



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

NEW JERSEY STATE BAR
FOUNDATION

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK



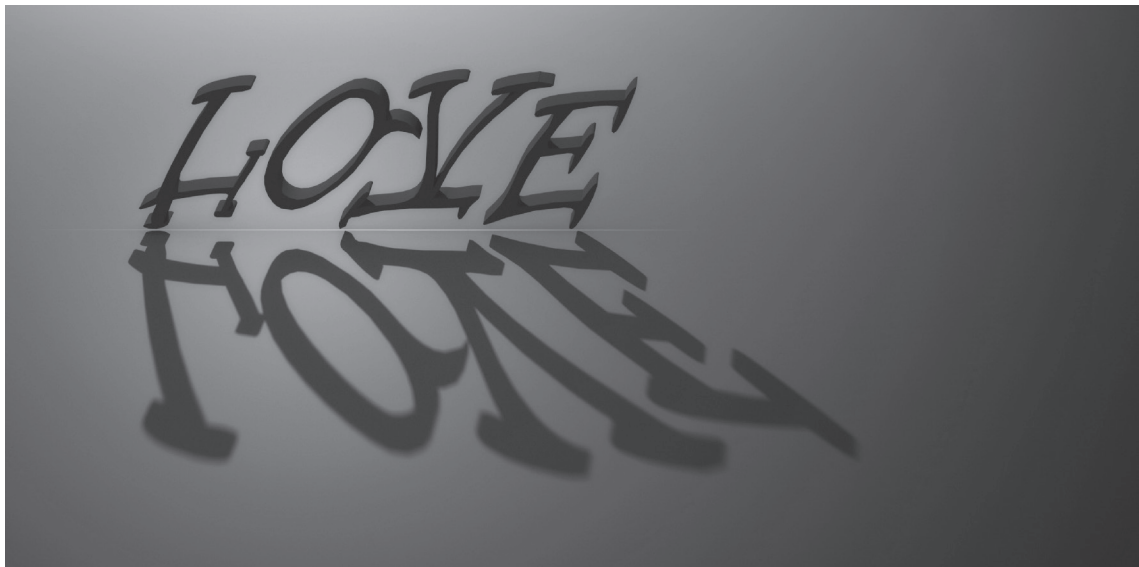
My Wife and My Mother-in-Law

IMAGE PERSPECTIVES

Elementary School, Middle School, High School



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Love and Hate Reprinted with permission of the artist Josh Sommers.



