

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 872

CE 065 962

TITLE Conflict Resolution Model. Final Report.
 INSTITUTION Center for Literacy, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
 SPONS AGENCY Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg.
 PUB DATE 93
 NOTE 185p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Classroom Use
 - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Guides -
 Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner)
 (051)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Behavioral Objectives;
 *Conflict Resolution; *Curriculum Development;
 *English (Second Language); Instructional Materials;
 Learning Activities; *Literacy Education; Material
 Development; Workshops
 IDENTIFIERS 353 Project

ABSTRACT

The Conflict Resolution Model project was designed to develop and field test an instructional model and materials for use in providing instruction in conflict resolution theory and techniques to participants in adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs. The instructional materials were written in a workshop format and were structured to build on learners' existing knowledge and strengths in conflict resolution while simultaneously presenting alternative conflict resolution techniques. A project manual and a learner's handbook manual were written, field tested on 111 learners in one 1 ESL class and 4 ABLE classes, and revised between field tests. Written evaluations confirmed that the students found the workshops interesting, relevant, and useful. (Accompanying this project report are a learner's handbook and instructor's manual. Included in the learner's handbook are reading materials on arguing, conflict resolution, and group conflict resolution. The instructor's manual includes the following: introduction; instructor's guide consisting of notes and an outline and description of the instructional model; learner's handbook; and overview, outline, activities, and handouts for the three workshops.) (MN)

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Final Report

Conflict Resolution Model

Project #98-3019
Federal Funding \$10,463

Fiscal Year 1993

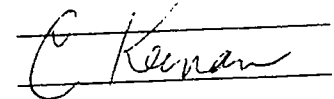
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to develop and field test an instructional model and materials to provide instruction in conflict resolution theory and techniques to participants in adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) and English as a second language (ESL) programs.

The instructional model was to build on learners' existing knowledge and strengths in conflict resolution while providing them with the opportunity to learn about and apply alternative techniques.

Materials to be created included a handbook to make conflict resolution information accessible to learners and a manual to assist educators in providing instruction in conflict resolution. The handbook was to be written on a low reading level and contain information on conflict resolution theory and techniques. The manual was to include notes on conflict resolution for educators, documentation of the instructional model, and the materials for instruction.

The instruction was to present conflict resolution in the context of education, approaching the resolution of conflict as a process of learning and growth. It was also to apply theory and techniques to everyday situations selected by students. Participation in this project was intended to help learners establish a clearer connection between what they read about and what they have to face in their daily lives.

The relevance of the instructional materials was to be guaranteed by field testing in four ABLE or ESL classes. Revisions were to be made when necessary between field tests.

The immediate audience for the project was to be adult learners in four CFL classes. The model and materials would be appropriate for use in other CFL classes and by adult basic education providers statewide.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This project provided adults with limited literacy and English skills with information on conflict resolution theory and techniques. Through the project CFL:

- developed materials on a low reading level to make conflict resolution theory and techniques accessible to students with limited reading and English ability;
- produced an instructional model for use in teaching conflict resolution skills to adults, especially those with limited literacy and English skills; and
- piloted the materials in community, family, and work-related classes, with literacy, adult basic education, and English as a second language students.

TIME FRAME

This was a twelve month project, July 1992 through June 1993. A first draft of the handbook, instructional model, and materials was developed and field tested. Significant revisions were made based on the field tests in the first two classes. A second draft of the handbook, instructional model, and materials was developed. These were field tested in three additional classes and revisions were made as needed.

STAFF AND KEY PERSONNEL

The project director was Monty Wilson. He was assisted by Vanessa Watson-Martinez. The classes which piloted the materials included two classes funded by the Pennsylvania Department of

Education, two classes funded through Job Training Partnership Act State Education Grant monies, and one class offered in cooperation with the School District of Philadelphia, funded by Even Start.

AUDIENCE

The immediate audience for the project was adult learners in the five participating CFL classes. The model and materials are appropriate for use in other CFL classes and by ABLE and ESL providers statewide.

This project was funded by:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education
Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Permanent copies of the report will be on file for the next five years with:

AdvancE
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

BODY OF REPORT

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Limited literacy skills can affect an adult's ability to function in our society. Adult learners frequently cite difficulties in solving everyday conflicts as one of these limitations.

Existing materials on conflict resolution theory and techniques are at a high reading level and therefore inaccessible to ABLE and ESL learners. This project addressed the need for conflict resolution materials for use with ABLE and ESL students by developing conflict resolution materials on a low reading level.

Often, when conflicts arise in learners' lives, they ask for help from instructional staff. This project developed instructional materials and provided instruction in conflict resolution theory and techniques to enable learners to resolve conflict independently.

The instruction presented conflict resolution in the context of education, approaching the resolution of conflict as a process of learning and growth. It invited learners to share examples of conflict in their everyday lives and helped them to apply theory and techniques to these situations.

Instruction in conflict resolution took place in three workshops, each two to two and a half hours long. Each of these workshops followed the instructional model developed by the Center for Literacy. The model has two dimensions: structural framework and application issues. The structural framework consists of the four sections of the workshop. These sections are: Preview, Skill Development, Sharing and Modeling, and Closure and Evaluation. The application issues address the conflict that arises as a result of tension between the learners' beliefs and the concepts underlying the workshops.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a booklet on conflict resolution as a resource for instructors and learners. To develop an instructional model for introducing conflict resolution to ABLE and ESL learners, using the booklet as a resource.
2. To field test conflict resolution instructional model, using the booklet as a resource, in 4 classes with 20-30 ABLE and 20-30 ESL learners.
3. To assess learners' conflict resolution knowledge and skills, identifying ways to explore their experiences and values as well as specific conflict resolution skills to be presented, practiced, and adapted to their lives.
4. To develop low level conflict resolution materials focusing on specific skills using examples of conflict in areas of interest to students and exploring skills appropriate for resolving conflict in those areas.
5. To field test conflict resolution materials, using the instructional model developed, with 20-30 ABLE and 20-30 ESL learners in 4 classes.
6. To compile a manual for educators interested in teaching conflict resolution containing a resource booklet on conflict resolution for instructors and learners, notes on conflict resolution for educators, the instructional model, and materials which address specific conflict resolution skills.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 1.

A booklet on conflict resolution and an instructional model for using the booklet as a resource for ABLE and ESL learners were developed.

The booklet, entitled *Learners' Handbook*, provides information on conflict resolution theory and techniques at a low reading level for ABLE and ESL learners. It also serves as a resource book for educators new to the field of conflict resolution.

The instructional model is based on the following beliefs:

1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
4. We can learn these skills through practice.
5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

The model, which is presented in both outline and descriptive form, has two dimensions: structural framework and application issues.

The structural framework divides each workshop into four sections: Preview, Skill Development, Sharing and Modeling, and Closure and Evaluation.

- Preview is the discussion of what conflict resolution is and of what skills and ideas are involved in it.

- Skill Development uses activities to introduce four specific conflict resolution skills:
 - Using the Conflict Escalator,
 - Identify Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs,
 - Listening and Responding to Feelings, and
 - Restating/Reflecting/Questioning.
- Sharing and Modeling adapts these skills to the real world by breaking learners out of the false formal boundaries of the activities. This section of each workshop helps the learners to explore how these skills look and feel and how the skills apply in their lives.
- Closure and Evaluation summarizes each workshop and also helps the learners to wind down after discussing a hot topic.

The application issues address the learners' doubts, questions and emotions which arise in the workshops. The Center for Literacy's model explores four issues which need to be addressed by the instructor:

- Recognizing the learners' doubts,
- Being non-judgmental about learners' values,
- Modeling real conflict resolution, and
- Establishing and maintaining a high level of teacher comfort.

