

C O N F L I C T M A N A G E M E N T
T E A C H E R G U I D E

Conflict and disputes are facts of life. *Conflict* is the internal feeling we have about a stressful situation with another person. Internal *conflicts* become external *disputes* when we engage the other person in an attempt to resolve both the situation and deal with the way we feel.

Most people dislike conflict and seek to avoid disputes. Yet some of the greatest achievements in history have resulted from struggles to resolve differences of opinion and perspective. Where would we be if there had not been leaders willing to confront tyrants and others who would deny freedom?

Learning about conflict and disputes can lead to learning from conflict and disputes. The turmoil they produce can lead to knowledge and growth. Conflict can actually create opportunities when we take steps to manage it productively. Resolving disputes provides every individual an opportunity to better understand relationships and appreciate individual differences.

Managing internal conflict and resolving external disputes are among the most critical social skills we can impart to our children.

**THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS
AS THEY LEARN TO MANAGE CONFLICT AND RESOLVE DISPUTES.**

This guide will do the following:

Inform you about the objectives and concepts that are included in the 8-lesson module being taught to students over the Internet in your school.

Provide you with methods for supporting student learning, including topics for discussion and activities that integrate the lessons with real-life experiences.

Note – A synopsis of each scenario the students will see is provided. You can discuss these scenarios with your students using the names of the characters that appear in the story.

L E S S O N 1

Lesson Name

Three Approaches to Conflict

Overview

Students will learn about three approaches to interest-based conflict management and dispute resolution and how each approach can be used either productively or unproductively. The Solve-the-Problem approach, also called Win-win thinking, is stressed to the student.

Topics Covered

- Three conventional approaches to conflict: Soft, Hard and Solve-the-Problem. (The Solve-the-Problem approach is traditionally referred to as the Principled approach.) Examples of manifestation of each approach (e.g., avoidance, power struggles, negotiation, etc.).
- The typical outcomes of each approach: win-lose, lose-lose and win-win.
- Introduce the concepts of positions and interests.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will identify three approaches to conflict.
- Students will identify the potential outcomes, advantages and disadvantages of each approach.
- Students will recognize that they have choices when facing conflicts.
- Students will begin to identify interests and positions they have taken in circumstances similar to those portrayed in the Lessons.

Scenario Overview

Has this ever happened to you? While you are at school, your parents go into your room and look through your things.

Chad is asked to see his Grandfather who is in the hospital.

Chad and Byron have a fight at school.

Enrique's grades are not good enough to graduate.

Topics for Discussion

- Ask students to think about how conflicts and disputes are typically handled by each of their parents or significant adults in their lives. Who usually uses a soft or hard approach? Can they give examples of a time when a principled approach was used? What have they learned from these people, both positive and negative, about dealing with conflict? How would they change things if they could?
- Explore the question: is avoiding a conflict always a sign of cowardice? When is it wise or unwise to avoid a conflict? What are some ways in which people avoid conflict (physically avoiding, mentally avoiding, changing the subject)?
- Discuss the four types of power: confrontation, power struggles, passive-aggressive power, use of force. When have students used power, or had power used against them? How did it feel? What were the results? Discuss the upside and downside of power-based approaches to conflict resolution.
- Is it always necessary to have a winner and a loser in a conflict?
- When is it wise or unwise to ask for help? To whom can students turn for help in a tough situation? What kinds of help can be offered (for example: get advice, ask a more powerful person to defend your rights, talk it out with someone)? How can students create trusting relationships with people who can help?

Activities

- Develop a project in which students explore the layers of the brain and identify the parts associated with the fight/flight response. Show how the primitive fight/flight reflex takes place in the older, reptilian section of the brain, while the newer, cerebral cortex is responsible for most learning. Have students report how the brain functions in relation to conflict.
- Have students examine animal behavior and note the predominance of fight and flight responses to threatening situations. Explore additional ways humans have of dealing with perceived threats in our environment.
- Review the life and work of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King. How did these two individuals use power to achieve their goals? What kinds of power did they use (passive resistance, non-violence, sit-ins, marches, fasting, etc.) and were they successful?

Questions to Ponder

As a teacher, what conflicts do you commonly face?

What approaches do you most often use in dealing with disputes?

Do you typically use soft approaches with certain people and hard approaches with others? Why? How often do you choose the principled approach?

How do you deal with group versus individual power issues?

To learn about ***Three Approaches to Conflict***, go to the Teacher mini-lessons, Lesson 1.

L E S S O N 2

Lesson Name

WIN-WIN Negotiation.

Overview

This lesson shows students how to prepare for and conduct a win-win negotiation session.