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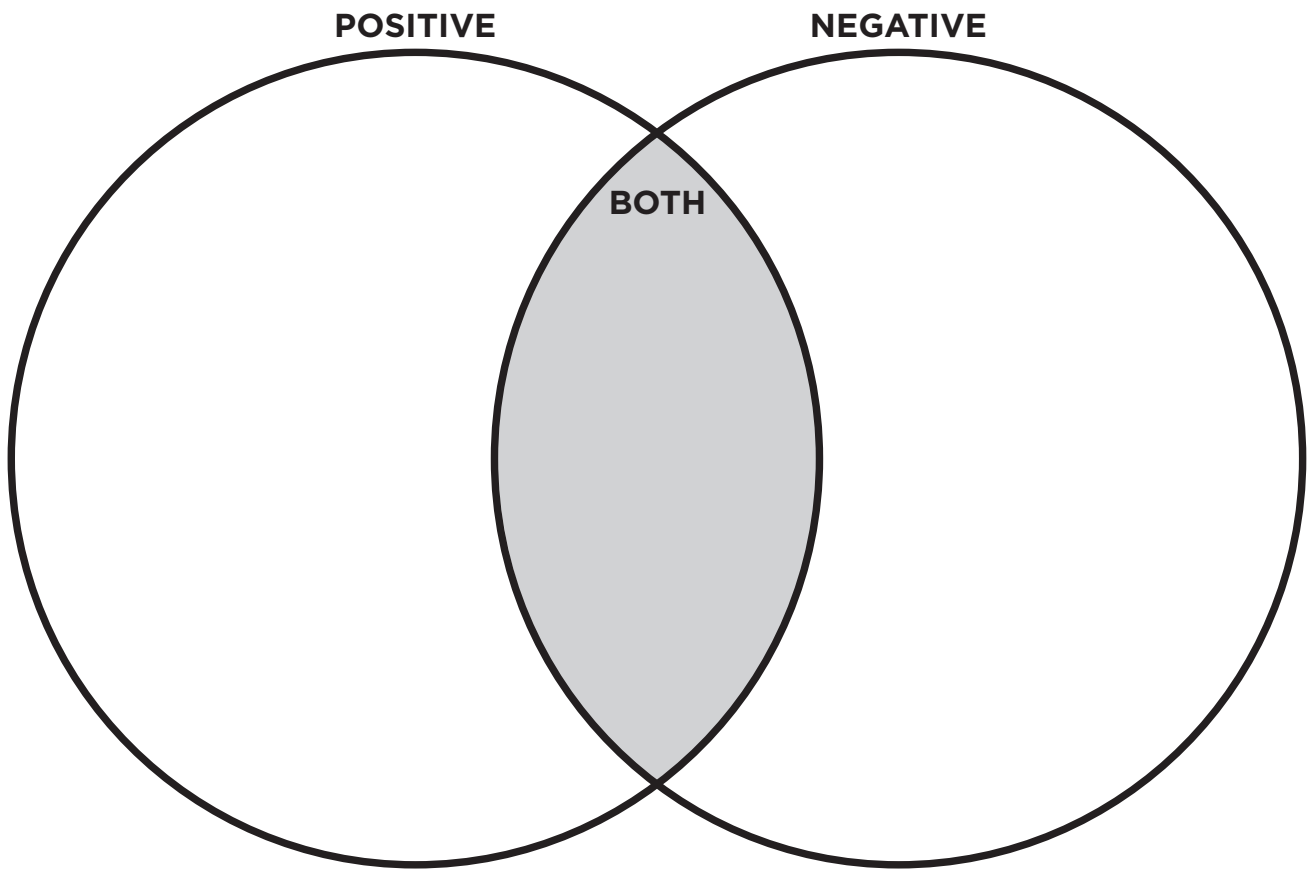
Society

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

Middle School

People have different perspectives on what is positive and what is negative. Decide as a group where to assign each word below. There are no right or wrong answers.

Anger	Win/lose	Differences	Innocent	Hurt	Decision	Normal	Disagree
Struggle	Right	Clash	Violence	Fight	People	Learning	Wrong
Agreement	Against	Separate	Change	Avoid	Intervene	Help	Creative
Resolution	Communication	Unfair	Ideas	Considerate	Guilty	War	Understanding



Work as a group to create a definition of conflict:

CONFLICT

CONFLICT IS

- ▶ A **MISUNDERSTANDING or DISAGREEMENT** that causes an emotional reaction
- ▶ between **TWO OR MORE** connected people
- ▶ who **NEED OR WANT** something from one another.

BULLYING

BULLYING IS

- ▶ **INTENTIONAL**, unwanted and aggressive behavior
- ▶ that involves a real or perceived **POWER IMBALANCE**
- ▶ and is **REPEATED**, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

What are some similarities and differences you notice about conflict and bullying?

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT? (adult version)

The following exercises are designed to help you take a closer look at how you respond to classroom conflicts. There are no trick questions and no absolutely right or wrong answers. The purpose of the exercise is not to judge your behavior, but to make you more aware of it.

Read the statements below. If a statement describes a response you usually make to classroom/school conflict, write "3" in the appropriate answer blank below. If it is a response you occasionally make, write "2" in the appropriate blank. If you rarely or never make that response, write "1."

