



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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NEW JERSEY STATE BAR  
FOUNDATION

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRAINING PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**

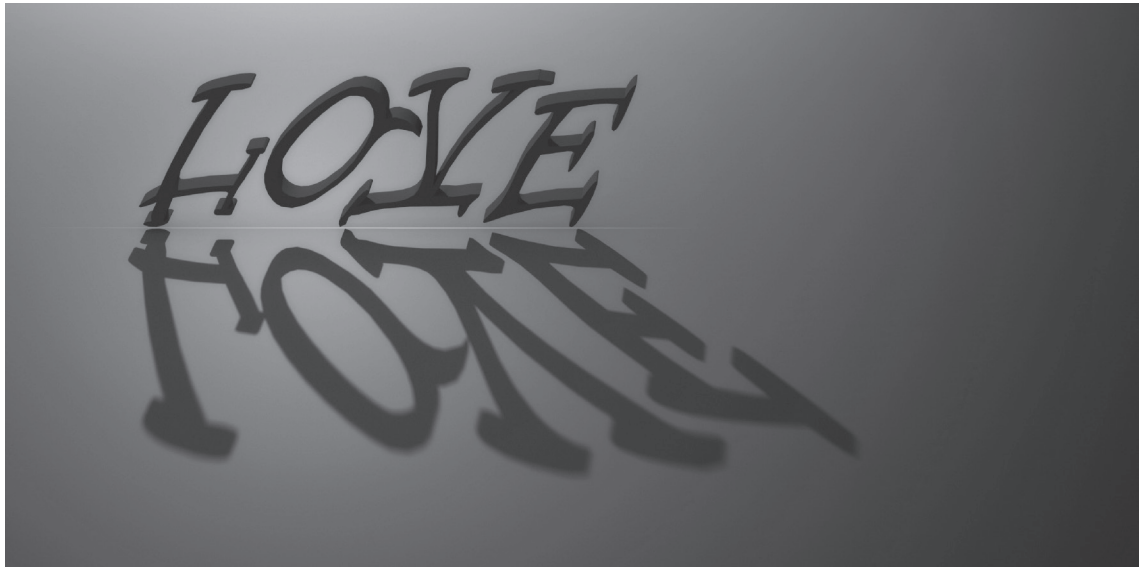


My Wife and My Mother-in-Law





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**Society**

# LESSON TWO

## UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

### DEFINING CONFLICT

Middle School

#### Objective

Students will learn:

- the definition of conflict.
- how to identify positive and negative outcomes of conflict.
- how to differentiate between normal conflict and bullying.

#### Materials

- A copy of the “Positive and Negative” handout for each student
- A copy of the “Conflict vs. Bullying” handout for each student

#### Procedures

##### Part I

1. Explain to the students that you will be reading a list of words to them. You will start each sentence with “When I say conflict, you think \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. When you complete each sentence with a new word the students should:
  - a. Clap if you think of that word when you think of conflict.
  - b. Snap if you sometimes think of that word when you think of conflict.
  - c. Stay silent if you do not associate that word with conflict.
3. Have them note the responses that the different words receive.

#### NOTE

There are no right or wrong answers.

#### Conflict Words

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

4. Once all the sentences are read, say the statement “When I say conflict, you think\_\_\_\_\_.” open-ended and allow the students to use any other words they might associate with conflict. Write these extra words on the board or on chart paper.
5. Have a class discussion using the “Clap/Snap/Stay Silent” activity discussion questions below.



## DEFINING CONFLICT (Continued)

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### Part II

1. Ask the students if conflict is positive or negative. Have a conversation using the following questions:
  - a. Why do you think conflict is negative?
  - b. Why do you think conflict is positive?
  - c. Have you ever had an argument with a friend and you worked it out? How was your friendship after you worked it out?

#### NOTE

FOR K-2: replace “Positive” and “Negative” with “Good” and “Bad” where you deem appropriate for this activity.

2. Make signs that read “POSITIVE” and “NEGATIVE” and hang them on either side of your classroom.
3. Explain to the students that all the words you are about to read relate to conflict in some way. They get to choose whether the word is “positive” or “negative” when they think about conflict.
4. Using the same list of conflict words, read each word and ask them to stand on the side of the room that they think that word is associated with.
5. After each word is read, and the students choose whether a word is “positive” or “negative,” have a few students explain why they think the word is positive or negative.
6. When you are done, have a whole class discussion using the following discussion question:
  - a. Would you change your idea about conflict after doing this activity?

