

## **Interpersonal Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

### **Conflict in the Parking Lot**

Elena:

Hey, Jackie, hi - everything okay?

Jackie:

Yeah! Of course. I guess. I just had the weirdest thing happen with this guy in the parking lot.

Elena:

Really.

Jackie:

Yeah - unbelievable! I pulled into this narrow space beside this huge SUV. There was a shopping cart between - I saw it there. Anyways, I start walking to the store and I guess the guy in the SUV was watching me. He gets out and yells, "Why would you park there? When that cart gets moved it's going to scratch the hell out of my car! You know what this is worth?" I have no idea! "Try 50 grand [\$50,000]!" I'm stunned; he's really pissed. What do I say? I was totally unprepared for the aggression. I couldn't believe this guy! I told him I'd be 10 minutes. I told him I'd talk to the cart-person-guy! And he says, "You got an answer for everything, don't you. How would you like to kiss my - " He was like - I was so jangled that I can't remember all the other stuff.

Elena:

Oh my God, Jackie.

Jackie:

I was just shaking. The anger! I tried to tell him nothing had happened. He's like, "Still got an answer for everything" and he stomps into the store. I get in here and I'm a total mess. Can't concentrate; dropping things; heart's beating through my chest - over a parking spot! I've been up and down this aisle three times. I can't settle down.

Elena:

That's awful.

Host:

What is conflict? Conflict is often defined as a disagreement between two people or two groups. Disagreements are usually based on perceptual differences related to events or behaviour. Perceptual difference is connected to our unique worldview that encompasses ideas, experience, beliefs, and values. Conflict is also described as being subjective, unstable, and complicated. A line in the sand is drawn and now there's an impasse. How did we get here?

Conflicts are usually a product of an additional element, something that people think or feel but don't say directly. Any individuals who work or live together may experience feelings of hurt, loss, betrayal, guilt, or anger toward one another.

Disagreement between people does not always lead to conflict until it is identified by one or both parties. Felstiner and Sarat suggest that conflicts generally develop by a process of naming, blaming, and claiming. Naming occurs when an individual perceives a situation as harmful. Blaming transpires when the individual identifies other parties in the adverse event. Finally claiming occurs when the individual seeks remedy or restitution from a responsible party.