When there is a classroom/school conflict, I:

1. Tell the students to knock it off _____
2. Try to make everyone feel at ease _____
3. Help the students understand one another's point of view _____
4. Separate the students and keep them away from each other _____
5. Let the principal handle it _____
6. Decide who started it _____
7. Try to find out what the real problem is _____
8. Try to work out a compromise _____
9. Turn it into a joke _____
10. Tell them to stop making such a fuss over nothing _____
11. Make one kid give in and apologize _____
12. Encourage the students to find alternative solutions _____
13. Help them decide what they can give on _____
14. Try to divert attention from the conflict _____
15. Let the students fight it out, as long as no one gets hurt _____
16. Threaten to send the students to the principal _____
17. Present the students some alternatives from which to choose _____
18. Help everyone feel comfortable _____
19. Get everyone busy doing something else _____
20. Tell the students to settle it on their own time, after school _____

I	II	III	IV	V
1_____	2_____	3_____	4_____	5_____
6_____	7_____	8_____	9_____	10_____
11_____	12_____	13_____	14_____	15_____
16_____	17_____	18_____	19_____	20_____
Totals _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Now add the numbers in each column. Each column reflects a particular approach and attitude toward conflict. In which column did you score highest? Find the appropriate number below and see if the description corresponds to your perception of your attitudes toward conflict.

- I. The no-nonsense approach. I don't give in. I try to be fair and honest with the students, but they need firm guidance in learning what's acceptable behavior and what isn't.
Competitive/Aggressive
- II. The problem-solving approach. If there's a conflict, there's a problem. Instead of battling the students, I try to set up a situation in which we can all solve the problem together. This produces creative ideas and stronger solutions.
Collaborative
- III. The compromising approach. I listen to the students and help them listen to each other. Then I help them give a little. We can't all have everything we want. Half a loaf is better than none.
Compromising
- IV. The smoothing approach. I like things to stay calm and peaceful whenever possible. Most conflicts are relatively unimportant, so I just direct their attention to other things.
Accommodating
- V. The ignoring approach. I point out the limits and let the students work things out for themselves. It's good for them, and they need to learn the consequences of their behavior. There's not a whole lot you can do about conflict situations anyway.
Avoiding/Ignoring



HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT?

Middle School

HANDOUT

LESSON TWO

LESSON 2: WHAT IS YOUR STYLE (OF CONFLICT)?

The questions below will help you understand how you respond to conflicts. There are NO trick questions and no absolutely right or wrong answers. The reason for this exercise is to make you more aware of the way you behave.

Read each sentence below. If a sentence describes a response you *usually* make to a conflict, circle the number “3” next to the sentence. If it is a response you *sometimes* make, circle the number “2” next to the sentence. If you *never*, or *almost never*, make the response, circle number “1.”

When there is a conflict at school between other students,	Usually	Sometimes	Almost never
1. Do I tell them to stop fighting, because someone may get hurt?	3	2	1
2. Do I try to help others talk about their conflict?	3	2	1
3. Do I ask them, “What are you fighting about?”	3	2	1
4. Do I try to get them to sit down and take deep breaths?	3	2	1
5. Do I let the teacher handle it?	3	2	1
6. Do I decide who started it?	3	2	1
7. Do I try to find out what everyone wants?	3	2	1
8. Do I help them try to work out a compromise?	3	2	1
9. Do I turn it into a funny story?	3	2	1
10. Do I tell them to stop making it such a big deal?	3	2	1
11. Do I make one person give in and apologize?	3	2	1
12. Do I try to get them to think of other ways to solve their conflict?	3	2	1
13. Do I help them decide what they can give in on?	3	2	1
14. Do I try to give them something else to do?	3	2	1
15. Do I let them fight it out, as long as no one gets hurt?	3	2	1
16. Do I threaten to tell the teacher or the principal?	3	2	1
17. Do I suggest some ways to resolve the conflict?	3	2	1
18. Do I help everyone to feel safe?	3	2	1
19. Do I get everyone busy doing something else?	3	2	1
20. Do I tell them to figure it out after school?	3	2	1

Fill in what you answered above (3, 2 or 1) following the question number below and total each column.

