



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

NEW JERSEY STATE BAR
FOUNDATION

**MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL
TRAINING PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**
In-Person Training



My Wife and My Mother-in-Law



Seven Columns Reprinted with permission of the artist Josh Sommers.



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



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Society

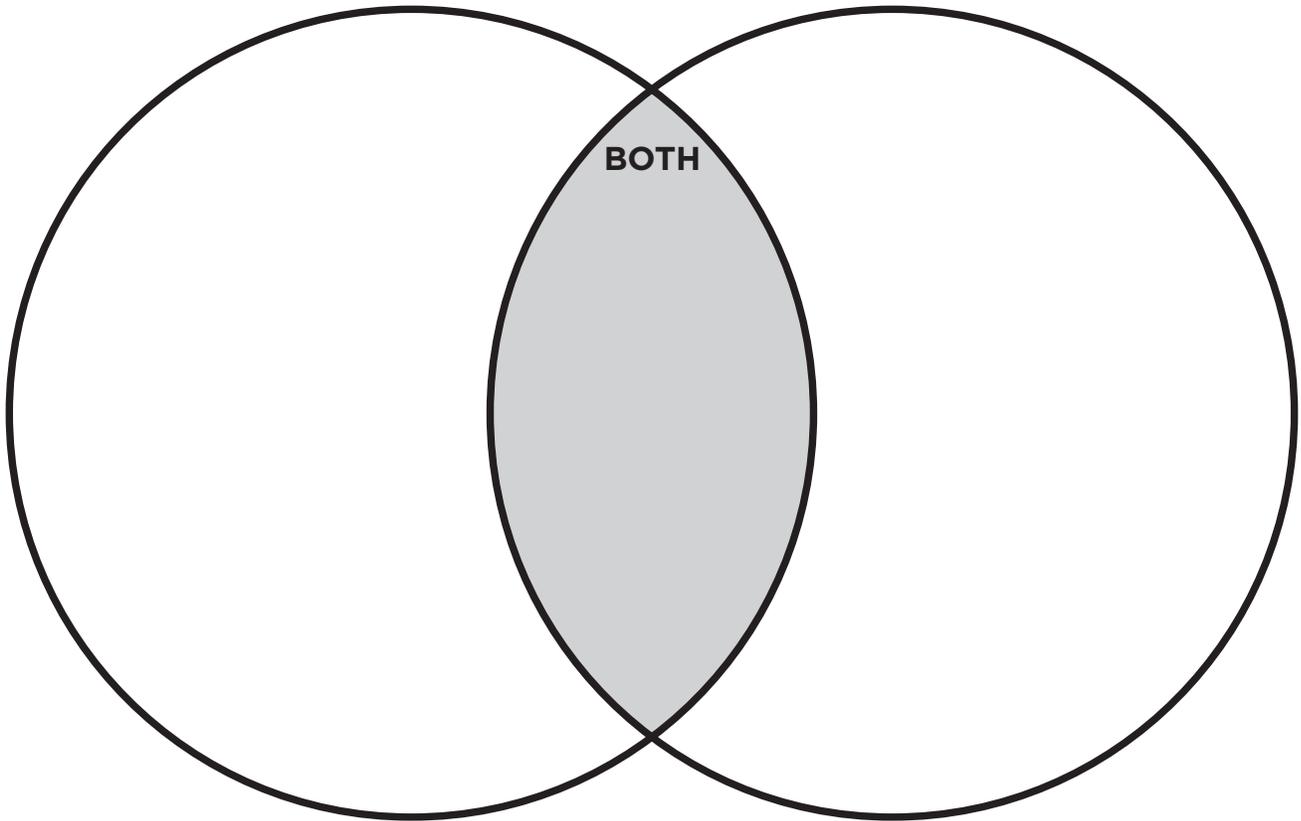
POSITIVE (PRODUCTIVE) AND NEGATIVE

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 |

POSITIVE (PRODUCTIVE)

NEGATIVE



Work as a group to create a definition of conflict:

CONFLICT

BULLYING

CONFLICT IS

BULLYING IS

▶ A **MISUNDERSTANDING** or **DISAGREEMENT** that causes an emotional reaction

▶ **INTENTIONAL**, unwanted and aggressive behavior

▶ between **TWO OR MORE** connected people

▶ that involves a real or perceived **POWER IMBALANCE**

▶ who **NEED OR WANT** something from one another.