Conflict resolution is a very personal and emotionally packed topic. How an instructor handles these emotions and doubts can determine the lasting impact of the workshops. The use of modeling and opportunistic teaching deals with conflict as it arises in the workshops and helps participants to establish a clear connection between what they read about in the handbook and what face in their daily lives.

Objective 2.

The first draft of the conflict resolution instructional model was field tested in 2 classes. Instruction was provided in a workshop format and was based on the booklet.

In this first field test it became apparent that learners were not open to exploring conflict resolution theoretically. While they found the booklet interesting, most felt that it did not apply to them.

An equally significant discovery in the first field test was that presenting conflict resolution as a topic created conflict between the learners' beliefs and the values underlying conflict resolution theory.

Based on the reaction of learners, the emphasis of the instruction was switched from reading about conflict resolution to focusing on conflict in learners' everyday lives. Participants were asked to share examples of conflict in their everyday lives and identify conflict resolution skills which they used. New techniques for resolving conflict were introduced. Then these new techniques were applied to the situations which learners had shared. Finally, learners were encouraged to adapt the techniques for use in their lives.

We realized that the conflict which arose in the workshops provided a unique opportunity for the instructor to use an opportunistic approach to the topic. What emerged as the most effective instructional technique was modeling in which the instructor would apply conflict resolution techniques to the conflict as it arose in the workshops. We found that, if the instructor modeled alternative approaches to these real life conflicts, the learners began to see the value of developing conflict resolution skills.

The instructional model was revised at this point to include the structural framework and application issues described under objective 1 above. This allowed the instructor to be responsive to learners' needs by building on their experiences, modeling conflict resolution skills, and giving them the opportunity to practice conflict resolution skills.

It also addressed the discrepancies between learners' beliefs and the underlying assumptions of conflict resolution theory.

At this point, the conflict resolution booklet was recontextualized as a resource both for learners after they had some successful experiences using the conflict resolution skills presented and for instructors who needed to be more familiar with theory and techniques in order to use modeling and opportunistic teaching in the workshops.

Field testing was conducted with a total of 111 learners in 1 ESL and 4 ABE classes.

Objective 3.

Learners' conflict resolution knowledge and skills were assessed in the first workshop in each series through an activity called The Who, What, and How of Arguing. This activity introduces the learners to the workshops and helps them and the instructor to identify the knowledge and experience which learners bring to the situation. At the end of the first workshop, the participants completed a conflict map which recorded their understanding of conflict resolution at that point. The conflict map activity was repeated at the end of workshop three. This enabled the learners and the instructor to see the progress in understanding conflict resolution which has been made through participation in the workshop series.

Objective 4.

Low level conflict resolution materials focusing on specific skills were developed. The workshops encourage learners to identify conflict situations in their everyday lives and focus on helping learners develop the skills necessary to resolve the conflict. The most common sources of conflict which workshop participants cited included two

areas of interpersonal conflict: with one's spouse and with one's children; and two areas of group conflict: within the larger family and within the community.

Objective 5.

The materials were field tested with a total of 111 learners in 1 ESL and 4 ABE classes.

Objective 6.

A manual for educators interested in teaching conflict resolution was compiled. The manual contains:

- the Learners' Handbook as a resource for instructors and learners;
- an Instructors' Guide which contains the instructional model and notes on conflict resolution for educators, and three workshop packets for use in providing instruction in conflict resolution.

OBJECTIVES NOT MET

All objectives of the project were met or exceeded.

EVALUATION

As stated above, all objectives of the project were met or exceeded. Field testing was conducted with 111 learners in 5 classes compared to the 40-60 learners in 4 classes as proposed. The instructional materials were expected to be approximately 60 pages. The final product is more than twice that length. The instructional model, with structural framework and application issues, is a unique contribution to instruction in conflict resolution.

Written evaluations by learners (samples attached) indicated that they felt that the workshops were interesting, relevant to everyday life, and offered concrete suggestions for dealing with conflict, e.g., planning what you are going to do and say, avoiding actions that cause conflict to escalate, and taking responsibility for emotions. Also, learners realized the limitations of conflict resolution skills in certain situations. Comparison of learners' conflict maps created at the end of workshop one with those that they created at the end of workshop three showed that learners had grasped both the theory and techniques of conflict resolution. Educators who participated in the project found the experience productive for their classes and for them, as professionals.

DISTRIBUTION

The manual and final report will be available to literacy service providers state-wide through Advance. It will also be shared through Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth through submission of a summary to their newsletter. The manual will be placed on CFL's list of publications which has nationwide circulation.

The project director will submit a proposal to present at the PAACE Midwinter Conference or the PDE Summer Institutes in 1994.

CONCLUSION

Providing instruction in conflict resolution theory and techniques to ABLE and ESL learners is both rewarding and challenging.

The instruction is rewarding because it helps adults to identify and refine existing conflict resolution skills and develop new skills which are relevant to their everyday lives.

Instruction in conflict resolution is challenging because it creates conflict between learners' beliefs and the ideas underlying what is being taught. CFL's conflict resolution curriculum is based on the beliefs that:

1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
4. We can learn these skills through practice.
5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

CFL's instructional model presents conflict resolution in the context of education, approaching the resolution of conflict as a process of learning and growth. It builds on learners' existing knowledge and strengths and provides them with the opportunity to learn about and apply alternative conflict resolution techniques. It also applies theory and techniques to everyday situations selected by students. Through participation in this project, learners were able to see the connection between what they read about and what they face in their daily lives.

Attachment

Learners' Written Evaluations

Customua

I think the lesson for today about conflict was interesting because some people don't have communication skills as a goal of life it is short to be taking a part on it and to have two individual hostile is not going to make the matter any better we all have to learn to communicate to understand each other. Another words have a cool head and think about what you going to do and say before doing it, or saying it.

By
Customua

Linda

This was helpful for me
as a parent in dealing with
my child's IWA. I have a
son with a hot temper who
could use this tool.

Susan P.

I really enjoyed this class because, it showed me ways to handle different ways of solving problems, when they come up. Now when I get in to an arguement I can think about it before I start to say anything. Now I know that a person dosn't have to fight to get their point across. Thank you for your time I really enjoyed, and I learned a lot. Come back again.

Susan P.

Julia

I enjoyed what I learned today. I learned how to avoid certain situations. I found out that a problem could be avoided by not making one happen. I also learned that self control is good. I learned that there can sometimes be a problem that you couldn't be aware of.

I thought it was in-fighting
and it had something to do
with every day life. An how
to deal with it in the city.

John

The class to day was very interesting to me because I learn more about how to solve and control conflicts so that they don't get out of hand. And the short scene of the movie was interesting to discuss about. The ~~confession~~ teacher was very supported and fun,

Sherry

Kathy
I enjoy the class
today I thought it
was very interesting
I would like you to
come back and talk to us
about relationship with partners
Boy friend - girl friend
Husbands - wives
And I love role playing
Thank you

Julie H

I enjoyed the lesson very much it was excellent. It thought me alot of how to deal with myself & others on a more understanding level with others no matter who they are to me. And also taught me about myself in way of consideration to others very therapeutic & to keep emotions on track!

Thank-you
Monty!

Julie H

I need to know how to express
my feeling and don't yell when
I need to tell people how I
feel.

Cordy

Samirah G. - Sandi C

The workshop was good
but this is the real world
you can apply some of the steps
but not all of them it all depend
on some of the people you are dealing
with some times

This workshop was very interesting
please come back again.

Barbara J

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS MANUAL

Conflict Resolution Model

Project # 98-3019

Fiscal Year 1993

by

MONTY WILSON



Center for Literacy, Inc.

