

Adolescents learn about and practice different strategies for handling and resolving conflict.



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 30 min



Activity Overview

Purpose

Explore complex topics related to conflict. Use role playing.

Objectives

Adolescents will be able to:

- ▶ Explore strategies for dealing with conflict.
- ▶ Practice problem solving skills.

Competency domains

Problem solving and managing conflict.

Works well for

Adolescents who are ready to explore the concept of conflict in depth.

Phase

Connecting.

Before

Adolescents should have already begun to explore the concepts of conflict and peace, through Peace and conflict and other activities. Use Role Play tool.

After

Adolescents can follow up by trying to use the different strategies they have learned to resolve conflicts in their lives.

Preparation

None needed.

1

Ask the adolescents to sit in six small groups and place the marker board where they can see it.

2

||| Facilitator says:

"In one of our previous sessions we talked about conflict, and how it is a natural part of life. What are some negative things that come from conflict? What are some positive things that come from conflict?"

Allow the adolescents to discuss.

3

||| Facilitator says:

"Today we are going to talk about different strategies for handling conflict, and the different results - positive and negative - they can lead to."

4

Write the following six strategies on the marker board and carefully explain each one:

- ▶ **Aggression** means trying to force or intimidate someone to do things a certain way. Examples: Physical fighting, yelling, insulting.
- ▶ **Compromising** means that both sides give up a little bit of what they want, to try to find a middle point and solution.
- ▶ **Giving in** means that one person lets the other person have things the way they prefer.
- ▶ **Avoiding or delaying** means pretending there is no problem.
- ▶ **Appealing to an authority** means asking someone in a higher position (such as a leader, a judge, a teacher or another adult) to settle the conflict.
- ▶ **Collaboration** means trying to find a solution together. Collaboration usually includes finding common goals and hopes, listening and understanding each other's point of view, and suggesting creative ways forward.

5

Let the adolescents ask questions and help each other to grasp the concepts. Make sure they have a clear and accurate understanding of each strategy.

Assign one strategy to each group.
Facilitator says:

||| Facilitator says:

"Each group is going to organize a role play focusing on one of these strategies. All of you will use the same conflict scenario, about two girls named Amina and Mary. Use your group's strategy to help Mary to resolve her conflict."

Conflict scenario: Amina and Mary both have younger brothers and sisters in primary school. Amina promises Mary that she will take Mary's younger brother home from school that afternoon when she goes to get her younger sister. This would give Mary time to meet with her study group to work on a school project. But when the afternoon comes, Amina tells Mary that she can't help her after all, because she has to go home early to do her homework.

6

Give all of the groups time to practice and prepare for their role plays. Encourage them to keep their role-plays short so that there is time for discussion afterwards.

7

Ask all of the groups to perform their role plays and then discuss which conflict strategies led to the best results.

8

Sharing and Take Away:

Discuss:

What were the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy?



9

Explain:

There is no one right way to handle conflicts. However, some of the strategies can make conflicts better or worse. For example:

- ▶ **Aggression** can cause harm to people, their lives and their feelings.
- ▶ **Compromising** can result in an agreement that reduces anger and frustration (if both people think it is fair). However, a compromise may not last if neither person is happy with it.
- ▶ **Giving in** means that one person's voice is not heard. That person may remain frustrated and the conflict could arise again. Also, when one person gives in the other person does not have the chance to learn from their perspective – and may not even realize there was a conflict. Giving in can work well if one person decides that they actually agree with the other person's point of view (this is also a kind of collaboration).
- ▶ **Avoiding or delaying** also means the conflict is likely to come up again in the future, and may become more difficult over time. However, sometimes a short delay can give both people a chance to cool down and think about solutions.
- ▶ **Appealing to authority** does not give the two people involved in the conflict a chance to be part of the solution or

to rebuild their relationship. However, sometimes it can help to ask an authority to step into a conflict if both people are unable to find a solution that works, or if the conflict may lead to harm for either person.

- ▶ **Collaboration** can be a very good way to resolve a conflict because it can lead to a solution that works for both people. When two people collaborate, they can also rebuild trust and good feelings. It can be challenging to collaborate, especially if one person in the conflict doesn't want to, or if both people don't trust or feel good about each other.

10

Give the adolescents some Take-Away questions to think about after their session:

- ▶ Look at how the different people you see deal with conflict, and which strategies they use. See whether the strategies lead to positive or negative results for the people involved.
- ▶ Reflect on the strategies you use in the conflicts in your life. What results do you get?
- ▶ Think of a different strategy you would like to use the next time you are in a conflict. (If adolescents are interested, take time in follow-up sessions to reflect on how well they have used that strategy, and what may have changed as a result.)

Do & Don't

- ✓ Make sure that the adolescents understand the six strategies for handling conflict, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- ✓ In follow-up sessions, discuss ways that adolescents can constructively explore a conflict that has affected them (if they want to do so).
- ✗ Ask adolescents to describe specific conflicts they have experienced if they don't want to do so.
- ✗ Allow adolescents to discuss conflicts they have witnessed that involve people that adolescents in the circle know --Community members may start to distrust adolescent circles if they feel that they are being talked or gossiped about. If adolescents are very concerned about conflicts they have witnessed, consider ways to engage them in a constructive dialogue with others in the community.
- ✗ Refer to complex conflicts, or conflicts that have deeply affected adolescents' lives or communities. Instead, use simple, neutral examples to build a basic understanding of the concepts.

Adaptation

Take more time. If adolescents want or need more time to finish the activity, continue with the role plays in a follow-up session. Take time to explore each strategy in-depth as long as adolescents remain interested and engaged.

Cultural context: Discuss how conflicts between individuals or groups are resolved through adolescents' cultural traditions. Explore whether these traditional processes are related to any of the six strategies.

Environment

Indoor or outdoor space with minimal distractions, where adolescents can rehearse and perform their role plays.

Supplies

- ▶ A marker board or at least three pieces of flip chart paper.
- ▶ Markers.

Improvise

Adolescents can create a poster campaign to discourage their peers from using negative strategies to resolve conflicts, and to promote constructive strategies.

Continue

- ▶ Encourage adolescents to think about how they and the people around them deal with conflicts, and support them to set goals for using the positive conflict management strategies in their lives. If adolescents in the circle feel comfortable sharing personal stories with each other, take time during sessions to share their progress with each other.
- ▶ Repeat the activity with different scenarios so that adolescents can continue to practice different strategies for handling conflict (if they are interested).
- ▶ Adolescents can transform their role play into a full-length drama. They could organize several skits to educate their peers about strategies for handling conflict and promote constructive behaviour. Alternatively, they could create a longer play based on a conflict that affects two or more characters.
- ▶ If adolescents want to understand a specific conflict that they have witnessed or that has affected their lives, plan activities that will help them to explore the conflict constructively and contribute to a positive solution.