▶ and is **REPEATED**, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

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

Large empty box for student response.

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



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

NEW JERSEY STATE BAR
FOUNDATION

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.

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| 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 |
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| 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.

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?

Vertical dotted line for writing

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?

Vertical dotted line for writing

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?

Vertical dotted line for writing

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?

Vertical dotted line for writing

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?

Vertical dotted line for writing

CONFLICT SCENARIOS

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.....

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

The following is a list of potential triggers that could cause conflict in your life. Read through the list. Choose one trigger that has recently caused a conflict in your life. Answer the questions below.

Conflict Triggers

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| Prejudice | Dishonesty | Not listening | Embarrassment | Competition | Intolerance |
| Moodiness | Ignoring | Being tired | Being excluded | Feeling hurt | Suspicion |
| Inflexibility | Differences | Failure | Sarcasm | Feeling stupid | Yelling |
| Lack of love | Mistrust | Laughing | Put-downs | Your best friend | Frustration |
| Shyness | Withdrawing | Boredom | Insecurity | Your property | Depression |
| Stubbornness | Not caring | Fear | Not sharing | Not talking | Despair |

1. Which trigger did you choose? _____
2. Describe the story of the conflict in which you were triggered (do not use names in your explanation).
3. Identify the players in the conflict and explain their different perspectives (when identifying the parties, use names like “student one” or “teacher”).
4. How did you feel about the conflict? How do you imagine the other players felt about the conflict?
5. What was the source of the conflict?

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

ASK TO TALK
Ask the responder, "Is now a good time for us to talk?" Allow responder to answer

1
TIMING

CHOOSE ONE ISSUE
Talking about more than one issue can be distracting

2
SINGLE ISSUE

STATE THE FACTS ONLY
Help to begin agreement by stating facts only

3
FACTS

STATE ASSUMPTIONS
State your assumptions by saying, "What I assume is..."

4
ASSUMPTIONS

FEELINGS
Share your feelings about the conflict

5
FEELINGS

REQUEST FOR CHANGE
Ask for a change for future interaction

6
REQUEST

RESPONDER SPEAKS WHILE THE INITIATOR LISTENS

AFFIRM
1
AFFIRM THE FACTS ARE TRUE
Confirm whether you agree with the facts presented

CORRECTIONS
2
CORRECT ASSUMPTIONS
Let the initiator know if their assumptions were right or wrong

ACKNOWLEDGE
3
ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS/SAY SORRY WHEN AUTHENTIC
Say that you hear the initiator's feelings and, if able, offer an authentic apology

FEELINGS
4
STATE YOUR FEELINGS
Share how you feel about the conflict

NEGOTIATE
5
NEGOTIATE CHANGE
Address requested future change with agreement or offer an alternative

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> |

Encouragers



Stop talking and listen

Speakers will be encouraged to continue speaking if you remain quiet and let them finish what they want to say.



Empathize

Try to put yourself in the other person's situation. Try to understand what she/he is feeling.



Make eye contact

In most Western cultures, looking at a person who is speaking tells her/him you are interested in what he/she is saying and that you are paying attention.



Concentrate on what is being said

Push all other thoughts out of your mind and use active listening to pay attention to the speaker.



Show understanding by non-verbal behaviors

Facial expressions, posture and gestures (such as nodding one's head) can be warm and accepting or closed and judgmental. The warm and accepting body language will encourage the speaker to continue.



Find out what the person wants from you

The speaker may want advice or suggestions, or she/he may not. Give the speaker what she/he wants, not what you think is desired.



Verbally acknowledge other person

While the person is speaking you may make verbal sounds to demonstrate that you are paying attention. You may say, "I understand" or "I hear how you felt." When they are done speaking you may want to summarize what they have said in your own words to demonstrate you understand.



Ask for understanding

Questions should be used to understand what the person has said, or to gather more information.

Blockers

Interrupting



Good communication is not possible when people are cut off before they have finished speaking. In a conflict, it is especially important for everybody to have a chance to tell their side without interruption.

Ignoring



There are at least five ways that ignoring behaviors can stop positive communication.

1. Not paying attention to the speaker
2. Monopolizing all the talking time
3. Focusing on your own agenda
4. Disregarding other people's contributions to the communication
5. Not acknowledging other people's concerns or feelings



Sarcasm

Sarcasm is saying one thing but meaning the opposite which sometimes can mock or hurt feelings. Sarcasm makes problem solving and communication very difficult.