### Part III

1. Give students the “Conflict vs. Bullying” handout.
2. Have them work in pairs or in groups to identify the similarities and differences.
3. As a large group decide on similarities and differences and answer any questions the students might have.
4. Read the following scenarios and ask the students to identify whether the scenarios are conflict or bullying and why.
  - a. Someone takes your scissors from you without asking while you are working on a project. (CONFLICT)
  - b. Someone tells you that your hair is ugly and she/he does not like you because of that. (BULLYING)
  - c. Someone knocks over her/his juice and it spills on you at lunch. (CONFLICT)
  - d. Someone tells you that you are mean when you pass out papers for the teacher roughly. (CONFLICT)
  - e. A group of kids are playing a game on the playground and you ask to play. They ignore you and start whispering and laughing to each other while looking at you. (BULLYING)
  - f. A group of kids are playing a game on the playground and you ask to play. Someone tells you that they do not have any room in the game for more people (and they truly do not have room). (CONFLICT)
5. Lead a group discussion using the following questions.

### Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, what is the difference between conflict and bullying?
2. When might you disagree on whether a conflict is positive or negative?
3. When you have a conflict, how does it make you feel?

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

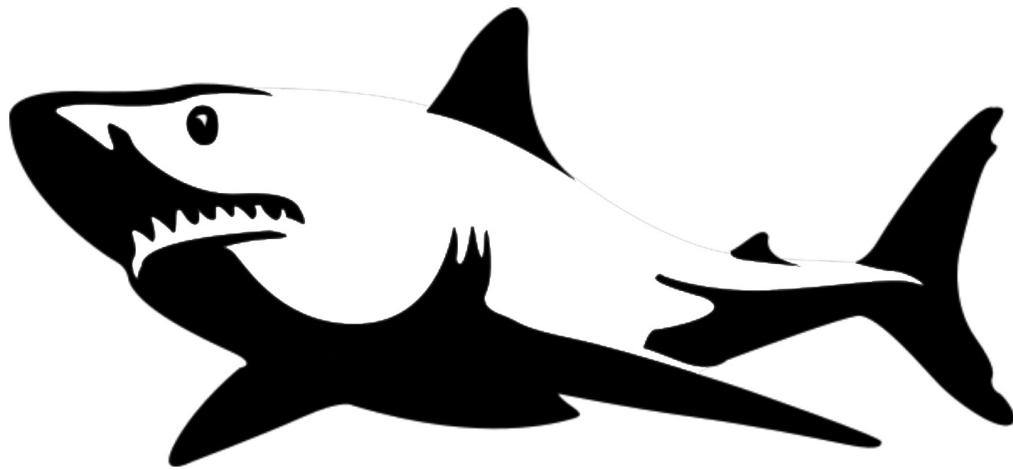
I	II	III	IV	V
1_____	2_____	3_____	4_____	5_____
6_____	7_____	8_____	9_____	10_____
11_____	12_____	13_____	14_____	15_____
16_____	17_____	18_____	19_____	20_____
Totals _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

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*



COMPETITIVE



ATTACKS PEOPLE  
"I AM RIGHT." "DO IT MY WAY."



COLLABORATING



**WORKS TOGETHER**  
 “WE ARE BOTH RIGHT.” “LET’S TALK ABOUT IT.”

ACCOMMODATING



GIVES IN  
“YOU ARE RIGHT.” “YOU CAN HAVE IT YOUR WAY.”

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT?

Elementary 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.”

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.
<b>TOTALS</b>					

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.



Each column is a way that people handle conflict. In which column did you score the highest? Find the letter below that matches your highest score and see if the description matches YOUR idea of how you solve conflicts. It is possible to have two high numbers that match.

## A. Competitive/Aggressive

You do not give in. You try to win conflicts.

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

## B. Collaborative/Cooperative

You see conflicts as problems to be solved and like to share creative ideas to reach solutions.

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

## C. Compromising

You like to make sure everyone walks away feeling they got what they wanted.

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

## D. Accommodating

You like things to stay calm and peaceful whenever possible. In order to keep the peace you will give in when you are in conflict.

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

## E. Avoiding

You do not want to get involved. You would rather walk away than deal with the conflict.

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

## SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Elementary School 3-5

**Not Enough**

Two people want something and  
there is only one of it

**Misunderstanding**

Not knowing what the other person  
means or wants

**Differences**

Someone does not look or  
act the same as you

**Anger**

Feelings that upset you and  
make you feel bad

**Unexpected Changes**

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

**Difficult People**

People that are hard to get along with

**Arguments**

When you and someone  
else do not agree

**Mean Adults**

People in charge who are always telling  
you what to do

**Threat**

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

**Bossy Friends**

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



Mean	Kicking	Touching	Laughing at someone	Sad
Lying	Ignoring	Bossy	Hurtful	Left out
Fidgeting	Not sharing	Interrupting	Sticking out your tongue	Distracting
Making fun	Joking	Silly	Put-downs	Staring
Stubborn	Tattletale	Calling out of turn	Teasing	Imitating





“I” Message	Value
I know	States facts
I feel	States feelings
I believe or I think	States opinions

**Read the passage below and fill in the blanks following the passage using the different types of “I” messages above.**

Many years ago in a city called Selma in the state of Alabama, white people lived on one side of town and black people on the other. A bridge separated these two groups of people. The white people had money, good schools and the right to vote. On the other side of the bridge were the black people who had little money, poor schools, not even running water and they were not allowed to vote.