Topics Covered

- Separating people from problems.
- Managing your ego.
- Think before you act - responding versus reacting.
- Thinking clearly (rationally) when upset.
- Five steps to achieving a win-win outcome.

Lesson Objectives

Students will recognize the basic elements of negotiation by:

- Identifying statements that show the speaker is separating the people from the problem.
- Identifying ways that an out-of-control ego interferes with principled negotiation.
- Recognize the importance of thinking before acting.
- Distinguishing between behaviors that are “reactions” to conflict (impulses or habits) and behaviors that are “responses” to conflict (rationally thought-out).
- Identifying the best timing for successful negotiation in different conflict situations.

Students will identify in order the steps of a 5-step negotiation process: 1) gather information, 2) focus on interests, 3) brainstorm options, 4) evaluate what is “doable,” and 5) choose an action.

Scenario Overview

Lisa responds to her parents’ questions about where she has been.

John was planning to take his sister to zoo.

Jim’s response to bad grades.

Topics for Discussion

- Ask students to think about the implications of having a loser in a dispute. What advantages can students see in using a win-win approach (where there are no losers) to resolving disputes? How can you make everyone a “winner” in life without creating a class of “losers”?
- Have students think about some of the conflicts they have faced, or are now facing, and imagine what a win-win outcome might look like. What steps should they follow as they prepare to negotiate?
- Discuss how nations have traditionally settled their differences (win-lose). Discuss the win-lose strategy in historical contexts. What has generally been the cost in social and economic terms of warfare throughout history? When is a victory a loss? (Pyrric victory)
- Have students consider world events today and brainstorm ideas for win-win solutions to international conflicts. Can countries have “egos” that get in the way of negotiating? How do countries sometimes “react” rather than “respond” to international conflicts?
- Discuss the problem of violence in our schools. Identify how acts of violence are the result of win-lose thinking. Is it ever really possible to make ourselves feel good by making others feel bad? Can bullies and their victims ever achieve a common ground? Discuss the implications of retaliation.
- Discuss how friends can help or hinder the resolution of a conflict? What factors do friends introduce that change the dynamics of a conflict? How does peer pressure prevent students from settling problems peacefully?

Activities

- Have students draw up a list of ways that friends can help friends solve conflicts in a win-win style. Ask students if they are willing to follow these guidelines with their own friends.
- Have students brainstorm win-win solutions to hypothetical or real world conflicts. Require them to keep track of the steps they took in the negotiating process before arriving at an agreement.
- Role-play conflicts using win-lose and win-win approaches to the same situation. After each demonstration, ask students for their predictions about what might happen next in this situation.
- Have students choose a personal conflict and enumerate how they prepare to negotiate. Have them brainstorm a list of past behaviors (theirs and the other person’s) that have prevented good negotiations in the past. What are they willing to change this time?

Questions to Ponder

“If you don’t model what you’re teaching, you’re teaching something else.” When disputes arise in your class, do you help students work toward a win-win solution?

How successful have you been at finding win-win solutions in your personal life, in conflicts with family, friends or colleagues?

How can you reconcile the concept of win-win with the notion that life isn’t always fair or balanced?

To learn more about ***Win-Win Negotiating***, go to the Teacher mini-lessons, Lesson 2.

L E S S O N 3

Lesson Name

Filters and Perspectives.

Overview

Students learn about different “filters” and how filters can influence our perspectives and actions. It also demonstrates the relationship between filters and conflict.

Topics Covered

- Major Filters that affect our perspectives: Gender, Ethnicity, Age, Appearance, Culture/Class, Jobs/Roles, Cliques, Relationships, Media.
- The relationship between filters, perspectives and actions.
- How filters and perceptions create rumors.
- How understanding filters can help you handle a dispute in a win-win way.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will recognize fixed and flexible filters and how they influence perspectives and actions.
- Students will become more aware of the ways filters influence their individual perspectives and ways in which they stereotype and generalize.
- Students will identify ways in which filters can cause problems in the first two steps of the negotiation process (1. Gather information; 2. Focus on interests.).
- Students will recognize the role filters play in rumors and listening.

Scenario Overview

Lisa believes “all guys are jerks.”

The “experience” filter - Dad doesn’t allow Doug to go to the party.

“Stephanie’s pregnant” rumor.

Filters influence how we interpret what we hear.

