

How Conflict Escalates

1. SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR ISSUE

2. PERSONAL ANTAGONISM

- allegations are made
- other person seen as the problem
- labelling and stereotyping



3. DEFENSIVENESS

- push and push back (“tit for tat”)
- defensiveness in one person triggers defensiveness in others



4. EXPANSION OF ISSUES

- other issues brought in to justify stance
- more problems arise
- talk is less specific



5. BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION

- communication is less direct
- emotional element increases
- understanding decreases



6. SPIRALLING MISTRUST

- escalation
- insult followed by insult
- antagonism
- becoming more and more entrenched



7. POLARISATION

- seeking allies
- groups organised into two camps
- no backing down
- belief that nothing can ever be the same again
- fight to win and inflict defeat on adversary