A Baptist Minister, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, came to Selma to help the black people gain the right to vote. He led a peaceful march that began with 600 black people. The march started by crossing the bridge that separated the two groups of people and went from Selma, Alabama to the capital city of Montgomery. Eventually, thousands of people came from other places all across the country to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to help black people have the right to vote.

Five months later, President Lyndon Johnson passed a law that said that black and white people are equal and that all people have the right to vote. The march had worked!

## Definitions

1. *March – a peaceful gathering for a cause. People usually walk from one location to another.*
2. *Equal – every person should be treated the same, no matter of race or religion.*
3. *Expression – share how you feel verbally and physically.*

## Using “I” Messages

1. After reading about the Selma to Montgomery March, I KNOW \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. After reading about the Selma to Montgomery March, I FEEL \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. After reading about the Selma to Montgomery March, I THINK \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



“I” Message	Value
I know	States facts
I feel	States feelings
I believe or I think	States opinions

Read the passage below and fill in the blanks following the passage using the different types of “I” messages above.

Many years ago in the 1960s, some public schools were segregated, which means that African American (black) and white children could not go to the same school because of their different skin colors.

There was a six-year old African-American girl, **Ruby Bridges**, who experienced segregation. She lived with her family in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her parents chose to send her to an all-white school close to their home. They felt Ruby would get a better education at the all-white school. She was the only African-American student. The school did not want a black child enrolled there. Ruby’s parents were worried, but they felt strongly about making sure Ruby got a good education.

The white parents of the children in the school protested, shouting bad words at Ruby, storming the school and keeping their children home. Teachers did not want to teach Ruby and refused to go to school. Only one teacher, Mrs. Henry, agreed to teach Ruby. They studied together in the empty school building.

It took some time, but finally a judge ruled that schools must be integrated. This meant that all children, regardless of their color, could go to the same school. White children started to come back to Ruby’s school, sat in the classes and became her friends. The black and white children studied together, played together and learned to love each other.

Ruby Bridges is all grown up now, lives in New Orleans, Louisiana, and has four sons. She indeed was a truly brave young girl who now is an active member in her community.

## Definitions

1. *Segregation – setting someone apart*
2. *Protest – to disapprove something and to do something that shows one’s disapproval*
3. *Integration – putting people or things together*
4. *Race – the idea that people with different color skin, different hair texture or different eye shapes belong in a group together. This is only an idea. There is one race, the human race.*

## Using “I” Messages

1. After reading about Ruby Bridges, I KNOW \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. After reading about Ruby Bridges, I FEEL \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. After reading about Ruby Bridges, I THINK \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Below are instructions on how to have a positive conversation to solve a conflict between two people.

## THE INITIATOR GOES FIRST

*The Initiator speaks while the Responder listens.*

**STEP 1**



**Can we talk?**

(wait for the Responder to answer before continuing to Step 2)

**STEP 2**



**I am upset because\_\_\_\_\_**

**STEP 3**



**I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_**

**STEP 4**



**I would like\_\_\_\_\_**

## THE RESPONDER GOES SECOND

*The Responder speaks while the Initiator listens.*

**STEP 1**



**I am upset because\_\_\_\_\_**

**STEP 2**



**I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_**

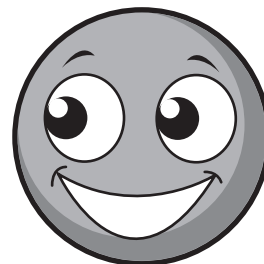
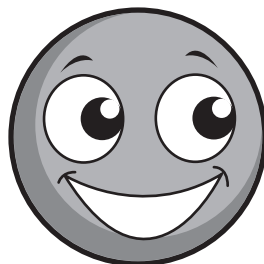
**STEP 3**



**I would like\_\_\_\_\_**

## LAST STEP

*Work it out. How can you both get what you want?*



**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?



## THE GUEST HOUSE: A POEM

High School

HANDOUT

LESSON ONE

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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LESSON 1: MINDFULNESS

## 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](http://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](http://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?			