

Conflict Resolution Playbook

A practical framework for resolving disputes within communal groups and guilds. Designed to be simple enough to use under stress, fair enough to be accepted by all parties, and robust enough to prevent small conflicts from becoming group-ending crises.

CORE PRINCIPLE

The goal of conflict resolution is not to find a winner. It is to find a path that the group can continue walking together. In a survival context, a fractured group is a vulnerable group. Cohesion is a resource.

BEFORE CONFLICT ARISES

The most important work happens in normal times. Pre-agree the following before any dispute exists:

Nominate a mediator

A trusted person outside your immediate group — ideally from an adjacent guild or zone. They should know your community but have no direct stake in internal disputes. Agree on this person by consensus during a calm meeting.

Define group decisions vs individual ones

Clearly document what requires group consent (resource allocation, new members, major expenditure) vs what individuals decide for themselves. Ambiguity is where most conflict begins.

Set the meeting rhythm

A regular group meeting — monthly minimum — keeps communication channels open and prevents grievances from building in silence.

Document everything

Keep a physical record of decisions made, resources allocated, and agreements reached. Disputes about what was agreed are the most corrosive kind.

THE THREE-STAGE PROCESS

When a dispute arises, work through these stages in order. Do not skip ahead.

STAGE 01 — DE-ESCALATION

Minimum 24-hour cooling period

No binding decisions are made during or immediately after the dispute. Both parties agree to a minimum 24-hour pause before any formal discussion. During this period neither party takes unilateral action on the contested matter.

This single rule prevents most escalation. Decisions made in heat are rarely good ones, and the damage they cause to group trust is disproportionate to the original issue.

STAGE 02 — STRUCTURED MEDIATION

Facilitated session with pre-agreed mediator

The nominated mediator convenes both parties for a single structured session. The mediator's role is not to judge — it is to help both sides articulate what they actually need, not just what they want. Needs are usually compatible even when stated positions are not.

1. Each party speaks uninterrupted for up to five minutes. No rebuttals during this time.
 2. The mediator restates each position back to confirm understanding.
 3. The mediator asks each party: "What outcome would allow you to continue working within this group?"
 4. The group works toward a resolution that addresses those underlying needs.
 5. The agreed resolution is written down and signed by both parties and the mediator.
 6. The written record is shared with the full group — transparency is the accountability mechanism.
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STAGE 03 — GROUP RESOLUTION

Supermajority vote — binding for defined period

If mediation does not produce agreement, the matter is put to the full group. A two-thirds supermajority is required to pass a resolution. Simple majority is not sufficient — decisions that divide the group nearly in half are not real resolutions.

The resolution is binding for a defined period (typically 90 days) after which it can be reviewed. This prevents permanent winners and losers, and gives the losing party a legitimate path to revisit the outcome through process rather than disruption.

SPECIFIC DISPUTE TYPES

Resource allocation disputes

The most common flashpoint. Apply the principle: vulnerability first, contribution second, need third. Children, elderly, and medically compromised members have priority claim on scarce resources regardless of contribution history. Document the allocation decision and the reasoning. Make the criteria public before scarcity arrives.

Free-rider disputes

Address contribution imbalance through the contribution ledger first — make the gap visible to the group without accusation. Have a direct private conversation before escalating. If the pattern continues, the group has the right to renegotiate the member's access to shared resources proportionally. Expulsion is a last resort and requires Stage 3 group resolution.

New member disputes

Disagreements about whether to admit a new member require group consensus, not majority. Any member can raise a concern. The concern must be specific and addressed in discussion. A probationary period (typically 90 days) before full membership is reasonable and reduces the stakes of the initial decision.

Leadership and coordination disputes

Coordinator roles should be reviewed every 12 months by group vote. No coordinator role is permanent. If a coordinator is acting outside the group's agreed mandate, any member can call an emergency meeting with 48 hours notice. Emergency removal requires a two-thirds vote.

CLEAN EXIT PROTOCOL

A member who wishes to leave — or who has been asked to leave — should be able to do so without destabilising the group:

- All shared resources contributed by the departing member remain with the group unless explicitly agreed otherwise at the time of contribution.
 - The departing member's tier-3 access is revoked within 24 hours of departure.
 - The departure is recorded in the group log without editorialising.
 - The departing member retains tier-1 and tier-2 access to the zone platform — they remain a community member, just not a guild member.
 - No member is entitled to detailed information about the group's internal resources after departure.
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This playbook is a living document. Review it as a group every 12 months and update it based on what you have learned. The best conflict resolution framework is the one your specific group has agreed to and understands.

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