	A COMPETITIVE	B COLLABORATIVE	C COMPROMISING	D ACCOMMODATING	E AVOIDING
START HERE →	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
TOTALS					

A

B

C

D

E

The column with the highest total is your dominant style of conflict. Read the matching description on “The Five Styles of Conflict Resolution” handout. It is possible to have more than one dominant style.

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT?

High School

The questions below will help you understand how you respond to conflicts. There are NO trick questions and no absolutely right or wrong answers. The reason for this exercise is to make you more aware of the way you behave.

Read each sentence below. If a sentence describes a response you *usually* make to a conflict, circle the number “3” next to the sentence. If it is a response you *sometimes* make, circle the number “2” next to the sentence. If you *never*, or *almost never*, make the response, circle number “1.”

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19. Do I get everyone busy doing something else?	3	2	1
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START HERE →	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
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TOTALS					

A

B

C

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The column with the highest total is your dominant style of conflict. Read the matching description on “The Five Styles of Conflict Resolution” handout. It is possible to have more than one dominant style.

HANDOUT

LESSON TWO

LESSON 2: WHAT IS YOUR STYLE (OF CONFLICT)?

THE FIVE STYLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Middle School

A. Competitive/Aggressive

This style focuses on one's own needs over the needs of others. It relies on a forceful style of communication with low regard for future relationships. Those using a competitive/aggressive style tend to seek control over a discussion, in both substance and ground rules. They fear that loss of such control will result in solutions that fail to meet their needs. Competing tends to result in not resolving the conflict.

Characteristics: standing your ground, asserting your opinions and feelings, debating, using rank or influence

"I am right." "Do it my way."

B. Collaborative

This style is the pooling of individual needs and goals toward a common goal. Called the "One-to-One" strategy, collaboration requires individuals to communicate and work together in order to achieve a better solution than either individual could have achieved alone. It brings new time, energy, and ideas to resolve the dispute meaningfully.

Characteristics: active listening, non-threatening confrontation, identifying concerns, analyzing input

"We are both right." "Let's talk about it."

C. Compromising

This is an approach to conflict in which people gain and give in a series of tradeoffs. While at the end the conflict may be over, neither side is satisfied. Each side still feels their needs are more important than the other's and they do not necessarily understand the other side very well.

Characteristics: negotiating, finding a middle ground, assessing value, making concessions (giving in)

"I will give a little, you give a little."

D. Accommodating

People with this style feel that preserving the relationship is the most important factor of conflict. The needs of another or the needs of a group are seen as more important than their own. They are willing to give up their own needs for the sake of peace. This style is the opposite of competing.

Characteristics: selflessness, ability to give in, forgetting your desires, obeying orders

"You are right." "You can have it your way."

E. Avoiding

This is a common response to the negative perception of conflict. "Perhaps if we do not bring it up, it will blow over," we say to ourselves. But, generally, all that happens is that feelings get pent up, views go unexpressed, and the conflict festers until it becomes too big to ignore. Like a cancer that may well have been cured if treated early, the conflict grows and spreads until it kills the relationship. Because needs and concerns go unexpressed, people are often confused, wondering what went wrong in a relationship.

Characteristics: ability to withdraw, ability to leave things unresolved, ability to bypass issues

"Forget about it." "I do not want to talk about it."

Determine which conflict style would be the most appropriate and the least appropriate to address each situation. There can be more than one answer in certain examples. Be prepared to share your reasoning.

1. You want to go to an R-rated movie with just your friends for the first time. Your parents will not let you go unless one of them goes with you. You are embarrassed to tell your friends. You need to have your independence!

Most appropriate style:
Why?

Least appropriate style:
Why?

.....

2. You just broke up with your boyfriend or girlfriend and were invited to a party. You hesitated to go to the party but decided to attend. As you walked in, there was your ex with your best friend and they were acting like they really liked one another.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

Least appropriate style:
Why?

.....

