

Building Healthy Relationships: Conflict Resolution



Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Program of Studies Outcomes

The student will...

- R - 8.5 Develop strategies for maintaining healthy relationships.
- R - 8.7 Develop and demonstrate strategies for promoting peaceful relationships, e.g., find common ground in conflicts.

Teacher Background

In the grade 7 lesson plan on “Building Healthy Relationships”, students learned about listening and the beginning principles of constructive communication. In grade 8, students will learn and practice conflict resolution.

All too often, minor disagreements between people can lead to broken relationships or to serious violence. Conflict is an inevitable part of life and students need to learn and practice skills that will help them resolve their own conflicts.

Objective

Students will learn and practice conflict resolution skills.

Materials

- Handout: *Noticing Conflict*
- Handout: *Conflict: What About Me?*
- Handout: *Creating a Win-Win Scenario*
- Sticky notes for each student
- Three pieces of poster size paper with the following headings:
 - Bucking Bronco
 - Cold as Ice
 - Calm as a Cucumber

Get Ready

- List examples of typical conflicts grade 8 students might have with peers, siblings, parents and teachers.
- Ask students to describe ways in which conflict can be negative:
 - Conflict can be emotionally hurtful
 - Conflict can lead to physical violence
 - Conflict can result in broken relationships
- Ask students to describe ways in which conflict can be positive:
 - Conflict can be creative
 - Conflict gives us an opportunity to seek solutions
 - Conflict can open doors to communication and can bring us closer to another person once we've worked it out.
 - Conflict is a part of life that we all experience. Having conflicts with other people may be uncomfortable, but trying to solve it can shake up our thinking and often leads to new ways of looking at things.

Activity 1: Conflict: What About Me?

- Provide students with handout *Conflict: What About Me?* to complete. Remind students this exercise does not need to be shared. Its purpose is to help them think about conflict in their own lives.

You Have 3 Choices (optional activity)

- Hang 3 large pieces of poster paper in the room. Label each with the following headings: Bucking Bronco, Cold as Ice, Calm as a Cucumber.
- Explain to students that in every conflict, they have 3 choices regarding their response:
 - Bucking Bronco – refers to a response that is angry, hot-tempered or violent
 - Cold as Ice – refers to a response that ignores, avoids, or condescends
 - Calm as a Cucumber – refers to a response that leads to resolution, win-win solutions
- Using sticky notes, have students circulate around the room, adding to each poster words that describe what each response looks, feels, and sounds like.
- In large group, discuss student responses to each poster and the possible consequence of each.

Creating Classroom Posters (optional activity)

- Have individual students or a group of students create classroom posters of the 3 responses & their possible consequences.

Activity 2: Steps to Conflict Resolution

- Provide students with the worksheet *Noticing Conflict*. Instruct students to complete the worksheet as they think of a conflict that they were recently involved in, or one that they observed (that they are willing to share with the group). Alternatively, they can choose to use a video streaming scenario.
- Ask students what they would list as steps to resolving conflict. (Be careful to discuss general conflicts and to avoid specific conflicts that students are involved in).
- Distribute the *Creating a Win-Win Scenario* handout. How did student responses compare to the steps listed on the handout?
- Instruct students to break into pairs and choose one of the following conflict scenarios to role play. Alternatively, have a few students act out scenarios to entire class. First, have students act out the scenario, ending it with the conflict unresolved. Then, using the *Creating a Win-Win Scenario* handout as a guide, instruct students to act out the scenario, demonstrating how a win-win scenario is achieved:
 - It's Friday night and Sam wants to go to a friend's house. The parent asks Sam to be home by 11:00 p.m. Sam doesn't think he needs a curfew.
 - Mr. J, the math teacher wants his student to complete an assignment by the next day. The student doesn't think it is possible to get all the work done in one night.
 - Sarah's little sister keeps borrowing her clothes without asking in spite of many attempts to stop her from doing so.
 - During lunch, a group of guys get together to play football in the school field. Another group of students always try to "take their spot" to play soccer.
- As a class, discuss what it was like for the students to resolve the conflict using the steps. Were they able to come up with an agreement? How does this activity connect to their real life?

Conclusion

Learning how to manage conflict is an essential skill to learn and practice, because it is an inevitable part of life. It is important to reflect on how you typically resolve conflict and think about ways that you can improve on this skill. Doing so will help you have healthy relationships now and in the future.

Take Home Activity & Follow Up Classroom Discussion

Using the handout *Creating a Win-Win Scenario*, ask students to work through the 5 steps with someone they live with using a conflict that they make up or one that they are having at present.

Discuss the student's experience of using the *Creating a Win-Win Scenario* with a family member or significant other.

Assessment Strategy

- Students will be able to name the 5 steps of “*Creating a Win-Win Scenario*”.
- Students will have participated in the classroom role play and follow up discussion.
- Students will have used the steps at home with a family member or significant other to help resolve a conflict.

Noticing Conflict

Where did the conflict take place?	
What was the conflict about?	
Who was involved?	
What did you notice about their actions, words, emotions during the conflict?	
Describe how the conflict was resolved?	

Conflict: What about me?

1 Describe some situations that create conflict for you:

2 Most of the time, I deal with conflict by:

3 What would I like to learn that will help me become better at resolving conflict?

Creating a Win-Win Scenario

Step 1: Be willing to solve the conflict

Do we both agree to take the time & energy to solve our conflict?

Step 2: Listen

The Speaker

- I am feeling _____ about _____ because...

The Listener

- You feel _____ about _____ because...

Feeling Words:

- angry, frustrated, excited, sad, made, happy, nervous, scared, disrespected, unhappy, scared

Step 3: Discuss each other's point of view and brainstorm possible solutions

Write down each other's ideas:

Step 4: Evaluate each solution

Which solution/solutions meet the needs of all parties involved?