

# Leadership Module

## **Conflict Resolution and Teamwork**

### Introduction

Leadership is not for the people at the top. Everyone can learn to lead by discovering the power that lies within each one of us to make a difference, and being prepared to respond when called to lead.

Leadership is applicable to all facets of life; it is a competency that you can learn by expanding your perspective, setting the context of a goal, understanding the dynamics of human behavior and taking the initiative to get to where you want to be.

### Instruction

Zonta is a Club of Leaders, and that is the purpose of recruiting individuals from many different professional classifications. As Zontians, we are also called to be leaders in their jobs, churches, communities, homes etc. Therefore, with this experience, we should embrace opportunities to take on leadership roles in our clubs, areas and districts. It is an honor to guide and direct such dynamic groups of women. However, sometimes when we put such a diverse group of professionals together, they may not always be willing to share new ideas, offer what they know for free or accept different points of view. The mix of such strong talents can, understandably, sometimes lead to disagreements and that's when conflicts arise.

As members, we must try to know all we can about our organization. Starting with that, we will recognize and appreciate that all of us have leaders guiding us at various levels in Zonta and that we are also leaders in our boards and clubs, directing and guiding other members to accomplish our club and District goals. We therefore, cannot escape having to lead or interact with a leader.

Good leadership minimizes conflict but, no matter how great a club is functioning, undoubtedly disputes will occur.

Let's talk about some of the reasons that disagreements or conflicts arise.

*Discuss examples of why conflict might arise. (see practice below)*

Practice: Examples of why conflict might arise:

- ***A member only wants to be in the club for their professional advancement and does not want any position in the club.*** The leader must re-orient them with our mission and the responsibilities of all members. Remind the member of why she and her skills are important to the club.
- ***Zontians are talking about each other and creating bad emotions among the members.*** The leader must work on discouraging this behavior and creating non-conflict meetings. One way to do this is to get conflicting members to work together on projects and committees to build their relationship, thus creating a healthy club environment.
- ***Seasoned members do not want to accept ideas and suggestions put forth by new members.*** This situation is common in many clubs because experienced Zontians and new members are often looking for different things from their membership in the club. The leader must make every member feel very important, and promote the fact that they can learn from each other. She must be thankful of the veterans who have been with the club for years and helped to build and make it a strong club. At the same time, new members should be made to feel comfortable in the club and encouraged to actively participate and propose new ideas. We need to keep in mind the old ways that worked but also introduce new and creative practices in order for the club to stay vibrant and be its best.

Other examples: Other examples can be used to facilitate discussion on the process of working in harmony.

When conflict occurs, the leader must respond quickly to diffuse the situation. This means:

- Listening carefully – to hear both side of the story and get a good understanding of the root of the conflict
- Being a pacifist – finding a way to establish and maintain peace and harmony
- Working to ensure that both sides are open to seeing the other’s point of view, and that they communicate respectfully and conduct themselves with good manners and proper decorum.
- Offering real alternatives
- Showing or explaining the best rule or principle for resolving the conflict, so

the members involved understand why this avenue of resolution is necessary and effective.

As members, we can also play a role in reducing conflict and building camaraderie in the club. We can do this by:

- Being open to others' points of view
- Looking at our differences as treasures. It is our differences that make us such a viable force. We have so many varying talents to boast of.
- Putting our self-interests aside and thinking instead about the club's interest.
- Taking the time to get to know your fellow members
- Realizing that we can accomplish more through harmony than dissention

A key focus of clubs should be to build and maintain a positive environment for their members. Club leaders can promote teamwork and camaraderie by:

- Making fellowship an important part of club meetings.
- Having seasoned and new members co-chair or work on projects together so they learn to understand and appreciate each other.
- Setting up get-to-know-you programs that allow members to learn about each other.
- Acknowledging the contributions that seasoned/long-time members have made and continue to make. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share.
- Encouraging active participation of new members who are able to inject new ideas and bring fresh perspectives to the club.
- Reminding members that we are a joint force working together towards Zonta's mission.

### Summary

Leadership gives us all the opportunity to grow as individuals by allowing us to hone our skills of managing, directing and mentoring people. It is not a position where power should be abused; rather, a leader should seek to inspire and encourage others to be their best. As Zontians, we are all leaders with strong skill sets and therefore, should hold ourselves to the highest standards. By putting our self-interests aside, we can see and appreciate the incredible things that we can do as a club, once we accept each other as teammates and remain committed to working together to achieve Zonta's goals.

## Your Opportunity to Serve

Now that we have talked about leadership and you know how to deal with conflict resolution, let's talk about the wonderful opportunity that you have to serve in an even greater capacity in Zonta. The U. S. Army is always looking for "a few good men"; in Zonta, we need a few good women (or men) to accept the responsibility of being leaders in District 11. The good thing is that we have so many remarkable Zontians to choose from because you all qualify for one post or another.

Here are District offices that you can vie for:

### Elected Positions

- Governor
- Lt. Governor
- Area Director
- Vice Area Director
- District Treasurer
- District Secretary
- Nominating Committee Member

and here are positions that you can volunteer for:

### Appointed Positions

- Service Committee
  - Subcommittee: ZISVAW
- Amelia Earhart
- Young Women in Public Affairs
- Jane M. Klausman
- Legislative Awareness & Advocacy
- United Nations Committee
- Public Relations/Communications Committee
- Foundation Ambassador
- Bylaws and Resolutions
- Finance Committee
- Long Range Planning Committee
- District Archivist
- IT/Webmaster
- Z & Golden Z Clubs

You can find the information on the descriptions and requirements for each of the positions on the District 11 website: [www.zonta-district11.org](http://www.zonta-district11.org) . Nomination forms are also available on the website and can be completed online.

Come on. Join the leadership team and make an even greater contribution to Zonta.

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