3. You are going shopping with an adult for an outfit for the upcoming dance. She/he chooses an outfit that is "babyish." You explain to her/him that you need something more grown up. Although she/he is paying for it, you are angry that she/he does not understand that it should be your choice.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

Least appropriate style:
Why?

.....

4. In gym class the teacher picked other kids for the baseball team. You were not picked and felt very upset. You approached the teacher and asked if it was because you had missed several practices because you were ill? You are good at baseball and always score. The teacher did not want to discuss this with you, but remained definite with her/his choices.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

Least appropriate style:
Why?

.....

5. You told a close friend that you liked someone. You made her/him promise not to tell anyone because you were not ready to tell and you did not know if the person would return your feelings. The next day, you discovered that your friend had posted your secret all over social media, betraying you. You are furious, hurt and do not know what to do.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

Least appropriate style:
Why?

.....

CONFLICT SCENARIOS

High School

Determine which conflict style would be the most appropriate and the least appropriate to address each situation. There can be more than one answer in certain examples. Be prepared to share your reasoning.

1. You want to go to an R-rated movie with just your friends for the first time. Your parents will not let you go unless one of them goes with you. You are embarrassed to tell your friends. You need to have your independence!

Most appropriate style:
Why?

- Least appropriate style:
- Why?

-
2. You just broke up with your boyfriend or girlfriend and were invited to a party. You hesitated to go to the party but decided to attend. As you walked in, there was your ex with your best friend and they were acting like they really liked one another.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

- Least appropriate style:
- Why?

3. You are going shopping with an adult for an outfit for the upcoming dance. She/he chooses an outfit that is “babyish.” You explain to her/him that you need something more grown up. Although she/he is paying for it, you are angry that she/he does not understand that it should be your choice.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

- Least appropriate style:
- Why?

4. In gym class the teacher picked other kids for the baseball team. You were not picked and felt very upset. You approached the teacher and asked if it was because you had missed several practices because you were ill? You are good at baseball and always score. The teacher did not want to discuss this with you, but remained definite with her/his choices.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

- Least appropriate style:
- Why?

5. You told a close friend that you liked someone. You made her/him promise not to tell anyone because you were not ready to tell and you did not know if the person would return your feelings. The next day, you discovered that your friend had posted your secret all over social media, betraying you. You are furious, hurt and do not know what to do.

Most appropriate style:
Why?

- Least appropriate style:
- Why?

STYLE	What Happens When Used	Appropriate to Use When	Inappropriate to Use When
Competitive/ Aggressive	One's authority, position, majority rule or a persuasive minority settles the conflict. Results in win/lose if the dominated party sees no hope for self.	Power comes with position of authority; when this method had been agreed upon.	Losers have no way to express needs; could result in future disruptions.
Collaborative	Abilities, values and expertise of all are recognized; each person's position is clear, but emphasis is on group solution. Results in a win for all.	Time is available to complete the process; parties are committed and trained in use of the process.	The conditions of time, abilities and commitment are not present.
Compromising	Each party gives up something in order to meet midway. Results in win/lose if "middle of the road" position ignores the real diversity of the issue.	Both parties have enough leeway to give; resources are limited; when all parties need to get something.	Original inflated position is unrealistic; solution is watered down to be effective; commitment is doubted by parties involved.
Accommodating	Differences are played down; surface harmony exists. Results in win/lose in forms of resentment, defensiveness and possible sabotage if issue remains suppressed.	Same as above, also when preservation of relationship is more important at the moment.	Reluctance to deal with conflict leads to evasion of an important issue; when others are ready and willing to deal with issue.
Avoiding	Person tries to solve problem by denying its existence. Results in win/lose.	Issue is relatively unimportant; timing is wrong; cooling off period is needed; short-term use.	Issue is important; when issue will not disappear but will build.