636 South 48th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19143

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Jo Ann Weinberger, Executive Director
Rose Brandt, Director of Educational Planning

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum was developed by the Center for Literacy (CFL) for use in adult basic and literacy education. CFL educators and learners helped pilot these materials in community, family, and work-related classes, with literacy, adult basic education, and English as a second language students. Their critiques and suggestions were invaluable in making sure that the curriculum would apply to many different situations including family arguments, disagreements at work, parent/child squabbles, and conflict in the classroom.

We would like to thank the learners and instructors who allowed us to develop these materials in their classes. Their time and patience are much appreciated: the Squirrel Hill education for work students and their instructors, Natalie Shapiro and Philip Wider; the West Philadelphia community class students and their instructor, Sandy Harrill; the Germantown YMCA education for work students and their instructors, Irma Torres-O'Brien and Matthew Smith; the Centro Pedro Claver ESL students and their instructor, Irma Torres-O'Brien; and the Even Start program students and their instructor, Stephanie Hirsh.

Additionally, we thank the CFL staff members who supported the project throughout its planning, writing, and revision. These include: Rose Brandt, director of educational planning; Sandy Choukroun, workforce education coordinator; John Houghton and Jessica Rosen, VISTA volunteers; Vanessa Watson-Martinez, instructor; and Yvette Walls, instructor. A special thanks to others outside of CFL: Michael Pfeiffer, Anne Rennenger, Steve Weimar, and Pat Whitman for their assistance with research and their expert advice in developing this curriculum.

Finally, we would also like to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the grant which made this possible.

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Literacy's Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum presents conflict in a different light from the usual assumption that conflict is a negative part of our lives. CFL's curriculum begins a process, for both the learner and the instructor, of seeing conflict in a positive way and practicing new skills to handle it. Instead of preaching about how learners *should* behave, CFL's curriculum offers a set of conflict resolution skills and leaves it to each learner to decide when and how to use these skills in their lives.

Innovations

The theories of conflict resolution presented in this curriculum are not unique to this manual or to the Center for Literacy. The ideas and activities were drawn from numerous written resources and from individuals who shared their expertise. Some of the activities, such as the conflict map, and some of the ideas, such as escalation and de-escalation, and positions and issues, are standard ones adapted from a variety of places. The Center for Literacy acknowledges its debt for all these resources. Rather than re-invent the entire wheel, we are thankful that the materials already existed.

Based on our knowledge of existing resources, we feel that the CFL curriculum offers the following contributions in teaching conflict resolution:

- 1) CFL's curriculum makes conflict resolution materials accessible to adults with low-level literacy skills.
- 2) CFL's curriculum focuses on adapting conflict resolution skills to the lives of adult learners by using the techniques of sharing and modeling.
- 3) CFL's curriculum stresses the need to respect the values and decisions of adult learners regarding the use of conflict resolution skills in their own lives.
- 4) CFL's curriculum stresses allowing adult learners plenty of time to debate and question the instructor regarding the application of these skills in their lives.
- 5) CFL's curriculum uses conflict resolution skills to deal with conflict that arises between learners' beliefs and the ideas taught in the workshops.

Materials

The Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum contains the following materials:

1) Instructors' Guide

This provides the model for CFL's Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum. It is a guide to teaching conflict resolution and handling issues that can arise around teaching such a hot topic.

2) Learners' Handbook

This handbook contains information on conflict resolution written at a level that is accessible to low-level readers. It is intended as a resource for both the learners and instructors. The Learners' Handbook is presented as part two of the manual for the instructor's use and convenience. It is also available as a separately bound handbook for learners.

3) Workshop Packets

These materials include:

- An overview of each workshop and the conflict resolution theories and skills presented.
- An outline of each workshop, listing the specific activities, materials, and time allotments.
- Step-by-step instructions for each activity, relating the activity to theory and guiding the instructor through the activity.
- Handouts for activities including worksheets, stories, and materials the learners will need. The instructor should feel free to photocopy these handouts as needed.

Workshops

The third part of the manual provides information and materials for approximately six hours of instruction, organized into three workshops of two to two and a half hours each. Instructors can follow the instructional plan as it is presented in the workshop packets, or they may select specific activities and use their own format. However, instructors who are new to teaching conflict resolution are encouraged to follow the workshop outlines closely until they feel comfortable with the concepts.

Conflict Resolutions Skills

This manual focuses on developing skills that are designed to help resolve conflict. The four specific skills taught in conflict resolution are:

- Using the Conflict Escalator,
- Identifying Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs,
- Listening and Responding to Feelings, and
- Reflecting/Restating/Questioning.

Using the Conflict Resolution Skills Manual

Before trying to teach conflict resolution, an instructor should read the Instructors' Guide carefully. It explains the goals of the workshops, provides an overview of the structure of the workshops, and prepares the instructor to deal with the tensions and conflicts that appear when he or she begins to teach. The guide helps instructors walk into the workshops ready to handle this hot topic.

Next, the instructor should read the Learners' Handbook which is written on a reading level accessible to both the instructor and the learners. The Learners' Handbook discusses how we act in an argument, why we argue, and some ideas about how we resolve conflict. It lays the philosophical base upon which the four conflict resolution skills are developed in the workshops.

Finally, the instructor should read the three Workshop Packets which contain the nuts and bolts of teaching conflict resolution. Each packet provides goals for the workshop, explains the ideas and skills to be taught, and describes the steps for teaching them. Copies of the materials for the workshops are included.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS MANUAL

INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE

- Notes to the Instructor
- Instructional Model — Outline
- Instructional Model — Description
Structural Framework
Application
- Summary

Notes to the Instructor

Teaching conflict resolution is not easy. It touches on an inherently hot topic for most of us. It deals with an unpleasant and often emotional part of life. Just discussing personal conflict can be difficult enough. Offering new and improved techniques for resolving conflict may seem pointless or patronizing to learners.

Teaching conflict resolution often causes conflict in the classroom by creating tension between learners' beliefs and the concepts taught in the workshops. Someone who believes in "do unto others before they do unto you" may disagree strongly with the idea that it is important to avoid power struggles - a basic tenet of conflict resolution. This disagreement can heat up quickly. The Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum is designed to help instructors relate conflict resolution to all areas of learners' lives including conflict which arises in the classroom when presenting this topic.

As noted in the materials section of the introduction to the curriculum, instructors can follow the instructional plan as it is presented here, or they may adapt specific activities for use in their own format. However, instructors who are new to teaching conflict resolution are encouraged to follow the workshop outlines closely until they feel comfortable with the concepts.

Instructional Model — Outline

STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

1) Preview

Goes over the ideas that will be introduced and the skills to be practiced. It includes ice-breaker activities and discussion topics.

2) Skill Development

Provides hands-on experience with conflict resolution ideas and encourages the learners to practice four conflict resolution skills:

Using the Conflict Escalator,
Identifying Positions/Threats
and Issues/Needs,
Listening and Responding to
Feelings, and
Reflecting/Restating/
Questioning

3) Sharing and Modeling

Helps the learners to adapt conflict resolution skills to their own lives. Learners act out and discuss how these skills might apply in various contexts such as in their families, the classroom, the workplace, and on the street.

4) Closure and Evaluation

Provides an opportunity for the learners to explore the relevance of the workshops to their lives and to evaluate the workshops. The closing activities help wind the workshop down and re-establish equilibrium in the classroom.

APPLICATION

1) Recognize the learners' doubts

Acknowledges the tension between the learners' personal beliefs about conflict and the ideas in the workshop. Talking about the tension and exploring learners' questions addresses their resistance to the ideas of conflict resolution.

2) Be non-judgmental about learners' values

Focuses on conflict resolution as a set of skills. People are much more receptive to techniques of resolution than they are to a moral stand about someone else's personal values. The instructor should respect the value judgements of each individual and leave it to the individual to decide what parts of the workshop are useful.

