



Title: Conflict Resolution

Grade: 7

Career Development Model:

Self-Awareness

Nebraska Career Readiness Standards:

- Contributes to employer & community success
- Utilizes technology
- Manages personal career development
- Attends to personal & financial wellbeing

Objective:

- Students will use conflict resolution strategies to mediate interpersonal conflict.
- Students will use conflict resolution strategies at school and during workplace experiences.

Materials and Supplies Needed:

- "Conflict Resolution" handouts
- Whiteboard

Class Instructions:

Part 1

1. There are times in our lives when we get into conflict with others. It is inevitable that we will not always get along with and agree with every person that we meet. This will occur not only in our personal lives, but also in our school lives and work lives. It is necessary to be able to manage these conflicts so that we are not constantly getting into arguments with those around us and so that we can reduce tension. This is especially important at work because we often have no choice of who we work with. We may even have to work cooperatively with co-workers that we do not get along with. It would be hard to be productive if we were constantly arguing and conflicting with the co-worker without coming to a solution or agreement.
2. After introducing the concept and relevance of conflict resolution above, ask students to share a conflict that they recently had with someone. How did they react in this situation? Did the conflict come to a good resolution? Why or why not? If not, could they have done something differently?

3. Create a chart on the whiteboard of effective and ineffective ways of handling conflicts that students came up with in their examples.
4. Pass out the "Conflict Resolution" handouts and discuss both the helpful and ineffective strategies with students. Ask them when they have used such strategies in their own lives. Do they agree with the list of helpful and ineffective strategies? Do they believe that sometimes helpful strategies on the list seem ineffective? Can ineffective strategies result in additional consequences or simply work to delay the actual conflict? The point is not that certain strategies are right or wrong across every single situation, but how they may be helpful or not so helpful. We always want to emphasize, however, a student's life context and not to be judgmental about how they have dealt with problems before.

Part 2

1. Explain to students that they are going to be doing a 2-3 minute role play project in small groups (3-4 students each) that they will be presenting to the class.
2. They can choose a situation in which they are in conflict with another group member(s). Encourage students to use a conflict or a similar conflict to one that they have actually experienced. Give students 10-15 minutes to organize and plan out their role play.
3. They should first act out a conflict with their group in which they believe the outcome did not go well, and a positive resolution was not met because their conflict resolution strategies were ineffective.
4. In the second part, they should act out the same conflict with their group, but this time present a resolution in which they used positive conflict resolution strategies.
5. Tell students they need to be prepared to tell the class why they think the way they handled the conflict worked or did not work in each situation. If it did not work, what could they have done to better manage the conflict?
6. Have each team present their role play to the class. If time is limited, the teacher may ask one team to present instead.

Credits/Sources:

Making my
FUTURE
WORK

"Making my Future Work: A College and Career Readiness Program", U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

<https://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/mmfw/making-my-future-work-0>

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Helpful Strategies for Managing Your Conflict

1. **Both people agree to follow the “rules for fair fighting.”** Rules need to be established so that no one “fights dirty”. For example, no name calling, no “hitting below the belt”, no avoiding the subject, etc.
2. **The goal is for both people to be satisfied with the outcome.** This means that you may need to compromise-the solution isn’t necessarily getting what you want, but coming to a solution that you can both live with. This may mean considering alternatives that you hadn’t considered before.
3. **Set a time to have a discussion about the conflict.** This should be a time that is convenient for both of you and neither of you are under a lot of stress. This allows time for both of you to calm down and gives time to think about the conflict and what you need to say. Allow enough time so that you both discuss what you need to (10 minutes before you need to leave for work will not be enough time).
4. **Don’t argue when you are emotionally upset.** Often times when people’s emotions are running high (they are angry, hurt, stressed, etc.) it is hard to think clearly and they may say things that they later regret. Wait until you have calmed down and you can think clearly. You may need to tell the other person that your emotions are running high and you can’t think clearly, so you would like to speak with them later when you are calmed down.
5. **Know when to stop.** Once you have reached an agreement or both feel better about the issue, stop discussing problems in the relationship. If needed you can talk about it another day.
6. **Take responsibility for your feelings.** Try to use “I” statements rather than “you” statements so that it does not sound like you are trying to blame the other person. For example, “I feel frustrated when you don’t acknowledge my suggestions”, instead of, “You don’t acknowledge my suggestions and that is really frustrating”.
7. **Describe the behavior that you want changed rather than criticizing it.** If you describe the problem behavior, then the other person can see what you would like them to work on. Instead of saying, “You are really mean and you don’t care about anyone’s feelings but your own”, you could say, “It can come off like you don’t care about other peoples’ feelings, when you interrupt myself and others during conversations and you sometimes say very hurtful things”.
8. **Focus on the here-and-now issue.** Don’t focus on something that happened in the past that cannot be changed. Focus on the present and future, which you can work on. Also focus on one issue at a time so that neither of you feel overwhelmed.
9. **Make the other person feel confident that you are not trying to hurt them.** If the other person feels that they can trust you, then it will be easier to discuss important issues because the other person will feel safe. For example, let them know that you are not trying to hurt or criticize them, you are just trying to resolve the issue.

INEFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING YOUR CONFLICT

1. **Name calling.** You throw any hurtful name at the other person. Things like, “Loser”, “Jerk”, “Freak”, and any profanities.
2. **Reversing the attack.** It started out that they had an issue with you and then you turn it around to make the issue their fault. For example, you keep forgetting to return a movie that they let you borrow and you tell them that they are just too pushy and they need to relax.
3. **Hitting “below the belt”.** Saying things that are intentionally meant to hurt the other person. This can be bringing up issues that are especially sensitive to the other person or things that they cannot easily change.
4. **Picking an argument about something small and trivial because you are upset about something else that the other person did.** This is a way of releasing your frustration to the other person, but not bringing up the issue that you are actually upset about, in return the real issue does not get resolved.
5. **Giving the “silent treatment”.** This is refusing to speak to the person that you are upset with. When they ask you what’s wrong you may respond with, “nothing”, if you say anything at all. This is not helpful because the issue that you have with the other person is never addressed.
6. **Changing the subject.** When the other person tries to talk about the subject of conflict, you change the subject to something else. Humor can also be used to avoid the topic.
7. **“Bottling it up”.** This involves holding in irritations about the other person. You hold the irritations in so long and they keep adding up until they do one more thing that irritates you and you “explode” and lose your temper. The behavior that made you lose your temper can be out of proportion to your exploding reaction.
8. **Over-reacting.** You turn a minor issue into a major issue by losing your temper and blowing up about it. This is the idea of “making a mountain out of a mole hill”.
9. **Hit and run.** This is bringing up an issue with the other person and then leaving. For example, you tell a coworker about an issue that you have with them right as you are going out the door to go home.
10. **Over-mirroring.** You repeat to the other person just what they said to you. Example Person 1: You don’t listen to me when I speak. You: You don’t listen to me when I speak.
11. **Kitchen-sink fighting.** You bring up every little thing that the other person has done wrong or that has bothered you. These little issues may have nothing to do with the real issue of conflict at all.