FACTS, FEELINGS AND VALUES

High School

Fact: a true piece of information

Feeling: an emotional state or reaction

Value: the importance, worth or usefulness of something

Directions: Form groups of four. Assign each person a role (speaker, listener for facts, listener for feelings and listener for values). The speaker should choose a topic from the list below and speak for one to three minutes on that topic. As the speaker is talking, the listeners write the facts, feelings or values depending on their role. When the speaker is finished, each listener tells the speaker what he/she heard as the listener for facts, the listener for feelings or the listener for values. The speaker corrects any misunderstandings. Use this sheet to take notes while listening. Take a turn playing each role.

SPEAKER

LISTENER FOR FACTS

LISTENER FOR FEELINGS

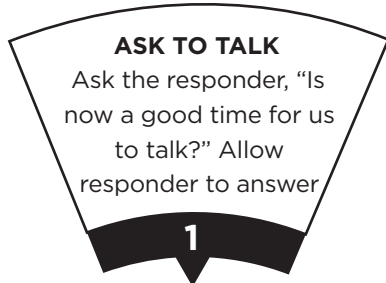
LISTENER FOR VALUES

Potential Topic List:

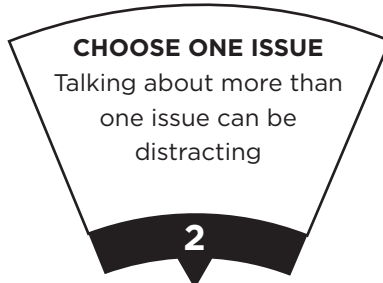
- Why sports are important
- Why music is important
- Why art is important
- A career you want to pursue and the education necessary
- A dream job and how to get it
- Anything else that you are interested in.....

When there is an interpersonal conflict, the conflict takes place between two individuals. The person who initially looks to solve the conflict is called the *initiator* and the person who is being asked to work it out is called the *responder*.

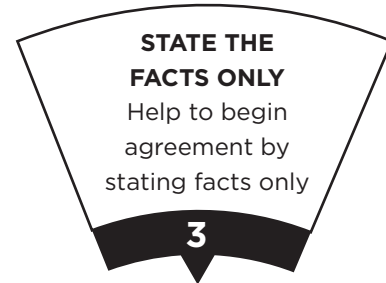
INITIATOR SPEAKS WHILE THE RESPONDER LISTENS



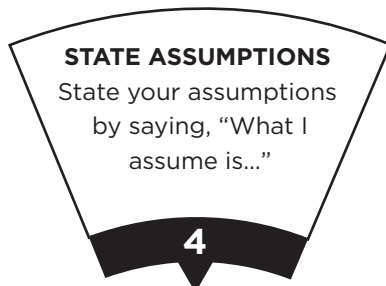
1
TIMING



2
SINGLE ISSUE



3
FACTS



4
ASSUMPTIONS

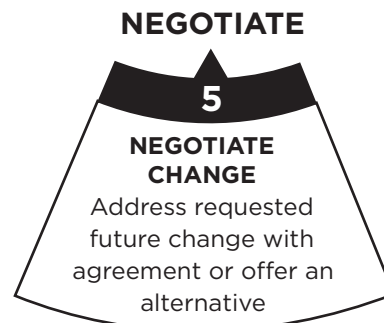
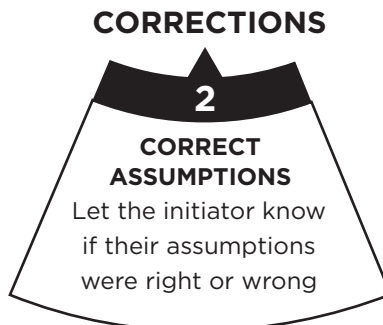
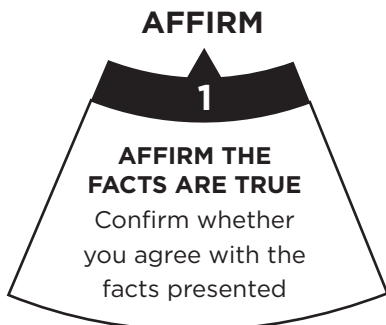