3) Model real conflict resolution

Uses the four conflict resolution skills when dealing with the tension between learners' beliefs and workshop ideas. Using these skills in class provides powerful evidence of the value of conflict resolution techniques.

4) Establish and maintain a high level of teacher comfort

Assures that the instructor has the skills to facilitate the workshops. Reading the material and practicing the skills with other instructors is recommended.

Instructional Model — Description

The Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum consists of three workshops, each of which is two to two and a half hours long. Each of these workshops follows the instructional model developed by the Center for Literacy. The model has two dimensions: structural framework and application.

The structural framework consists of the four sections of the workshop. These sections are: Preview, Skill Development, Sharing and Modeling, and Closure and Evaluation.

The application deals with those issues that we have found arise as a result of tension between the learners' beliefs and the concepts taught in the workshops. These issues require that the instructor recognize learners' doubts, take a non-judgmental attitude toward learners' values, model real conflict resolution by resolving learners' doubts about this hot topic, and establish and maintain a level of comfort with conflict resolution skills and application.

Structural Framework

Each of the three conflict resolution workshops has four sections: Preview, Skill Development, Sharing and Modeling, and Closure and Evaluation.

Section One: Preview

The three workshops begin with ice-breaker activities or a discussion of the ideas and the skills that are the focus of that day's session. The first workshop also includes the underlying beliefs of the conflict resolution workshops. Clarity about these beliefs makes the learners much more receptive to discussing conflict once they understand that it involves practicing a set of skills, not judging each others' values. During the overall preview, the instructor should make it clear what beliefs he or she is offering to teach.

There are six beliefs which the Conflict Resolution Skills curriculum is based on:

1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
4. We can learn these skills through practice.
5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

It is important for the instructor not to preach about how to resolve conflict but to focus on teaching a set of conflict resolution skills. The instructor should make it clear that each person needs to decide for himself or herself when and how to use these skills. The instructor also should tell the learners that their doubts and questions about conflict resolution are normal and, in fact, will be used in the process.

Discussing the skills and activities in each workshop helps the learners see the point of what may seem like some pretty bizarre exercises. Knowing what the activity is about beforehand, rather than revealing it later, can help the learners understand what to look for in each activity and get more out of it.

Section Two: Skill Development

There are four skills presented in CFL's curriculum:

- Using the Conflict Escalator,
- Identifying Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs,
- Listening and Responding to Feelings, and
- Reflecting/Restating/Questioning.

The workshop activities keep things interesting by engaging the learners in practicing skills instead of just having them listen to a lecture.

The first workshop introduces the idea of conflict escalation and de-escalation, and focuses on the skill of separating positions and threats from needs and issues. The second workshop develops the skill of manipulating conflict escalation and de-escalation, and of listening and responding to feelings. The third

workshop focuses on the role of communication skills and develops the skills of paraphrasing what another person has said and asking questions for information.

Learners may not initially see how these formal activities apply to their lives, but they need the bare bones of the skill before they can flesh things out during the sharing and modeling section of each workshop.

Section Three: Sharing and Modeling

Sharing and modeling are the crux of adapting all these ideas and skills to real life conflicts. Sharing and modeling can be carried out in two ways:

1. The learners and the instructor share personal stories of conflict. While the learners are telling stories, the instructor mentally notes the strategies and skills they used during the conflict.

Next, modeling offers the learners a chance to re-enact their own conflicts and adapt the new skills into a form that suits them. The learners are invited to re-enact a past conflict or to represent a conflict they currently feel in their lives. The volunteer plays himself or herself and sets the scene. The instructor acts as the opposing member in the conflict. The goal is to resolve the conflict using the skills taught in the workshops. Once the conflict scene is up and running, the facilitator applies conflict resolution skills in order to bring the conflict to a satisfactory conclusion.

Finally, the instructor leads a discussion of the original conflict and the effects of conflict resolution skills on the outcome of the conflict. Discussion can be wide ranging, but at some point the instructor should focus on examples of the skills to be taught in the workshops. This gives the learners an opportunity to discuss and question the underlying assumptions they make in a conflict and the role of conflict resolution skills in their lives.

2. Besides re-enacting the learners' stories, the instructor should model conflict resolution skills when addressing learners' real doubts and concerns about the workshop itself.

The instructor can use learners' doubts and questions about conflict resolution as an opportunity to model the skills. It is important to pick up on cues and try to resolve these conflicts. The doubts of most learners provide a

real venue for the instructor to model how conflict resolution works. Using learners' doubts to help teach conflict resolution is not limited to any one phase of the workshop, so we will discuss it in more detail in the application section of the manual.

Whether the instructor is re-enacting learners' stories or addressing concerns about the workshops, it is important to know that modeling is not the same as role-playing. Role-playing involves people stepping outside themselves and adopting roles in order to demonstrate or practice a specific skill. Modeling makes fewer demands on the learners who may not be comfortable using the skills yet. It can be a good introduction to any role-playing you may want to do later. For modeling to succeed, however, the instructor must be very comfortable with conflict resolution skills. (See Issue 4 - Teacher comfort, in application section.) He or she needs to be able to turn on a dime and adapt the skills as needed. He or she may have to alter the language used or mix different skills together, but when the skills are applied successfully to the conflict, it provides powerful, visible proof that conflict resolution works in the outside world.

Section Four: Closure and Evaluation

Discussing conflicts, doing activities, and re-enacting personal conflicts can be exhausting, especially if learners have become emotionally involved in the session. Be sure to take time at the end to unwind.

Each workshop has time and activities designed to wind down the class at the end of a session. The first workshop includes drawing and discussing a Conflict Map to help people summarize the workshop. It also uses Kisses, an activity designed to help the class relax. The second workshop wraps up by reviewing and discussing the skills covered in that session. The third workshop repeats the Conflict Map in order to help learners see how their ideas about conflict have changed. As the instructor closes each session, he or she should summarize the ideas and skills covered and how they might apply in the learners' lives. At the end of the third session, the instructor should summarize all three sessions.

While summarizing, the instructor needs to use the application issues that can help him or her cool down the hot topic. How the learners will react to conflict resolution skills will differ from one class to another. One class may focus on family conflicts, while another class may discuss the differences in conflict

resolution styles between men and women. In drawing things to a close, the instructor needs to avoid debating with the learners and focus on summarizing the experience of that particular group.

Finally, the close of the workshop is a good time to thank the group for talking about their conflicts. A note of recognition and thanks does a lot to unify a group and calm things down if needed.

Application

While the group is moving through each of the four structural sections of the workshop there are four issues that the instructor needs to hold in the back of his or her mind: recognizing the learners' doubts; taking a non-judgmental attitude toward learners' values; modeling real conflict resolution in the classroom; and establishing and maintaining a level of comfort with conflict resolution theory and application. These are issues that can affect the success of any class, but they become even more critical when discussing a hot topic like conflict resolution. How an instructor handles these issues that apply across the workshop will often determine if the learners truly feel free to adapt these skills as needed or if they come away from the workshop, despite all promises, feeling preached at.

Issue One: Recognize the learners' doubts

Learners' initial responses to conflict resolution can range from polite silence to asserting that, "This conflict resolution stuff may be O.K. in the classroom, but it's never going to make it in the real world." Learners, and even teachers, may feel that these ideas have little street value. The instructor should not take these feelings personally. The learners' skepticism is usually based on a life-time of conflict experience that says "I'll believe it when I see it work, rather than get hurt." When students offer their doubts and feelings about the ideas in conflict resolution, it is easy for the instructor to come back with some very conflict *un*-resolving responses. The instructor may feel tempted to debate with the group, or the instructor may give in to his or her own doubts. In either case, the workshop is a failure because the instructor has fallen into one of two common pitfalls in conflict resolution: taking a position or avoiding a conflict. It is critical that the instructor avoid these pitfalls and face the learners' doubts about conflict

resolution, or in conflict resolution parlance, "avoid a power struggle and try to resolve the issue at hand."