Insults/name calling

People with the competitive/aggressive style of communication tend to use insults and name calling to handle conflict. This raises hostility levels and increases the chance for violence.



Always and Never

"You always do this." "You never do that." These statements are hardly ever accurate and make people angry and defensive.



Judging

Judging occurs when one person decides if others are right or wrong or good or bad. They then share their judgement with the other person. The best climate for problem solving is when people hold off on judgement and listen to each other in order to understand each other's perspectives.



Blaming

Blamers assume that if there is a problem or conflict, somebody must be to blame. They are quick to say, "It was not my fault - it was yours!" To effectively communicate or problem solve, it is important to get away from the idea that someone is to blame.

What Activates Me? – Adult Version

Read the following list of buttons that can activate you (or cause “big feelings” as we would say to our younger students). Look at the “feelings thermometer” on the 2nd page. Rate each item from 1-10 regarding where it might cause you to fall on the thermometer.

Label each scenario 0 through 10 depending on where it falls on the thermometer for you.

0 means you are very “cool” or comfortable

10 means you are very “heated” or uncomfortable

_____ A student ignores or appears to ignore you when you give instructions.

_____ A friend lies to you.

_____ You get blamed for something that you did not do.

_____ Your friends get invited to a dinner and you do not get an invitation.

_____ A friend does not call, text or email you back.

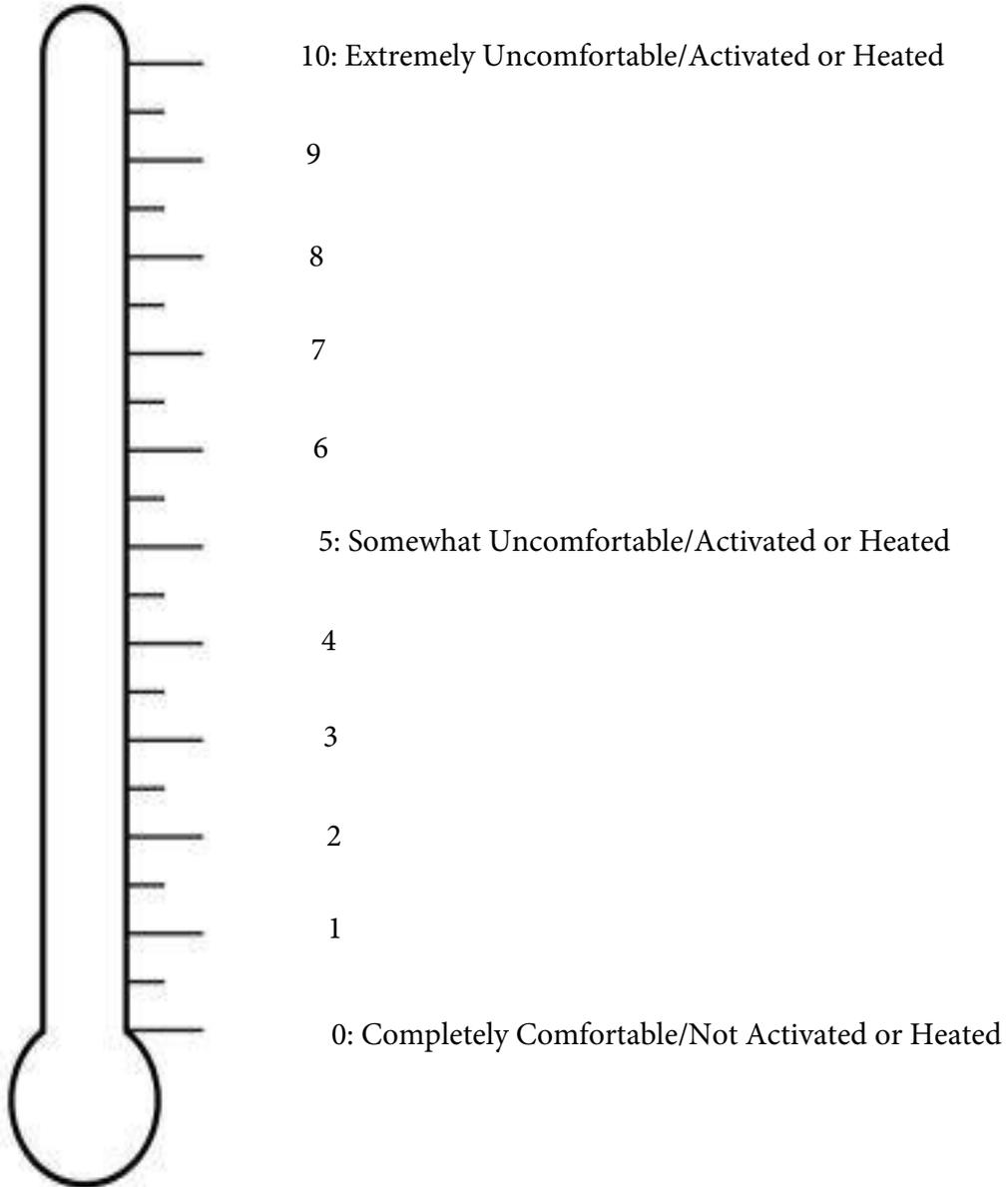
_____ A colleague purposefully withholds information from you.