5
FEELINGS



6
REQUEST

RESPONDER SPEAKS WHILE THE INITIATOR LISTENS



Note the use of “I” messages

Initiator to Responder

1. Can we talk? (wait for response)	<i>Ask to Talk</i>
2. I would like to talk about...	<i>Choose One Issue</i>
3. I remember the facts as being...	<i>State the Facts Only</i>
4. I assume it happened because...	<i>State Assumptions</i>
5. I feel...	<i>Feelings</i>
6. I would like...	<i>Request for Change</i>

Responder to Initiator

1. I agree/disagree that the facts are...	<i>Affirm the Facts are True</i>
2. The assumptions you made are true/not true, I	<i>Correct Assumptions</i>
3. I understand why you feel ____, and I am sorry for ...	<i>Acknowledge Feelings/ Say Sorry When Authentic</i>
4. I feel...	<i>State Your Feelings</i>
5. I think we should ...	<i>Negotiate Change</i>

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Middle School

1**Not Enough**

Two people want something and there is only one

2**Misunderstanding**

Not knowing what the other person means or wants

3**Differences**

Someone does not look or act the same as you

4**Anger**

Feelings that upset you and make you feel bad

5**Unexpected Changes**

Things are different than you want them to be or thought they would be

6**Difficult People**

People that are hard to get along with

7**Mean Adults**

People in charge who are always telling you what to do

8**Arguments**

When you and someone else do not agree

9**Threat**

Feeling weak and not being able to fix something that bothers you

10**Bossy Friends**

Friends who tell you what to do and you do not agree

1

Limited Resources

Two people want something and there is only one, i.e. two friends are interested in dating the same person

2

Misunderstanding/Miscommunication

Lack of conversation or connection or not understanding the other person in a conversation, i.e. not being able to interpret or process each other's words

3

Differences

Appearing, speaking, acting, believing in different ways, i.e. race, language, behavior, culture, identity

4

Anger, Mistrust, Fear

These emotions can cause people to not interpret or react in the intended way, i.e. when you interpret what the other person says or does in a negative way

5

Unmet Expectations and Changing Roles

When things do not go the way you expected or your plans are disrupted, i.e. when someone plays a sport better than you do

6

Difficult People

Others whose behavior makes it difficult to collaborate with them, i.e. an aggressive person or a person who frequently lies

7

Power

Being in a position where the other person has, or believes that they have, more influence or control and takes advantage of the situation, i.e. someone who insists on having the last word in a conversation

8

Disagreements

When two people have differing opinions and argue over them, i.e. your parents and your friend's parents disagree over religion or politics

9

Stress

Being overburdened and having difficulty coping, i.e. when schoolwork is demanding causing you to get sick and fall behind

10

Peer Pressure

When your circle of friends puts uncomfortable demands on you, i.e. making a decision on conforming or being left out when choosing not to drink at a party

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

—Rumi

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Discussion Plan

Use the following questions to lead a conversation with your group:

1. Are there times you cannot or do not want to solve a conflict? Why?
2. Besides anger, what are some reasons a person might not want to make up with someone else?
3. Describe a time when you did not want to solve a conflict. Do not use names.
4. What happens on social media that does not happen face-to-face? Why does it happen on social media?
5. Are there environments that make it more difficult to solve a conflict? (for example, peer pressure)
6. Is it ever easier to NOT solve a conflict? When or why?
7. Does other people knowing about a conflict help or hurt solving the conflict? Explain your reasoning.
8. Why might a person like being in conflict?
9. What are some benefits for people who always want to solve conflicts? What disadvantages might people who always want to solve conflicts have?
10. Are there things you cannot control that might stop you from solving a conflict? What are they? How do they stop you from solving a conflict? *(for the educator: an example might be an alcoholic relative or a relative with clinical depression)*
11. When you are deciding whether or not you want to solve a conflict, do you think about the value of the relationship or the value of the conflict? Which is more important to consider and why?

