

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT 101 - PAT

You are a new employee at Pepperdine who recently transferred from a different University in order to be closer to family. Over the last couple months you have been trying to get to know your colleagues and make a good first impression while figuring out this new job that is stressful and overwhelming.

In hopes of proving yourself, you jumped at the chance to work on a new project that, if successful, would shed a positive light on your whole department and ultimately provide a great benefit to the entire University. You were assigned to the project and put on a team with Sam, your counterpart in a different work group in the department who has been with the University for many years.

You had heard great things about Sam and as an extrovert in need of some friends, you were excited at the chance to get to know someone – especially someone who had been with the University for so long and could maybe give you some pointers. Initially, you and Sam got along fine but as the days and weeks wore on things went downhill quickly.

Sam turned out to be simply unbearable and impossible to work with.

It was like pulling teeth to get him/her to meet with you. All the meeting times you proposed were promptly shot down or shortened to the point where no work could be done anyway. He/she was clearly not engaged with the project and by the second week the project was already way behind schedule.

In project update meetings with your mutual supervisor, Sam would always just sit in the corner with arms folded and force you to do all the talking, even though he was much more experienced and, frankly, knew more about topic. It was making you look bad in front of the boss.

On top of this, the project relies on a computer program that is housed on only one laptop in the office that you have to share. Because you are new to the office you have been scheduled into many meetings to get you up to speed. This left you with very limited windows of time to use the laptop and Sam would intentionally take it at those times so that you couldn't use it.

You cannot figure out why Sam is so hostile and is sabotaging your project. You even tried to reach out by inviting him/her to Taco Tuesday with a group of colleagues after work and you weren't surprised when your invitation was coolly declined.

You want to make a good impression in your new job but there is no way you can stay on this project with Sam. You talked to your supervisor about it and she thinks it would be best for you and Sam to see if you can talk it out.