Issue Two: Be non-judgmental about learners' values

One key to avoiding power struggles is for the instructor to model and stress being non-judgmental about others' values. Neither the instructor nor anyone else can decide for a learner whether his or her values are right or wrong. Those beliefs have worked for that person all of his or her life. Whether or not to change those beliefs is something each learner must decide for him or herself. The instructor is in the uncomfortable position, on one hand, of providing information, of being set up as the expert, while on the other hand, needing to respect others' beliefs and not invalidate them even if they seem to run contrary to conflict resolution theory.

Issue Three: Model real conflict resolution

Balancing respect for others' values with the desire to justify conflict resolution is difficult. However, the instructor has a set of tools with which to help strike a balance: the conflict resolution skills themselves. The learners' doubts provide a good opportunity for the instructor to model avoiding escalation; separating positions and threats from needs and issues; focusing on feelings; and restating, reflecting, and questioning others' ideas in order to resolve tension between the learners' beliefs and the ideas presented in the conflict resolution workshop.

Whether a learner is just apathetic or openly hostile, the instructor needs to separate the position the student is taking, such as, "I think this is all garbage," from the underlying need or interest: "I don't understand how this applies to me." The way a student presents his or her feelings will influence how the instructor responds, since the instructors are human, too. The instructor needs to be aware of the students' feelings and of his or her own feelings. The instructor can even address these feelings by saying something like, "So it seems to me that what you're saying/feeling ... Is that right?" or "When you say that, I feel good/bad/angry." The important thing is that the instructor identify the feelings, not judge them. For example, a learner states that "You're telling me that if somebody hits me in the face, I should use these skills? No way!" The instructor

could ask, "So you feel this stuff doesn't work for you? Have I got it?" The usual learner response is either "Yes" or "Actually, no, what I mean is..."

Either one of these answers is fine, because the learner has been heard. The instructor's follow-up statement to the learner's point will heavily influence how the class feels about conflict resolution. The instructor should avoid debating whether or not conflict resolution will work for the learners. Arguing will/won't is falling into a power struggle.

Instead of arguing, the instructor should re-interpret the learner's position as a more neutral need or issue. Rather than following up with, "You get punched in the face, and you think you don't need help?" the instructor could say, "I think you're right. When someone punches you, it may be too late for these skills, but how did things get to the point where you got punched? There must be a story there." There is always a story there, usually one that highlights many of the ideas and skills of conflict resolution. The instructor can point these out and even ask the learner to re-enact or model the conflict to reach a more peaceful conclusion. Once the instructor has demonstrated that conflict resolution skills do, in fact, apply to the learner's conflict, he or she should not push the point. It may feel tempting to end with, "Now do you see how these skills apply to you?" What this actually says to the learner is, "See, I win, you lose." This sets up a power struggle with the learner. The instructor should avoid this. Having demonstrated the usefulness of conflict resolution skills in the learners' lives, the instructor needs to respect the learners enough to let them decide for themselves if they are satisfied with the demonstration.

Respecting the learners' doubts and avoiding power struggles will also serve the instructor well in situations where the learners' doubts may be valid. A learner may ask what to do if he or she is in an abusive relationship. The correct answer is, "Hey, there is nothing to resolve here. It sounds like things have gone way beyond talking it out." The instructor should refer the learner to someone who can help. In this situation, if the learners perceive the instructor as respecting them, they will accept this response as a valid point about the limitations of conflict resolution skills. On the other hand, if learners perceive the instructor as preaching to them, they will view this response as a failure of the instructor and, by extension, of conflict resolution skills.

An instructor who has never done these workshops before might be surprised by how much time can be devoted to exploring the value of these skills. The instructor needs to watch for both verbal and non-verbal cues and draw out the learners' conflicts about the content of the workshops. Addressing these conflicts is not limited to a particular time or section of the workshop. The instructor should depart from the structural framework to address conflicts around values and beliefs as they come up.

When instructors *talk* about conflict resolution in a class, the learners tend to nod obligingly and withhold judgment until later. Most people want the world to be nicer, but they understandably feel that talk is cheap. Using conflict resolution skills to resolve the learners' real conflicts provides proof that these skills can work right before their eyes. When it works, it is the single most impressive demonstration an instructor can give of conflict resolution.

Issue Four: Establish and maintain a high level of teacher comfort

If modeling real conflict resolution is going to work, the instructor needs to be very comfortable and fluent with using conflict resolution skills. He or she must be able to adapt and apply them quickly in the middle of a very real and emotional conflict. This is not easy. If possible, instructors should practice on each other before trying the workshops with the learners. The only other way to gain mastery of conflict resolution is trial-by-fire. It is not comfortable, but it does work. Learners are usually more than willing to let instructors fumble the ball a few times, especially if the instructor admits up front that this is almost as new to him or her as it is to the class.

Summary

CFL's instructional model presents a structural framework for teaching conflict resolution and also addresses the difficulties inherent in applying that structure. These application issues which occur throughout the workshops are seen as an opportunity for adapting conflict resolution skills to the learners' lives.

The instructional model divides each workshop into four sections: Preview, Skill Development, Sharing and Modeling, and Closure and Evaluation.

- Preview is the discussion of what conflict resolution is and the skills and ideas involved in it.
- Skill Development uses activities to begin practicing the four specific conflict resolution skills:

Using the Conflict Escalator,
Identify Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs,
Listening and Responding to Feelings, and
Reflecting/Restating/Questioning.

- Sharing and Modeling adapts these skills to the real world by breaking learners out of the false formal boundaries of the activities. This section of each workshop helps the learners to explore how these skills look and feel and how the skills apply in their lives.
- Closure and Evaluation summarizes each workshop and also helps the learners to wind down after discussing a hot topic. In the closure and evaluation section of the third workshop the instructor should summarize all the conflict resolutions skills and beliefs that were developed.

Teaching a hot topic like conflict resolution brings out the learners' doubts, questions, and emotions. It is a very personal and emotionally packed topic. It is difficult to finish these sessions "unscathed." How an instructor handles these emotions and doubts can determine the lasting impact of the workshops. Rather

than just leaving the instructor to fend for him or herself, the Center for Literacy's model distinguishes these applied teaching problems as four issues:

- Recognize the learners' doubts,
- Be non-judgmental about learners' values,
- Model real conflict resolution, and
- Establish and maintain a high level of teacher comfort.

Effective teaching of conflict resolution skills requires that the instructor constantly apply these four issues in the workshops. These issues arise at the most inconvenient times, and are not easily distinguished. Handling them well requires that the instructor have an integrated sense of how these issues and the conflict resolution skills interweave. Once an instructor has an integrated sense of the skills and the application issues, he or she will find that conflict resolution workshops can have a high impact on the learners' lives.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Learners' Handbook

Conflict Resoluiton Model

Project # 98-3019

Fiscal Year 1993

by

MONTY WILSON

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- Part One: Arguing
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The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

INTRODUCTION

"I never said that!"

"Will you stop!"

"I want to talk to you right now!"

Whether you have used these exact words or not, you probably recognize these three phrases as the beginning of an argument. Most people can think of a time when they have either said these words (loudly) or have heard them from someone else. People argue all the time, and then wish that there was less disagreement in the world. But can you really imagine that you will never have another argument with your spouse, your children, your best friend, or your boss? Can you really imagine that you will never disagree again with your landlord, your neighbors, or a bill collector?