STEPS IN PLANNING A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM

Action Plan

The order of this plan is offered as a guide. You know your educational environment's needs and can adjust this to best fit your school setting. If you need more space to answer the questions, or make notes, feel free to use the reverse side of this page. The questions are intended to help you in thinking about, preparing for, training of, and integration of the Conflict Resolution Program. Try to attach a time-frame for each action.

STEP ONE – PREPARATION

1. Determine the needs of your school in terms of types of conflict, frequency, sources, size of school, etc.
2. Bring together a small group of staff, including an administrator, who are interested in conflict resolution to serve as a committee. Make sure the staff members are diversified in terms of their position at the school and they accurately represent the school population. This committee will work as a team on the rest of this plan.
3. Review all materials, in particular the ethics materials, available at the Association for Conflict Resolution (www.acrnet.org).

Questions to consider:

- How will you go about determining the needs of your school?
- Who will you ask in your school to serve on the committee, what are their roles, and what would they bring to the project?
- Do you want to integrate the ethics materials into your program, and if so, how will you do that?
- What are some additional items of preparation you want to do in your school?

STEP TWO – PLANNING

(Some of the following may start at this point but continue throughout the life of the program.)

1. Provide training for the committee, either at the New Jersey State Bar Foundation (www.njsbf.org) or by bringing in a reputable person or organization to train them in conflict resolution concepts.
2. Committee develops both long and short-term goals, a plan and a timeline for the program.
3. Approach administration with the Plan and obtain their support.
4. Develop any materials you intend to use, i.e. letter home to parents, application for funding, etc.
5. Seek funding through PTA/PTOs, grants, Municipal Alliance, local business, etc.
6. Integrate conflict resolution into the school's mission statement.

Questions to consider:

- Regarding training for the committee, when and where will it be, who will provide it, and what will be the duration?
- Where will you find models for goals, plan and timeline? How much time should you allot for this step?
- Who can you approach in the administration? Do you need/want another colleague to join you? What are you looking for from administration? What will you do if you don't get it?
- What sources will you use for materials?
- Will you seek funding? Where from? What contacts do you or your committee members have?
- What do you want to integrate into the school's mission statement? How can you accomplish that?
- What are some additional items of planning you want to do in your school?

STEP THREE – TRAINING AND INTEGRATION

1. Introduce conflict resolution to the school community (teachers, students, staff, administration) through curriculum, in-service or staff development.
2. Introduce conflict resolution to parents through a letter home, PTA or PTO meeting, parent-teacher conference nights, etc.
3. Introduce Conflict Resolution Program on back-to-school night and offer parent workshops throughout the year.
4. Provide training for all teachers and support staff.
5. Provide lesson plans to teachers. Have principal ask teachers to include a monthly conflict resolution lesson in their plan books.
6. Develop an implementation schedule for the year, mapping units among disciplines.

Questions to consider:

- When and how will you introduce Conflict Resolution, or revitalize an existing program, to the adults in your school? To the students? To the parents?
- Will you offer any parent workshops? If so, what will be the topic? When will they be offered? What is the goal?
- What kind of training, will you provide for teachers and support staff? When? How will you engage teachers and support staff?
- What will your sources of lesson plans be for teachers? Will your committee be a source for lesson plans?
- What will your implementation plan look like?
- Go back over these questions and determine what roles your committee will play in each step?
- What are some additional items of training and integration that you want to do in your school?



Conflict Resolution Action Plan

Three conflict resolution activities or strategies I would like to implement in my school/classroom:

1.

2.

3.

Three actions I need to take first (who to talk to/convince, who to train, etc.):

1.

2.

3.

Barriers that may/do exist to implementing conflict resolution in my school:

Solutions/strategies for dealing with barriers:

Conflict Resolution Action Plan Challenges

Action Plan Step	Rate Challenge (Low 1-5)	Identify the Challenge	Ideas to Overcome Challenge
Preparation Time & Planning			
Assembling Champions			
Funding			
Buy-In Key Administrators			
Buy-In & Training of Staff			
Other?			