_____ Misinformation about you gets posted on social media.

_____ A student mimics you in front of the class.

_____ A person you are eating with loudly chews with their mouth open.

_____ Your supervisor does not listen to or accept your suggestions for improvement on a project you have been asked to review.



Uncomfortable Feelings Poetry

Instructions: Organize students into groups of 4-6 people. Give each group a set of lines for a literary piece (following). Ask students to arrange the strips vertically to make a free verse poem. Stress that there is no correct sequence - just place strips in order of the way you feel – express yourself. Give students about 10 to 15 minutes to complete the task. Ask each group to read its poem aloud. Have students listen carefully. They will learn that no two poems are alike, but each one is good.

like a bonfire flaring in the night

what will happen here

I see bright eyes

I follow my anger

in the cave where no one walks

anger comes now

looking for something forgotten

like a stone rolling down a passageway

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?

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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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? | | | |

Table 4: Age-Appropriate Sequence for Acquiring the Foundation Abilities of Conflict Resolution

| Early Childhood to Grade 2 | Grades 3–5 | Grades 6–8 | Grades 9–12 |
|--|--|--|---|
| O r i e n t a t i o n A b i l i t i e s | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands that having conflicts is natural and knows that involvement in conflicts is all right. ◆ Knows that conflicts can be solved through cooperation. ◆ Views peace as a desired condition and identifies several peacemaking and peacebreaking behaviors. ◆ Differentiates between prejudice and a dislike. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands that conflict is inevitable and that it can be a positive force for growth. ◆ Understands that conflicts can become better or worse, depending on the chosen response. ◆ Understands and recognizes soft, hard, and principled responses to conflicts. ◆ Participates in cooperative endeavors. ◆ Recognizes prejudice in self and in the actions of others. ◆ Understands own behavior in terms of the need for belonging, power, freedom, and fun. ◆ Understands peace as a personal action and differentiates between peacemaking and peacebreaking behaviors in self and others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recognizes that the sources of conflict and the problem-solving processes of conflict resolution are applicable to all types of conflicts—interpersonal, intergroup, and international. ◆ Diagnoses conflicts appropriately and selects conflict resolution strategies for conflicts in various settings (such as school, home, and neighborhood). ◆ Exhibits effective responses to another person who, in a shared conflict, chooses a soft or hard response. ◆ Takes action to inform when prejudice is displayed. ◆ Suggests a peacemaking action as an alternative to a displayed peacebreaking action. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Maintains various good working relationships with parents, family, siblings, boyfriends, girlfriends, teachers, and bosses. ◆ Analyzes conflict in the context of a present relationship and uses an appropriate problem-solving strategy. ◆ Recognizes patterns in his or her responses to conflict and strives for positive growth and change in those patterns. ◆ Understands that conflict resolution skills are life skills. ◆ Confronts prejudice effectively in self and others and in the school as an institution. ◆ Promotes equal access and opportunity on many fronts. ◆ Seeks diverse and multicultural experiences and relationships. ◆ Works actively to promote peace in the school and in the community. |
| P e r c e p t i o n A b i l i t i e s | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Accepts that he or she is not always “right.” ◆ Accepts that others may see things differently. ◆ Describes a conflict from own perspective and from the perspective of others. ◆ Withholds blame. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identifies and checks own assumptions about a situation. ◆ Understands how others perceive words and actions. ◆ Empathizes and accepts the feelings and perceptions of others. ◆ Analyzes a conflict from the perspective of unmet basic psychological needs. ◆ Understands friendships and good working relationships and strives to build and maintain them. ◆ Understands the effects of blaming and accusing behaviors and chooses not to act in that manner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recognizes the limitations of own perceptions and understands that selective filters affect seeing and hearing. ◆ Identifies and checks assumptions that self and others make about a situation. ◆ Possesses a rudimentary understanding of how problem-solving strategies can be influenced. ◆ Recognizes the prevalence and glamorization of violence in society. ◆ Recognizes that conflicts can escalate into violence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Critically analyzes own perceptions and modifies understanding as new information emerges. ◆ Articulates how own words, actions, and emotions are perceived by others. ◆ Analyzes how perceptions of others relate to probable intent or purpose. ◆ Understands how problem-solving strategies can be influenced and regularly chooses to exercise positive influence. ◆ Prevents escalation of conflicts, even with adults. ◆ Helps others recognize the potential for violence and for nonviolent conflict resolution. |