Topics for Discussion

- How do rumors start? How do they hurt people? Ask students what they can do when they hear a rumor, whether it’s about them or someone else, to stop it from escalating?
- Discuss the most common filters that influence our perspectives, and have students think about the main filters through which they experience life. How do our filters affect not only our perception of events, but also our choice of behavior?
- Is it possible to change our filters? Even if we can’t change our age, appearance or ethnicity, can we change our attitudes about them?
- Have students think of a time when they judged someone by the way they looked. What are some cultural stereotypes we learn as we grow up? Is it possible to “unlearn” our prejudices and mistaken beliefs?
- Ask students to think of a conflict in which they or someone they know have been involved. Can stepping into the other person’s shoes and seeing the conflict from their perspective help to resolve it?
- Differences in filters and perspectives create conflict at all levels. Identify the filters that can influence an individual’s perspective of a major issue such as stem cell research, military spending, energy policy, the NRA, etc.

Activities

- Have students experiment, through role-play, with being the opposite gender, or part of a different clique, or having a different appearance. How did the different filter affect their perceptions, feelings, behaviors or their attitude toward others? What insights did they gain by “trying on” a different filter?
- One way in which we filter the world is through our moods. Have students track their moods throughout the day and keep a log of changing moods. Do they have many ups and downs? What impact does mood have on their behavior? Do they make some decisions in one mood that they wouldn’t make in a different mood? (Reminder: student logs cannot be made public.)
- Have students watch a television show or film and count the number of violent incidents, including verbal and non-verbal threats and put-downs. Does the media influence our beliefs about how to behave in conflict situations? Does violence in the media affect violent behavior in society?

Questions to Ponder

Political correctness limits communication regarding sensitive issues that are at the heart of many conflicts and disputes. How can you effectively address a matter and still be “PC?” Does being PC create additional conflicts?

Are you tuned in to recognize other perspectives?

Do you have filters that keep you from seeing a situation from another’s point of view?

To learn more about ***Filters and Perspectives***, go to the Teachers mini-lessons, Lesson 3.

L E S S O N 4

Lesson Name

Emotional Management.

Overview

Students will learn how emotions influence actions and how to think clearly when emotional.

Topics Covered

- Definitions of different feelings and emotions.
- Thinking and choosing your actions before reacting.
- The sequence in which people process their environments: Event, Thoughts, Feelings, Actions.
- Effective anger management strategies: Look underneath feelings; use positive self-talk; listen.
- How to think clearly when emotional: Separate from others; release your feelings; separate your position from your interest.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will identify the steps in the sequence by which people process their environments.
- Students will identify three strategies for staying rational while feeling strong emotions.
- Students will distinguish between a rational approach and emotional response to conflict.

Scenario Overview

Girl is angry with boyfriend because he caused them to miss an event.

Topics for Discussion

- Ask students to tell the class about a time when they were angry. Have them notice any physical changes (faster breathing or heart beat, sweaty palms, etc.) as they recall this experience. Identify the underlying emotions (fear, hurt, guilt, disappointment, embarrassment, confusion, etc.) behind the anger.
- Ask students to think about their anger styles and triggers. Are they quick-tempered, slow-to-burn, or do they blow up and hold a grudge? What kinds of things set them off? Make a list of anger triggers.
- Ask students to recall an incident in which anger led to fighting or other destructive behavior. Brainstorm ways of defusing situations that arouse anger.
- Are violent confrontations such as “road rage” becoming more common? Are people angrier than in the past – or just acting on their anger more violently? How do influences in our culture (music, film, TV) affect our generalized level of anger?
- Students’ lives are full of stress. Discuss the relationship between anger management techniques and stress management techniques.

Activities

- Have students explore biofeedback. Can they detect the physiological changes that result from angry thoughts compared with calming thoughts? Does slowing the breath affect the pulse and heart rate? Research the physiological effects of anger on the functioning of our immune system, susceptibility to disease, longevity and well-being.
- Have students monitor their self-talk during the day. How often do they have angry or negative thoughts? How do these thoughts affect their moods and behavior? Have students see if they can replace these thoughts with positive ones whenever possible. (Reminder: student transcriptions or logs cannot be made public.)
- Role-play a dangerous or threatening situation, acting out the possible results of angry responses. Try out alternative responses, which defuse the situation. Process the experience by asking the participants how they felt in each case.

Questions to Ponder

What are your red flags for anger?

Which is easier to handle, a dispute with a student, other teacher, administrator or parent? Why?

What helps you defuse your anger?

What is your personal strategy for dealing with conflict, anger, stress and emotional pain?

Go to the Teacher’s mini-lesson, Lesson 4: ***Emotional Management*** to learn more about the strategy for effectively managing anger and other strong emotions.

L E S S O N 5

Lesson Name

Listening Skills.

Overview

Students will learn why listening is important and how to be an active listener.

