



Title: Resolving Conflicts-4th grade

Grade: 4

Career Development Model:

Self-Awareness

Nebraska Career Readiness Standards:

- Contributes to employer & community success
- Uses critical thinking
- Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competence
- Utilizes technology
- Manages personal career development
- Attends to personal & financial wellbeing

Objective:

- Students will define the word conflict and the word resolution.
- Students will identify a conflict when they encounter one.
- Students will list different strategies used to resolve a conflict.
- Students will recognize conflicts can arise at school, during activities at school or in the community and at workplaces.
- Students will justify why it is important to be prepared with conflict resolution skills for college and career readiness.

Materials and Supplies Needed:

- Board or chart paper and markers
- "Sample 'You-Message'" activity sheet
- An "I-Message" activity sheet for each student
- Conflict ideas created by you to present to the class

Class Instructions:

1. On chart paper or a board, create a T-Chart with one side labeled "Words that Light Us Up," and the other side labeled "Words that Scorch Us." (Optional: Draw or print out a picture of a light bulb and fire to go along with each side of the T-Chart.) Ask students to brainstorm words that bring "light" (for example, joy and happiness) to their lives. To prompt their thinking, ask students, "What words make you feel good about yourself when someone says them about you?" Record student responses. Then, ask students to think of words that "scorch" (for example, burn, harden, sadden) their "souls" (egos, hearts). Again, record the words the students suggest. Following the brainstorm, tell students, "As we have just shown on this chart, words have a very special power. They can either lift someone up or tear someone

down. We have to be careful with how we use our words, especially when we are upset or angry. Today, we are going to learn the best way to communicate and use our words when faced with conflict."

2. Ask students if they have ever been accused of something and how it made them feel. After listening to a few student responses, show students the "Sample 'You-Message'" activity sheet. Have students read the text conversation between Naomi and her friend. After reading the text messages, analyze the conversation by asking the following questions: Why is Naomi upset? How do you think she is feeling? How do you think her friend felt when she read Naomi's messages? Which word is repeated the most in this conversation? (Answer is "you.") What types of adjectives do Naomi and her friend use to describe each other? (Answer could be liar, mean, worst friend ever.) Could Naomi have talked to her friend in a better way?

Lead the class to understand that effective communication is the key to resolving conflicts. Explain to students that whenever people are upset or angry, they often accuse others of doing things and use "You-Messages" instead of explaining how a person's actions made them feel. When accusations and hurtful words ("You-Messages") are used by the speaker, more conflict is often triggered because the listener feels as if he or she is being attacked. Instead, the best way to effectively communicate during a conflict is to use something called an "I-Message."

3. Explain how an "I-Message" contains three important pieces.
 - a. Begin the statement with "I" instead of "you," and a statement of feelings. (Write "I feel _____" on the board.)
 - b. Include a statement about the problem or what happened, but only stick to the facts! Do not use any hurtful words, accusations, or insults. (Write "when you _____" on the board.)
 - c. End the message with why the person's behavior has affected you and made you feel certain emotions. (Write "because _____." on the board.)
 - d. When finished writing all of the parts of an "I-Message," the final formula should look like the following: "I feel _____ when you _____ because _____."
 - e. Inform students that the way a person says his or her "I-Message" is very important. Tell students, "An 'I-Message' should always be said in a calm voice with eye contact, confidence, and respectful body language."
4. Direct students to revisit the text conversation between Naomi and her friend. Ask students to think of several different ways Naomi could have used an "I-Message" instead of a "You-Message." As a class, have students work together to craft an "I-Message" from Naomi. To prompt their thinking, ask students to recall why Naomi is upset: What is the main problem? How does Naomi feel? Why does she feel that

way? (A sample “I-Message” from Naomi could be “I feel hurt that you did not attend my party and went to the mall instead because I thought you had soccer and feel like I was lied to and ditched.”)

5. Hand each student the “I-Message” activity sheet. Direct students to work in pairs to come up with an appropriate “I-Message” for each conflict situation you created before class. (For example, a friend says something hurtful without intending offense, someone cuts in front of you in the lunch line, a younger brother or sister breaks something of yours.) Then have students role-play the conflict scenario and practice saying their “I-Messages.”
6. Close the lesson by reminding students that words are very powerful and must be used wisely. When faced with conflict, it is important to use an “I-Message” to express one’s concerns without hurting anyone else and causing more conflict.

Credits/Sources:



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Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Education, www.overcomingobstacles.org
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“I-MESSAGE” PRACTICE

Directions: Read the following examples.

Imagine they were happening to you; then, write your own “I-Message” for each example.

EXAMPLE:

Your mom is making you cut your hair before you visit your grandparents.
But you want your hair to stay how it is.

I feel *upset* _____

when you *make me change my hairstyle* _____

because *I like the way my hair currently looks.* _____

1. A teammate has been making fun of the shoes you wear to practice.

I feel _____

when you _____

because _____.

2. Your classmates won't let you join their game at recess.

I feel _____

when you _____

because _____.

3. Your sibling calls you a “nerd” because you like to read.

I feel _____

when you _____

because _____.

SAMPLE “YOU-MESSAGE”

Read the text conversation between Naomi (*messages in white*) and her friend (*messages in blue*).

How would you feel if you were Naomi’s friend?