Table 4: Age-Appropriate Sequence for Acquiring the Foundation Abilities of Conflict Resolution (continued)

| Early Childhood to Grade 2 | Grades 3–5 | Grades 6–8 | Grades 9–12 |
|--|---|---|---|
| Emotion Abilities | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Knows that feeling anger, frustration, and fear is all right. ◆ Controls anger. ◆ Expresses feelings in language that expands beyond happy, sad, glad, or mad. ◆ Hears and acknowledges the feelings of others. ◆ Does not react to emotional outbursts of others by elevating own emotional response. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands own emotions. ◆ Understands that others have emotional responses and that those responses may be different from his or her own. ◆ Expresses emotions effectively and appropriately. ◆ Disagrees without being disagreeable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Takes responsibility for emotions. ◆ Accepts and validates emotions and perceptions of others. ◆ Possesses effective strategies for “cool down” and uses them at appropriate times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Remains calm and focused on problem solving when confronted by a strong emotional display from another person, including an adult. ◆ Prevents conflict escalation and violence effectively by using communication-based conflict resolution strategies. |
| Creative Thinking Abilities | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Describes what is wanted and why it is wanted. ◆ Generates ideas for solving a problem. ◆ Improves a simple idea. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Distinguishes between positions and interests. ◆ Identifies interests beyond own position in any situation. ◆ Separates inventing options from making decisions. ◆ Identifies mutual and compatible interests and creates behavioral options to satisfy those interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands that underlying interests, not positions, define the problem in conflict situations. ◆ Understands that multiple, unclear, or conflicting interests often coexist. ◆ Understands and uses analytical tools to diagnose problems. ◆ Uses problem solving for conflicting as well as common or compatible interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluates and reconciles positions and interests of self and others in most situations. ◆ Prioritizes interests and develops a strategy for working toward agreement, focusing on easier issues first (those of mutual concern) and more difficult issues last (those of conflicting concerns). ◆ Articulates mutual interests and reconciles conflicting interests. ◆ Switches perspectives to generate new options. ◆ Manages brainstorming effectively, separates inventing from deciding, and advocates options for mutual gain. ◆ Brainstorms multiple options in any situation, improving, refining, embellishing, and expanding on current options. ◆ Uses analytical tools to diagnose problems, develop new approaches, and evaluate those approaches. |

Table 4: Age-Appropriate Sequence for Acquiring the Foundation Abilities of Conflict Resolution (continued)