Topics Covered

- Why listening is important.
- How to be a good and active listener.
- Active listening skills: attentive body language, focusing on the speaker, listening to understand (not to agree) and showing you understand.
- Ways to show you understand: repetition, reflection, and interest interpretation.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will identify the benefits of listening in a conflict situation.
- Students will identify appropriate repetitions, reflections and interest interpretations of a statement made by another person.

Scenario Overview

A girl believes her mother is not listening when she tries to explain why she missed curfew.

Daughter gets Mom to listen to explanation as to why she was late (because Stephanie's car broke down).

Girl hits fork on her teeth.

Jim and Ralph's camping adventure.

Girl describes knee injury.

Boyfriend is unhappy when girl joins track team.

Topics for Discussion

- What behaviors indicate that someone is listening to you? Not listening? What are the non-verbal cues that people should "hear" in order to have a complete understanding of the other person?
- What is the difference between listening to agree and listening to understand? Why should you listen when you believe the other person is wrong, or is not listening to you? What happens if neither person listens to the other?
- Do people listen to teenagers? Do teens listen to adults? To their friends? Do they sometimes look like they're listening when they're really not (and vice versa)? Discuss the impact of looking like you're not listening on conflicts and disputes.
- What situations from history (or current events) are examples of people being able to listen when they are angry? (e.g., in an arrest) What situations are examples of people NOT being able to listen when they are angry? (e.g., in a divorce or breakup)

Activities

- Do a simple "whispering down the lane" exercise. Evaluate why certain details were missed and others were reported accurately.
- Pair students up and have them practice listening skills with each other. Have them share with each other (and then the class) what verbal and non-verbal cues they picked up from the speaker. Have the speaker share what signs came from the listener that indicated he/she was listening to them and what it felt like.
- If your school has a peer mediation program, invite students to present a "case" in class to a mediator. Have the class evaluate all of the active listening and understanding techniques used by the student mediator. Then have the disputants describe their feelings as they went through the mediation process.

Questions to Ponder

Are you able to actively listen to your students and/or their parents, especially when they challenge you?

Can you really "hear" the principal or another teacher when you are angry at the way they handle things? How do you rate your listening skills?

How do you reconcile to students that some adults are entrenched in positions and may be unwilling to modify those positions based on what the student says – BUT the student must find a way to be heard.

Go to the Teacher's mini-lesson, Lesson 5: ***Listening Skills*** to learn more about how you can open your eyes and ears to listen more effectively even when you are ready to blow your top.

L E S S O N 6

Lesson Name

Win-Win Communication.

Overview

Students will learn the components of communication and how to use them effectively.

Topics Covered

- What is communication?
- Verbal and Non-verbal communication.
- Assertive and aggressive communication.
- Communication of feelings.
- Elements of win-win communication: use a neutral tone of voice; talk about feelings; make an "I" statements; ask open questions.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will recognize that they are always communicating, and that non-verbal communication sets the tone of an interaction.
- Students will identify the emotions expressed by different types of body language.
- Students will identify the value of "I" statements.
- Students will define aggressive and assertive communication and identify examples of each.
- Students will differentiate between open and closed questions.

Scenario Overview

Why is Chad more likely to get to a win-win negotiation than Enrique?

Topics for Discussion

- Which is more important in communication: body language, tone of voice or the words that are said. What are examples of these three elements in advertising, music videos and politics?
- Different people have different communication styles. Which ones do students prefer, and which ones do they dislike? How would they describe their own styles?
- Some people think they are being assertive when they are really being aggressive. How can you tell the difference? What can these people do to facilitate win-win communication?

Activities

- Ask for three student volunteers who have seen the same movie. Assign each volunteer to tell about a conflict in the movie. Have the class compare the 3 versions? What does this tell us about communication when people are in conflict (each sees and communicates the situation differently, even though they're telling the truth)?
- Pick a neutral phrase like "I'm fine" or "What's going on?" and ask different students to say it using different tones of voice. Have the class guess what the student is "really" saying. Then have volunteers say the phrase the same way each time, but model different body language. Which conveys the message more accurately: body language or tone or voice?
- Pick a current hot topic and have students debate it using assertive language. Have some students identify when the language transitions from assertive to aggressive. Have other students listening for win-win communications skills presented by the debaters.
- Brainstorm a list of student conflicts, then have the students make up assertive statements to address them. Discuss how these assertive "solutions" can be turned into action.
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Questions to Ponder

Am I clear, direct and assertive in my communication?

Do my body language and tone of voice send the same message as my words?

Can I be more effective as a communicator?

