



Conflict, one step at a time

Conflict can arise from differences in values, opinions and/or interests between 2 people and/or groups.

It's also normal for emotions to run high in conflict situations!

The impact of conflict on your role as caregiver can be numerous:

- Loss of support
- Loss of trust
- Reduced self-esteem
- Increased stress
- Etc.

Here's a reflective tool to help you explore your reactions to conflict situations and to offer you strategies for resolving a conflict.

In any conflict, there is neither victor nor defeated. There are only human beings.
-Yves M.

"My daughter and I went through a lot of tension following a difference of opinion about my partner's accommodation. It was very difficult for me, and I had to take on all the chores on my own for a while".

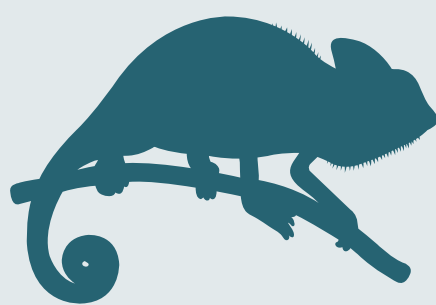
Here are a few examples of possible reactions to conflict :

Competition - concurrence



"I'm looking to win my point at all costs, I want to have the last word."

Concession or accommodation



"When the person gives me his opinion, I give him I don't like bickering."

Avoidance - withdrawal or inaction



"I don't answer the phone when the person calls me and I run away from the situation".

Compromise



"I verbalize my opinions and listen to those of the other person with consideration".

Collaboration- partenariat



"I consider the other person's strengths, availabilities and emotions to establish our respective participation in managing the conflict, and the other person does the same".

Letting go - acceptance



"I understand that accepting this reality as it is, is the best I can do."

What about you? How do you usually react to conflict?

Here are a few things you may need to help you feel better equipped to manage a conflict

- Listening
- Respect: for my values, my emotions, my abilities
- Understanding
- A suitable place to express yourself
- An appropriate time
- Mutual openness to discussion



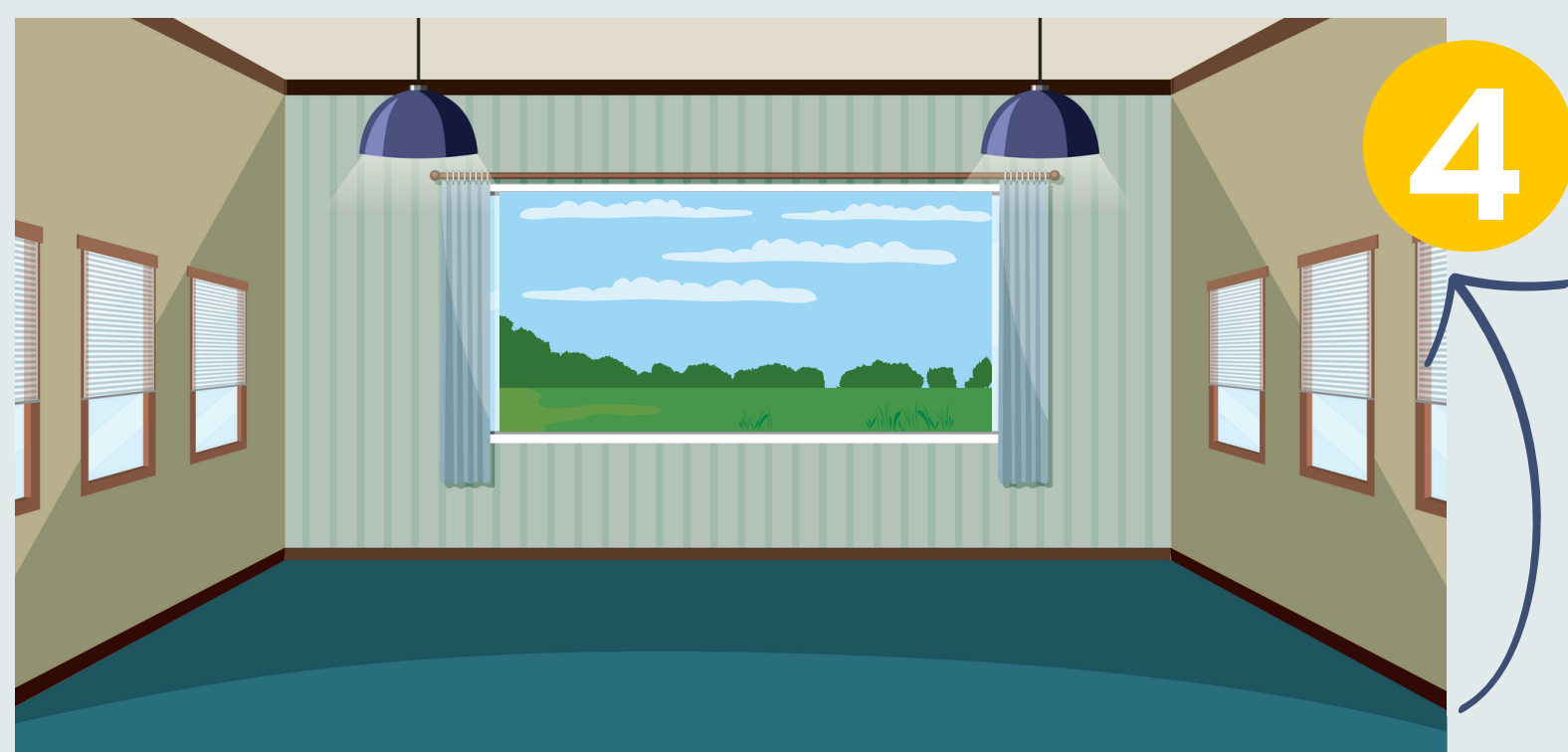
Sometimes, giving yourself the right not to resolve a conflict can be the best way of dealing with it.

