



GENEVA ASSOCIATION OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD MEDIATION

FIVE STEPS FOR
RESOLVING CONFLICT
THROUGH DIALOGUE

GOOD NEIGHBOUR RELATIONS

5 STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT THROUGH DIALOGUE

1. Avoid reacting hastily in the heat of the moment.

To have a constructive discussion both parties increase the chances of their being understood if they express their views calmly.

2. To help quell the anger you may feel toward your neighbour:

- try to calm yourself by doing some deep breathing slowly in and out, or carry out an activity which makes you feel good ;
- try to better understand the fears your anger may be hiding: fear of losing your apartment, fear of the lack of peace and security at home and the effect it has on your family life, worry about being on bad terms with your neighbours, and so on ;
- consider what the situation tells you :
 - about what **you** wish or need to feel secure, at peace and on better terms with your neighbour and
 - what compromise **you** could make to improve relations with your neighbour.

3. To make it easier for your neighbour to understand your point of view, use non violent communication:

- Avoid pronouncing judgement such as you are aggressive, insensitive, selfish, you have no respect for others, etc.
- Rather explain how you feel when the problem arises.

For example :

"I feel nervous / I feel frustrated / I feel irritated ...

- ... when I hear footsteps over my head for a long period."
- ... if there is noise after 10pm."
- ... when cigarette smoke arrives in my home."
- ... when I am not able to meet you to talk about the problem."
- ... when you ignore it when I say Hello."
- ... when the police ring my doorbell before I have had the opportunity to speak to the person who called them."
- ... when I fail to understand the problem caused by the noise of small children."
- ... If I'm told my children are badly brought up."."
- ...etc.

"I feel anxious / I feel disturbed when...

- ... people shout at me."
- ... the radiators ring in my apartment."
- ... someone knocks on my door late at night."
- ...etc.



QUARRELS, DIFFERENCES OF
OPINION, AND CONFLICT
FORM PART OF OUR
EVERYDAY LIFE. EACH ONE
OF US CAN TRY TO FACE UP
TO THESE CHALLENGES IN A
POSITIVE WAY TO AVOID
AGGRAVATING THE
SITUATION AND HELP IN
THE SEARCH FOR
SOLUTIONS.

4. To propose a solution, present a clear version of your request:

- "I would like it if you could come to talk to me directly or, if you prefer to do it by phone, you could leave your telephone number in my letter box."
- "I would like to find out what prevents us from greeting each other when our paths cross."
- "I would prefer it if we could discuss together any problem you may have before it becomes known to everyone else."
- "I must tell you that we only have a few hours for our family life when we come back in the evening. These moments are important for us, and we welcome your understanding."
- "I must inform you that we are old and therefore sensitive to excessive noise. We need a quiet life. We go to bed early and we need peace and quiet and we welcome your understanding."
- "I must tell you that I have very young children and that I do my best to avoid disturbances."

5. Be receptive to how your neighbours react and how they reply to you :

- "I see that there is no time to talk now. I'll come back tomorrow."
- "I understand your point of view although I see things differently."
- "I didn't know it was so important for you."
- "I had never considered the situation from this point of view."
- "I am sorry to learn that you have such problems."
- "I realize that there may be a misunderstanding."
- "We have received no support to improve the state of our building, the access to the cellars, at what time the postman delivers the mail, how the parking space is organized, and so on..."
- "I note that we all agree to say that this situation must change."
- "I heard what you had to say, and I will take it into account."
- "I would like to think further about our discussion and talk to you again in a little while."
- "Thank you for having taken the time to discuss this situation."

In difficult circumstances you cannot control the behaviour of your neighbour, but you have full control of your own. The way you handle the problem will express both your feelings and its possible solution.

IN ADDITION, A TEAM OF VOLUNTEER MEDIATORS FROM L'ASMÉD-GE ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL AND CAN BE REACHED BY TELEPHONE :
022 321 11 55