Go the Teacher's mini-lesson, Lesson 6: ***Win-Win Communication*** for ways to go right to the heart of the matter in your next difficult conversation.

L E S S O N 7

Lesson Name

Conflict Resolution - Decision Making.

Overview

Students learn how to use a variety of skills to make good decisions.

Topics Covered

- Review of three approaches to conflict: Hard, Soft and Solve-the-Problem (Principled).
- Steps to effective decision-making: define the problem; generate alternatives; evaluate consequences; select the best option.
- Thinking before you act: what to do when you have time and when you don't.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will define the problem in a decision-making situation.
- Students will generate alternatives and identify the rules of brainstorming.
- Students will evaluate consequences of different options and pick the most effective option.

Scenario Overview

Pie throwing "decision."

John needs to decide between studying for a test and working to earn extra money.

John explores his alternatives.

John selects his best option.

Topics for Discussion

- Have you ever wished you could go back and choose a different way to handle a conflict? What would you do differently and why? Was the problem related to decision-making or lack of alternatives?
- How would your life be different if you carefully chose how you responded to the conflicts in your life, instead of acting out of habit? What stops you from doing this?
- How do the important people in your life make decisions? Do you think they are good decision-makers?
- What kind of decision-making styles do people in the movies usually use? How about people in the news? Explore the differences between real life and the movies and how conflict is handled in each
- Does the size of the problem change the conflict resolution decision-making process? Can your personal problem and a national crisis be address using the same basic skills and strategy?

Activities

- Have students select a hot topic where they can come up with a reasonable solution. Compare the ultimate result to the students' proposed solutions (current examples could be global warming or energy exploration policy). Discuss the decision making process.
- Apply the decision-making process to conflicts in literature or movies, and see if the approach the class chooses after thinking it through is the same one chosen in the story line.
- Have the class develop a list of "all time bad" and "all time good" decisions.
- Have the class enumerate the factors that can go into getting to a successful negotiated solution. Starting with the approach (soft, hard, etc.), separating the people from the problem, understanding that there are two sides to consider, keeping cool under fire, communicating effectively, etc., guide the students to the realization that getting what they want can be complex – but it can be done if they make good choices.

Questions to Ponder

How often do I make a strategic decision about responding to a dispute in my life, and how often do I simply react out of habit?

At this point are you comfortable enough with the interest-based approach to describe it to a friend or consciously use it to address a conflict in your life?

Go to the Teacher's mini-lesson, Lesson 7: ***Conflict Resolution - Decision Making*** to see how you can gain more control over difficult areas of your life.

L E S S O N 8

Lesson Name

Lights, Cameras, Action.

Overview

“Making it real” - students will plan personalized applications for the use of a win-win problem solving approach in their lives and their communities.

Topics Covered

- Win-win in action.
- Making a difference.
- Examples of projects and/or activities.
- Outline/template for planning an action.

Lesson Objectives

- Identify opportunities for win-win problem solving approaches in students' lives.
- Identify and design an activity, product or project that applies win-win attitudes, skills and/or information in their lives.
- Develop an action plan to implement the chosen activity.

Project Examples

- Student Non-Violence Pledges.
- Create T-shirts, posters and banners promoting non-violence and peace.
- Hold a Non-Violence assembly.
- Research causes being promoted by celebrities.
- Create a “Kudos Board” recognizing student achievements.

Topics for Discussion

- What historical events demonstrate the power of people taking positive action with a win-win approach?
- What events in history are indicative of an adversarial approach? How might events in history have been altered if the approach had been different?
- What events in your school involving disputes are indicative of either win-win or adversarial approaches? What could have been done to move adversarial situations to a more win-win approach?
- What can individuals or groups do to make a difference in your school or community. Share stories of people who made a difference, no matter how small.
- Activists versus pacifists – who gets the job done? Why?

Activities

- Start a “Buddy System” for conflict resolution where pairs of students reinforce each other and help each other take a win-win attitude.
- Start a peer mediation program in your school.
- Select an ongoing dispute in your school. This may involve student council, PTA, factions or cliques in school. Offer to help the parties in the situation by teaching them the concepts of dispute resolution, or just offer to LISTEN to what they have to say.
- Write an article for the school newspaper outlining the concepts of win-win approaches, including practical examples.
- Actively encourage students and colleagues to choose a win-win approach when dealing with other.

Questions to Ponder

What can you do to make a contribution in your classroom and/or school?

How can you encourage the students and be a role model in action for them?

Are you really “tuned in” to the campus climate? Does your assessment mirror that of the students?

Go to the Teacher’s mini-lesson, Lesson 8: ***Lights, Cameras, Action*** to learn how *you* can make a difference.