Conflict, one step at a time

And if I feel like addressing a conflict, here are some strategies and reflections.

♥ It's important to note that each step must be completed before moving on to the next. In other words, you have to climb each floor using the stairs rather than taking an elevator. If a step is neglected, communication is likely to be more complex.

4 steps to resolving a conflict



Search for solution(s) to address the conflict

In stage 4, the caregiver and the person(s) involved are engaged in the search for solutions. At this stage, the picture is much clearer, and you can look ahead to a more positive horizon.

- Establishing a common goal
- Find a satisfactory compromise between those involved in the conflict



Addressing conflict

In stage 3, the caregiver feels ready to address the conflict with the person(s) involved. To clarify the conflict situation, "clear the air" in order to resolve the conflict.

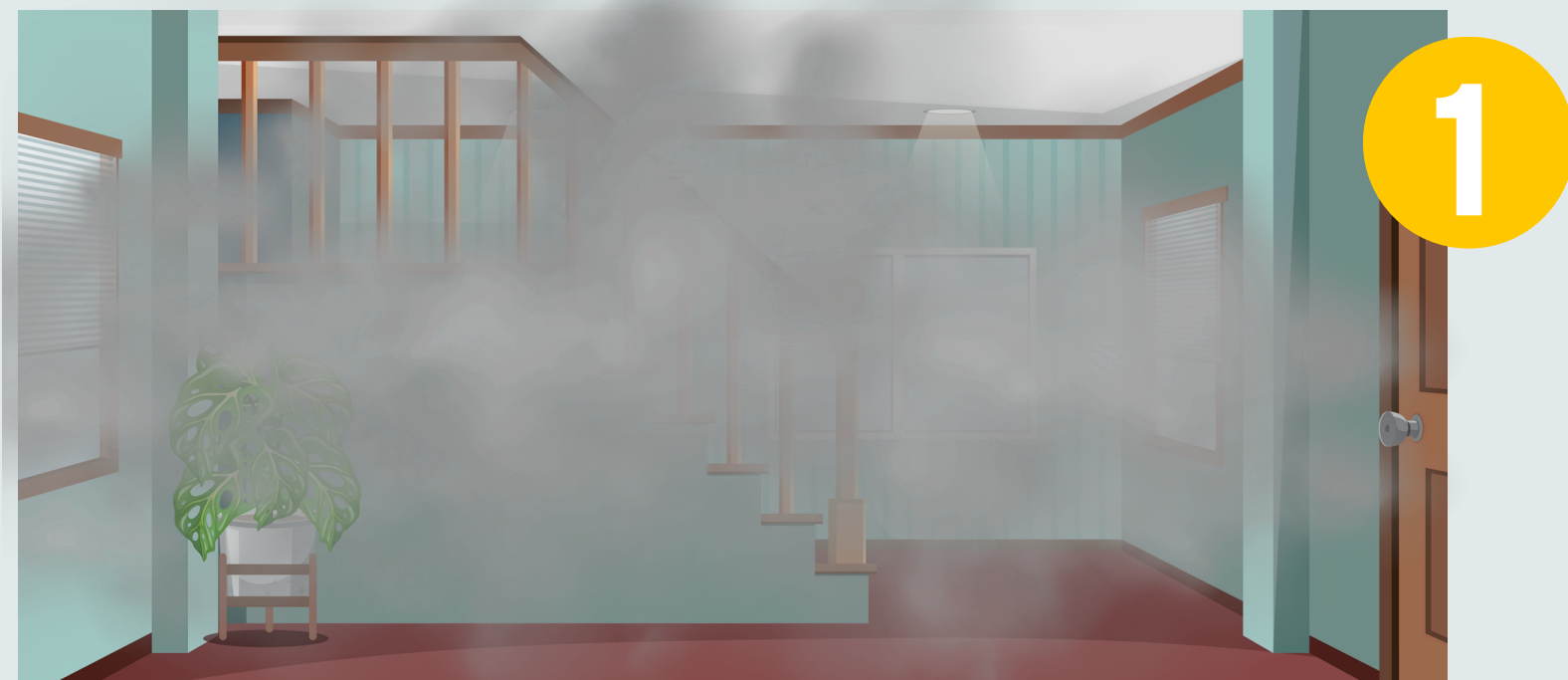
- Approach the situation as "I".
- Recognize my emotions and the emotions of others
- Identify and name my responsibilities
- Address things constructively and avoid accusations



Questioning yourself

Stage 2 is the moment when the caregiver chooses to question the nature of the conflict and identify its components, in order to settle the dust.

- What happened?
- Why did it affect me?
- Why do I want to resolve this conflict?
- What is more costly for me (in energy) right now: managing the conflict or not managing the conflict?
- Will managing the conflict help me in my role as caregiver? (Mental load, tasks, emotions...)



Taking a step back

Stage 1 represents the important place conflict takes in the caregiver's daily life. There can be a sense of being surrounded by dust, of things being intertwined and difficult to find one's way through.

- Allow yourself to experience emerging emotions
- Rediscover a less agitated state of mind



You may need to take a step back at each of the 4 stages shown here if emotions are too intense for you or the other person(s) involved. Taking time out at different stages does not mean abandoning conflict management. It's more a matter of respecting each person's pace and ability to deal with conflict.