No matter how much you like a person or how much you try to smooth things over, you cannot escape every disagreement. Disagreement leads to conflict. Just like birth, death, and taxes, conflict is a fact of life. It is how you handle conflict that is important.

The Learners' Handbook was written to be used with three workshops that will help you learn conflict resolution skills. This handbook will not teach you how to avoid conflict.

Instead, it will offer some new ideas about dealing with conflict.

The first part of this handbook will explore one way that people deal with conflict: arguing. It will help you understand why people argue. It will also talk about three ways that people can act in an argument.

The second part of this handbook talks about conflict resolution between two people. This is called interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is the kind of conflict most people think of when they remember conflicts in their families, on the street, or at work. This handbook offers five basic principles to help you handle disagreements and resolve conflicts. These five principles are:

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

Conflict resolution is a structured way of using these five principles to solve a problem. It is very different from just blowing your top. It is a set of ideas and skills designed to help you solve problems successfully.

The third part of the Learner's Handbook will look at group conflict resolution. There are some differences between interpersonal conflict resolution and group conflict resolution. The five basic principles still apply in groups. However, having more than two people in a conflict changes how people communicate and highlights the importance of inventing additional solutions to conflict.

We hope that the skills which you learn through this curriculum will be useful to you the next time you find yourself in a conflict. For example, we hope you will use conflict resolution skills when you disagree with your spouse, when you disagree with the phone company, and even when you disagree with local politicians.

PART ONE: ARGUING

People argue when they care about an issue or about each other. It can be easy to walk away from a stranger, but sometimes it seems like you just cannot escape the people you work with, live with, and even love. When people get to know each other, they discover each other's different values and needs. Conflict happens when people value something different than what another person values.

When people disagree about an idea, the way a job is done, or some action by another group, the conflict is about an "issue." For example:

Karen may feel it is important to do the dishes immediately after dinner; her husband may want to relax.

You may want the radio at a high volume; your neighbor may want to sleep.

The issue between Karen and her husband is when to do the dishes. The issue between you and the neighbor is the volume of the stereo.

Sometimes, however, the entire issue is only a smokescreen for someone's feelings about the person they are fighting with. For example:

Karen and James are doing the dishes. Karen drops a dish and James blows up about it. But what is really bothering James is the unspoken fact that Karen forgot to call him last Friday night.

This time, the issue of the broken dish is only a cover for feelings of anger and hurt over the telephone call which wasn't made. The broken dish allows James to vent his feelings, but the dish is not what the argument is really about. People's feelings are an important part of conflict.

Conflict occurs when people do not clearly communicate their feelings and desires to each other. If James does not tell Karen what he is feeling and what he wants from her in the future, Karen may continue to argue about the broken dish. Their disagreement will never get to the heart of the matter: James's feeling of neglect and his wish that Karen would call him next weekend. In order to resolve this conflict, Karen and James need to keep talking long enough to separate the issue of the broken dish from James's feelings about the forgotten phone call.

Communication can be hard because it requires that the people involved take responsibility or ownership for how they

feel and act. It may not be easy for James to admit to Karen that he feels neglected. He may not want to take responsibility for yelling at her about the dish. And Karen may not want to explain why she didn't call. However, James and Karen both need to accept responsibility for their parts in the conflict. Otherwise, they will never understand what is bothering the other person.

Unfortunately, sometimes people argue for power over a person or group. This desire for power can be based on how someone feels about race, gender, class, or a personal bias. The issues or feelings involved in the conflict may be completely lost in a person's desire to win the argument at all costs. In the case of James and Karen, if James decides he is right because it is his house and he is a male, then what James wants is power. James's gender and his property have nothing to do with his feelings or the phone call. He has decided, however, to ignore his feelings and simply make sure he wins the argument with Karen.

In summary, people argue for a lot of reasons.

- People argue because they disagree about an issue.
- People argue because of their feelings about the other person involved in the conflict.
- People argue because they misunderstand each other and have not found a way to communicate clearly.

- People even argue just for the sake of winning. Sometimes the issue is unimportant. The people in conflict are locked in a power struggle to prove their superiority over others.

WHY DO PEOPLE TRY TO AVOID CONFLICT?

If conflict is natural and if everyone will get into it with a person or a group at some point, then why do people fear conflict and work so hard to avoid it? We avoid conflict because society has taught us that conflict is bad. Bad experiences with conflict also teach us to avoid it. Most of us can remember conflicts that forced people apart and damaged relationships. Everyone has experienced or watched others lose lovers or friends, jobs or apartments because of a disagreement. Face it, conflict can feel lousy and have serious results.

Often, the outcome of the conflict depends on how people act. Think about it. How do you act in a disagreement? Do you yell back the minute you feel attacked - "I don't take nothin' off nobody." Do you refuse to speak when someone is angry with you - "I refuse to listen to this junk." Or do you try to listen? - "Hmmm. Maybe you have a point."

We are bound to get into conflict. What is important is how we handle it. Unfortunately, we often turn to arguing.

HOW WE ACT IN AN ARGUMENT

People act in one of four basic ways in an argument. They either withdraw, surrender, get aggressive, or resolve the problem.

Withdrawal means removing one's self from the situation. For example:

Karen and James disagree over how much money to spend on a new car. But every time Karen tries to talk about it with James he announces that he has an appointment to keep and walks out the door.

Instead of facing the problem, he has physically withdrawn from the situation. Withdrawal does not have to be physical, however. Another possibility of what could happen when Karen tries to talk about the car is:

James withdraws by burying himself in his newspaper and ignoring Karen.

In this case, rather than physically leaving, James has mentally withdrawn from the situation. Whether James leaves through the door or through his head, the end result is the same. He has avoided the fight, but left the problem of money unresolved.

Another response to conflict is **surrender**. Some people are so afraid of conflict that they will do anything to avoid it. In the case of Karen, James and the price of the new car:

Karen brings up the problem and James immediately says, "Whatever, we can do it your way."

He has **surrendered**. James has so much fear of a fight that he gives up talking about how he feels about the car in order to avoid a fight with Karen. The problem may seem to be solved, but that does not mean James feels good about the solution. He may believe that Karen forced him to surrender by threatening him with a fight. Since none of his issues or feelings about the car was even discussed, he may feel a lot of resentment. And that resentment will show up in other ways.

Withdrawal and surrender are ways to avoid conflict in which the problem appears on the surface to be solved, but resentment may force a worse conflict later on. Time definitely does not heal unresolved conflicts. Things usually get worse in the long run.

A third way some people deal with conflict is by **aggression**. Aggression is an attempt to resolve the conflict by either physical or verbal force. This time:

Karen brings up the issue of the car. James either

shouts and screams at her until she surrenders or withdraws, or he hits her until she agrees to his solution.

The problem has been solved, right? Wrong. **Aggression** may appear to solve the conflict, but resentment hides just below the surface. Karen may resent James's abusive words and if physical aggression is involved, Karen and James may end up in a legal conflict that is much worse than any problems about a new car.

Withdrawal, surrender, and aggression all fail in one very important way: they do not solve the problem. At best, one person feels satisfied and another feels defeated. Yet this is how most people approach conflict. They think that someone must win and someone must lose. After a few trips through that emotional meat grinder of withdrawal, surrender, or aggression, no wonder people try to avoid conflict.

The next part of this handbook will help you to face conflict, instead of avoiding it. It will show you how to resolve conflict by getting to the issues and feelings involved in a conflict. Does this sound too good to be true or even impossible? It is possible, but have no doubt, it is hard.

PART TWO: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict does not have to end with everyone feeling lousy. There is an important difference between unresolved and resolved conflict. Arguments usually end in unresolved conflict. An argument can start as a tense, polite conversation and turn into a knock-down, lip-splitting brawl. The problem or issue that started the argument gets lost in loud words and bad feelings. Nothing gets done about the issue. The conflict is not resolved.