| Early Childhood to Grade 2 | Grades 3–5 | Grades 6–8 | Grades 9–12 |
|---|---|--|--|
| Communication Abilities | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Listens without interruption while another person describes an incident and summarizes what that person has said. ◆ Describes an incident intelligibly using “I” statements. ◆ Uses questions such as “How did that make you feel?” and “What happened next?” ◆ Answers questions about a conflict. ◆ Uses a conflict resolution vocabulary (such as “interests,” “options,” “brainstorm,” “negotiate,” and “point of view”). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Summarizes the facts and feelings of another person’s perspective. ◆ Asks specific, clarifying questions to gather more information. ◆ Uses appropriate problem-solving phraseology (e.g., “and” rather than “but” and “we” instead of “me” or “you”). ◆ Makes “I” statements rather than “you” statements when expressing perspective. ◆ Recognizes nonverbal communication by self and by others, especially communication related to feelings. ◆ Communicates desire for cooperative working relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Uses summarizing and clarifying to defuse anger and deescalate conflict. ◆ Withholds judgment and listens to persuasive discussions. ◆ Is productively persuasive. ◆ Tests understanding, listens to understand, and speaks to be understood. ◆ Reframes own statements using unbiased and less inflammatory language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Summarizes positions and interests of others in conflict situations efficiently and accurately. ◆ Acknowledges the validity of emotions and perspectives of others. ◆ Reframes statements of others, removing biased or inflammatory messages to capture the underlying meaning. ◆ Expresses interests explicitly. ◆ Uses clarifying questions to uncover hidden interests of others. ◆ Possesses a conflict resolution vocabulary (e.g., “position,” “interests,” “options,” “alternatives,” “consensus,” “commitment,” “legitimacy,” and “brainstorm”) and uses it appropriately. |
| Critical Thinking Abilities | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Chooses from multiple ideas. ◆ Understands when something is fair to self and fair to another person. ◆ Explains why something is not fair. ◆ Expresses a realistic and workable plan for resolving a conflict. ◆ Understands the meaning of committing to a plan and being trustworthy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluates realistically the risks and consequences of “flight or fight” in conflict. ◆ Identifies best self-help alternative in a conflict situation. ◆ Chooses to work toward mutual fairness in resolving a dispute rather than to accomplish self-imposed will. ◆ Evaluates interests of self and others according to fairness standards. ◆ Crafts win-win resolutions. ◆ Specifies clear agreement by stating who, what, when, and how. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Challenges assumptions about what is possible. ◆ Thinks about short- and long-term consequences of proposed options. ◆ Negotiates without conceding. ◆ Identifies outside standards and criteria for fairness (such as legal standards and school rules) when evaluating interests and solutions. ◆ Recognizes the efficacy of committing only to solutions that are fair, realistic, and workable. ◆ Endeavors to fulfill commitments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Uses problem-solving processes when engaging in difficult conversations. ◆ Speculates as to best alternatives to negotiated agreement for self and others. ◆ Analyzes ways to improve best alternatives to negotiated agreement. ◆ Analyzes willingness and ability of self and other person to honor a plan of action in any situation. ◆ Identifies uncontrollable factors that might impact the ability of the parties to fulfill an agreement. ◆ Identifies external standards of fairness and uses those to resolve conflicts. ◆ Honors commitments and encourages others to do the same. |

Table 5: Age-Appropriate Sequence for Acquiring the Problem-Solving Processes of Conflict Resolution

| Early Childhood to Grade 2 | Grades 3–5 | Grades 6–8 | Grades 9–12 |
|--|--|---|---|
| Negotiation Process | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cooperates with a peer in unassisted problem solving—each cools off, tells what happened, imagines ways to problem-solve, and chooses a solution. ◆ Participates in a negotiation session coached by an adult or older child. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Manages the negotiation process without assistance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Performs principled negotiation with peers and adults. ◆ Involves a peer who has little or no conflict resolution training in the negotiation process. ◆ Understands that nearly every interaction is a negotiation. ◆ Teaches younger students the negotiation process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Negotiates with difficult parties effectively. ◆ Teaches negotiation process to peers and adults. ◆ Enjoys negotiation process. |
| Mediation Process | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Participates in a mediation facilitated by an adult or older student mediator. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Participates in the mediation process facilitated by another student or an adult. ◆ Serves as a peer mediator in a classroom program or a schoolwide program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Mediates disputes among peers. ◆ Co-mediates disputes between peers and adults. ◆ Coaches younger students and peers as they learn to mediate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Mediates an array of disputes involving various disputants. ◆ Trains others in the mediation process. |
| Consensus Decisionmaking Process | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engages in group problem-solving discussions and processes facilitated by a teacher or other adult. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Participates in classroom sessions designed to resolve group conflicts and problems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Manages consensus problem-solving sessions for classroom groups of younger students. ◆ Manages consensus decisionmaking in a small group of peers (such as classroom work group or student council committee). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Manages consensus problem solving in various groups. ◆ Facilitates consensus decisionmaking as a member of a group. |