



Dealing with Conflict

THIS IS A: Student Assignment ✓ Classroom Activity

SYNOPSIS:

Students will examine their own responses to conflict by engaging in a webbing activity to distinguish between conflict and violence and completing a personal questionnaire. Students will be introduced to a problem-solving procedure and guided through the process of resolving a conflict.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will evaluate their personal responses to conflict
- Students will list steps involved in problem-solving
- Students will practice the problem-solving steps
- Students will demonstrate verbal and nonverbal communication skills

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL: 5TH, 6TH, 7TH, 8TH

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS/PERFORMANCE INDICATORS MET:

- 4.5.1: Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health
- 4.5.3: Demonstrate nonviolent strategies to manage or resolve conflict
- 4.8.1: Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health
- 4.8.3: Demonstrate effective conflict management or resolution strategies
- 7.5.2: Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors to maintain or improve personal health
- 7.8.2: Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- ***Dealing with Conflict*** questionnaire

CLASS TIME: 30 minutes

TEACHING STEPS:

1. Write the word "conflict" in the center of the board and circle it. Ask students for their associations with the word "conflict". Record their ideas on the board using a web format, writing associated words at the ends of lines radiating from the circle and grouping together related ideas.
2. Discuss the web by asking:
 - *What do you notice about the web?*
 - *Why are most of our associations with conflict negative?*
 - *What are some examples of conflicts?*
3. Explain that many people equate conflict with violence. (You may want to write "Conflict = Violence" on the board to make this point). Then ask students, "*What is the difference between conflict and violence?*" (When a distinction has been made, change the equation on the board to "Conflict ≠ Violence"). Point out that violence and conflict are not the same things because most conflicts do not lead to violence.

4. Erase the board and ask students to brainstorm a list of things that are positive about conflict. Some examples of the positive aspects of conflict are:
 - *It can shape our thinking so that we have new ideas.*
 - *Sometimes it can bring us closer to another person once we've worked it out.*
5. Explain that conflict is a part of life and we all experience conflicts at home, at work, in school, and on the street. In fact, conflict is often beneficial. Having conflicts with other people may be uncomfortable, but trying to solve them can reshape our thinking and often leads to new ways of looking at things.
6. OPTIONAL: Direct students to work in pairs for the next activity. They will take turns talking and listening. Give each person two or three minutes to respond to the following questions:
 - *What was a recent conflict you experienced?*
 - *Who was involved?*
 - *What did he or she do?*
 - *How did it turn out?*
7. Distribute the **Dealing with Conflict** questionnaire and have students complete anonymously. Remind students not to put their names on the questionnaire and encourage them to be honest.
8. Collect papers when students have completed them. Redistribute so that all students have another student's questionnaire. Then ask students to trade with someone two more times, just to ensure the papers are mixed up. If a student ends up back with his/her own, tell students to keep it to themselves.
9. As a class, determine the most common answers for each response to conflict by reading answers aloud.
10. Explain that when people are in a conflict, they respond in various ways. Some of the responses enable those involved to resolve the conflict, while some responses don't help solve the problem at all and can even make the conflict worse. Tell the students that there are steps to take that help resolve a conflict.
11. Write the following steps on the board:
 - i. **Define the problem**
 - ii. **Brainstorm solutions**
 - iii. **Choose a solution and act on it**
12. Go over each step with the class, emphasizing that **brainstorming** involves coming up with as many solutions or ideas as possible, while being careful not to judge those ideas. Also point out that the final solution should be win-win: everyone involved in the conflict should be satisfied with the solution.
13. Point out that before the problem solving begins; the people in the conflict have to agree to work it out. They have to agree to not yell or call each other names; basically they should treat each other with respect. Remind students that they should still respect others even if they do not agree with them. They should try to de-escalate the conflict, not escalate it. Encourage students to define problems in a way that does not affix blame.
14. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group come up with an age-appropriate conflict scenario and work through the steps. Observe each group as they follow the problem solving steps. Have each group describe or act out their conflict and the steps taken to resolve it.



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Instructions: Mark the boxes that show the responses that are most typical for you when you are in a conflict with another person. Then circle the three responses you normally make first in a conflict. Do not put your name on this and please be honest.

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Yell back or threaten the person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid or ignore the person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to understand the other side	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complain to an adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call the other person names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let the person have their way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to reach a compromise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let an adult decide who is right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Try to find ways to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apologize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hit or push back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make it into a joke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pretend my feelings are not hurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions: Finish the following sentences

I get angry when

I make others angry when I

When I'm talking to someone who is really angry, an important thing to do is

When I'm really angry with someone, an important thing for me to do is

When I'm upset with or bothered by another student, I can (list three things)

When I have a disagreement or conflict with someone, we can agree to