For conflict to be resolved, the people involved need to work hard to solve the problem. Solving problems is so important and sometimes so difficult that many people study how to do it. The process they study is called **conflict resolution**.

Conflict resolution is a set of steps to help people discuss a problem. It is not easy. It takes practice. For conflict resolution to succeed, the people who are involved have to act very differently from what may feel natural in the heat of the moment. They may have to listen to other peoples' ideas or feelings, even if they seem stupid. They may even have to try to give the other side some of what they want. And they will have to take their time. An argument can be over in fifteen minutes, but conflict resolution can take days.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Communicate - it is essential.

For conflict to be resolved, those involved have to understand each other. Ideas must be expressed as clearly as possible. When one person is speaking, the others must be actively listening. Checking in as you go along helps you to know how communication is going. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice skills to help you communicate with others.

To get a clear idea of what is going on, you will learn to restate, reflect, and question the other person in the conflict.

To help make sure that you understand what another person is trying to say, you will practice **restating** another person's words by saying something like, "What I hear you saying is..." Repeating back what you heard the other person just say helps avoid misunderstandings.

Feelings are another important part of an argument. Learning to recognize another person's feelings and your own feelings can help keep an argument from exploding. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice **reflecting** another person's feelings by saying something like, "It looks to

me like you are feeling... Is that right?" Often, just being aware of your own and another person's feelings (anger, embarrassment, envy) can help you handle a conflict successfully.

When the ideas or feelings in an argument are not clear, you can get more information by asking questions about the ideas or feelings. Asking "How are you feeling?" or "So you want me to ...?" can help clear up confusion.

Another conflict resolution skill that focuses on feelings is **listening and responding to feelings**. In the middle of a conflict, your own feelings can get in the way of another person's feelings. Practicing talking about your own feelings and asking questions about others' feelings can keep good communication going.

Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.

Sometimes people care more about who wins and who loses than they do about resolving the conflict. When people stop talking about the issue, and begin to feel like they have to win, the conflict heats up or **escalates**. As the conflict escalates, the people get even more involved in a power struggle. The chances that anyone will solve the problem in a power struggle are not very good. In the Conflict Resolution Skills workshops, you will practice spotting when a conflict is escalating. You will also practice cooling conflicts off by focusing on the issues or

needs that started the conflict.

Take responsibility for feelings and actions.

It is important that everyone involved take responsibility for his or her part in the conflict. When people disagree, feelings often get high. This is not bad in itself. But it is destructive if people aren't aware of or willing to own their feelings.

It is also important to take responsibility for your actions. If mean words were spoken, perhaps an apology is needed. If it had been agreed to save money to buy a car and the money is lost in a poker game, this has to be admitted. In the workshops, the skills of Listening and Responding to Feelings and Restating/Reflecting/Questioning will help you get clear on responsibility for feelings and actions.

A special note about responsibility for blowing up

How many times have you heard this: "You shouldn't get so angry" or "Don't raise your voice to me." It seems that as an adult, you are only allowed to discuss problems in a calm, cool manner, when what you may really want is to yell your head off.

Anger can be frightening, but it happens. Feeling angry is fine. Often it is better to let it out

than to sit on it. Feelings are not good or bad; feelings just are.

What matters is how you act when you are angry. You alone are responsible for the way you act. Storming out of the house or shouting may be O.K., but it has a cost. How is the person you yelled at going to feel when you stop? Physical aggression is never O.K. Pushing, hitting, or beating are never acceptable ways to express anger. If you feel like hitting someone, it is your responsibility to leave the situation. Unless it's self-defense, no one can make you hit them. When you are feeling violent, you are responsible for setting limits on your behavior even when it feels like the fool really has it coming.

When someone blows up at you, you need to understand that now is not the time to try and solve the problem. Allow some time to cool off. Once there has been some time to cool off and limits have been set on behavior, you are ready for conflict resolution.

Separate feelings from issues.

Both feelings and issues are important but they have to be identified and dealt with separately. Cooling off time is essential when emotions are high. Getting clear on the issues

will help prevent emotions from taking over the discussion. If everyone involved has taken ownership of his or her feelings and actions, it will be easier to solve the problem. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice the skill of restating threats into clear statements that focus on the issue.

Keep inventing solutions.

Many times in arguments we forget to be creative because we are busy defending ourselves from the other people in the conflict. In the heat of the moment, people often see things as either my way or the wrong way. Because of their emotions, people believe that their solution is the only solution. We need to remember that there is often more than one answer to a problem. All the different skills taught in the workshops: **Conflict Escalation & De-escalation; Positions and Issues; Listening and Responding to Feelings; and Restating/Reflecting/Questioning** help us to invent other solutions.

11 STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This section of the the handbook will give you some specific steps to follow when you are in a conflict. The steps in conflict resolution fall into three stages: Planning, Discussion, and Closure. The five principles we talked about are part of all of the stages. They are important to keep them in mind as you work your way through each stage. You can ask yourself "Am I

communicating? Am I looking for a solution or just trying to win? Am I taking responsibility for what I did and how I feel? Am I aware of the feelings and the issues involved in the conflict? Is there another way to try and solve this?" Ask these questions at each of the steps.

Stage One: Planning

This may seem like a strange thing to do when you feel that an argument is about to happen. Who plans for a disagreement? They just kind of happen. Avoiding moving from a disagreement to an argument is the point of planning in conflict resolution. During the planning stage, you give yourself a chance to cool down and figure out what things you really want from the other person or group. The planning stage of conflict resolution is usually done alone.

Step 1 - Take time out

How often have you jumped on your spouse, friend, or co-worker in a fit of frustration? This is natural; however, it does not solve the problem. Taking time gives you a chance to cool your emotions down, pay attention to the issues that are bothering you, and see your own part in the conflict. It will give you time to think about the other person's points.

Also, taking a little time may also help you see other things that are bothering you. For example:

Karen and James are arguing about the dishes again. When Karen takes a little time out, she remembers what a lousy day she had and realizes that she is angry at her boss.

Because of Karen's lousy day at work, and because she took her frustrations about work home, she picked a fight with James about the dishes. After she took a few minutes to think about it, Karen realized what was really bothering her.

Step 2 - Get clear on what you want and how you feel

This can be one of the hardest things to do. Before you talk to the person in the conflict, make a list of the specific actions you want from him or her, and list what you could do to resolve the conflict. Remember, the other people in the conflict may want something from you. Try to guess what they might ask of you. Know ahead of time where you will compromise. Also, make a list of your own feelings. This will help you control your emotions when you discuss the problems later on.

Step 3 - Take responsibility for what you want and how you feel

Practicing your request ahead of time will help you keep calm and stay focused on the issues. Try using "I" instead of "You." This is part of taking ownership of what you feel. Saying "I feel..." to someone is much less threatening than beginning a sentence with "You are..." Using "I" makes it clear that the person speaking does not blame the other people involved. The statement "I like things neater, and I would like you to hang up your coat when you come in the door," makes it clear what you want and does not suggest a judgment. It just points out that you want things to be different. It does not say that one person is right and one is wrong or that you want the person to be different. On the other hand, the word "You" suggests harsh judgment. "You are always leaving your things lying around!" leaves little room to talk. It suggests that I am right and you are wrong. It is not likely that this will lead to resolution of the conflict.

Step 4 - Make a date to discuss the conflict

Arguments often occur when one person feels jumped on and unprepared to deal with the problem. Conflict resolution takes planning. If the time is not right to confront a problem, pick a different time, one that works for everyone.

