and to understand*.

We need the confidence to be honest others but especially with ourselves. We need to recognize that we may have played a more significant role in causing the conflict than initially thought.

Because we tend to personalize a situation, we can try to remove ourselves from the conflict. It may better allow us to reflect on the role we have played in creating the conflict, no matter how small. We can ask ourselves: If someone else is faced with the same situation, how would I advise them to address and resolve the conflict? This can help us move forward to collaborate and achieve a resolution.

When justified, a timely and sincere apology will also help expedite the path to a resolution.

At lastly, we can use conflict resolution as a teaching moment and agree on an effective way forward focusing on the outcome as well as on the relationship.

I look forward to seeing you on campus and I wish you all a wonderful semester and a great beginning for 2023!

All my very best, Eliane