Stage Two: Discussion

When you finish planning, approach the person or group in the conflict to begin discussion of the conflict. This is easier said than done. Discussion in a conflict situation is hard work. You will do some things right and some things wrong. Keep track of how the discussion is going. Feel good about each success you worked so hard for.

Step 5 - State your problem and your desire clearly

No one can possibly stop bugging you or meet your needs if he or she does not know clearly what you want. Keep your statements short and focus on what the person does, not on the person. For example, "I don't like it when you swear like that" is a better statement than "I think you are such a pig!" Notice that both sentences start with "I," however, the first sentence tells the person that you don't like swearing. The second sentence says that you don't like him or her. The conflict resolution skills workshops focus on using non-threatening words and staying on the issue the argument was about.

Step 6 - Check in with the person

It is important to make sure the other person understands what was just said. Do not assume that people understand you or that you understand them. Give the speaker immediate feedback so that everyone understands what has been said.

After listening, try using sentences that begin with words like "Are you saying..." or "It sounds to me like you are saying..." Using the skills of Restating/Reflecting/Questioning can help people in conflict manage to check in with each other in spite of angry feelings.

Step 7 - Pop the question

Once the person you are dealing with understands how you feel and what it is you are asking, it is time to ask him or her "Will you do what I asked?"

Step 8 - Give him or her time

Just like you needed time to think about what you wanted, other people may need a few minutes or a few days to think things over. No one likes to feel pressured for an answer. If needed, set a date to get an answer. Also, the other person or people involved may need time to calm down and focus on issues. They may want time to plan their own requests for you. Give them the same time you needed.

Step 9 - Answering the question

The person may grant all of your request or only part of it. The person may say, "I cannot do all you asked, but I'll try 'X' for now." It is very important that everyone involved feel that he or she can live with this solution. Conflict resolution is not

Let's Make a Deal. It may require several cycles of planning and discussion before a solution is found. If you do not feel good about a compromise being offered, it is important to say so now, or you can end up with another conflict on your hands later.

Stage 3: Closure

For conflict to be resolved, the process must have an end. Sometimes disagreements go on and on. One thing leads to another. It is important not to let this happen. Work to solve one problem at a time. Save other issues for another day.

Step 10 - What if the answer is "NO?"

Sometimes the idea of actually solving problems makes people sneer and think "No way, not in the real world! Who are you trying to fool?" There is some truth to this feeling.

It is important not to think of conflict resolution as all roses. Conflict resolution requires that people set aside their emotions and act in ways that do not feel natural. Following the steps is not an easy thing to do. Sometimes the people or group involved in the conflict do not agree about the solution. Everyone involved may need to go through the steps of planning and discussion several times. And after a few meetings, people may decide that these particular needs cannot be met. Conflict resolution is not a guarantee. At this point, the

people involved can agree to disagree and part company. Even if the conflict cannot be resolved, the process may help the opposing sides learn to respect each other.

Step 11 - Plan a check up meeting

Once an agreement has been reached, it is a good idea to check in after a while (two days to two weeks) to see if the agreement is working. At that point you can either agree that the problem is solved, agree to try the solution for an extended period of time, or come up with a new agreement.

Take a minute to congratulate all the people involved. Instead of falling into a pit of failure and problems, you have successfully resolved a conflict. Here are a few basic signs that the conflict resolution process was constructive.

The needs of the people involved were met and the problem was solved.

People are able to live and work together even better than before the conflict.

The people involved in the conflict have improved their ability to resolve conflicts with each other in the future.

THE CYCLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution is difficult. The process of conflict resolution seldom happens in 11 easy steps as described above. For example:

You may state the problem clearly (Step 5). Then when you check in with the other person (Step 6) you may find that you have been misunderstood and that emotions are out of control. That means it is time to go back to Step 1, taking time out.

In Stage 2, the discussion, you might pop the question and then give the other person time to think about it. As time goes on, you may realize that the other person is not just in a time out, but that he or she has withdrawn. As a result, you need to go back to Stage 1, planning. For conflict resolution to work, you have to keep trying.

PART THREE: GROUP CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Most of this handbook has talked about a kind of one-on-one conflict which is called interpersonal conflict. Group conflict is a conflict that involves three or more people. Most people have experienced interpersonal conflict with someone they care about, such as a friend or family member. Group conflict may also be familiar to people in their families, at work, or in the neighborhood.

A group in conflict can use the conflict resolution skills. The five basic principles still apply in groups.

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

However, interacting with more than one person changes the way people act in conflict, so it is useful to look at group conflict resolution separately from interpersonal conflict resolution.

Communicating is essential, but even harder.

Communication by talking and listening to others is very important. It runs through all three stages of conflict resolution.

When more than two people are involved, communication becomes much more difficult. When more people are involved, the chances for misunderstanding increase. This is because people can only listen to one person at a time. If there are three people in a group, there is room for any one person to misunderstand the other two. Things can get worse as the numbers go up.

Separate feelings from issues.

If the problem being resolved is a bitter one, feelings can often flare up and threaten to stop discussion dead in its tracks. In a group, there can be as many different feelings as there are people. People's feelings need to be dealt with separately from the problem. This is not the same as not dealing with emotions at all. It is very important to recognize people's anger, sadness, or frustrations and to celebrate when conflict resolution is going well. However, the group must agree to try to place emotions on the back burner when the official time to resolve the problem arrives. During conflict resolution, the entire group must try to focus on the problem, not how they feel about it.

Avoid power struggles.

Often what people want to get out of a situation is to win. This leads them to take a position and stick to it. Most people take a position at the beginning of an argument. Look at this example of three neighbors, James, Leon and Bill:

Bill holds loud parties every Friday night. When his two neighbors storm over to his house shouting about last Friday night, Bill immediately takes a position by stating that he can do whatever he wants on his property. Angered by this, James and Leon take a position by threatening that if Bill ever has another party again, they will call the police.

Taking positions leads to making threats and sets up a power struggle in which each side feels that it must never back down or it will lose. In large groups there may be many more than two positions and everyone may feel that they cannot give an inch or they will lose everything.

Now let's look at the whole thing again.

Bill's neighbors storm over to his house right when Bill has just finished reading this Learners' Handbook. Bill sees that Leon and

James are angry, so he lets them blow off steam and suggests they get together later to work out the problem. Having failed to stir up a fight, Leon and James agree. Bill has caused the situation to **de-escalate** by **separating** Leon's and James's **feelings** from the **issue** of the party's noise.

When Leon and James return much calmer in the afternoon, they insist that all parties must stop. Bill, however, tries to communicate by **asking questions** about what bothers them about the party. Both neighbors immediately insist that there is too much noise on Friday. Bill asks what is wrong with noise on the weekend? At this point, Leon **takes responsibility** for what he wants and says that he works on Saturday mornings and cannot sleep with the loud music at 2:00 a.m.

Instead of causing the conflict to **escalate** by saying that this is not his problem, Bill **restates** what Leon wants by asking "So, you're saying that what you are really interested in is getting some sleep?" Leon agrees with this. Bill then **takes responsibility** for his own interests and says that he still wants to have parties, but that he is willing to turn the stereo down at

midnight. Will that solve the problem? Instead of yelling at Bill, Leon sets his anger aside for a minute and points out that all the conversation and cars will keep him awake.

Bill could now cause the conflict to escalate. He could say that he tried to resolve the conflict, but Leon wouldn't compromise, so tough luck, Leon. Instead, Bill sets his frustration aside for a minute and looks at his interests and Leon's interests. Leon wants it really quiet on Friday because he has to work. Bill wants to see his friends on the weekend. Both Leon and Bill want to get along with each other.

Can this conflict be resolved? Is there a way that both needs can be met? Is it possible that everyone could get what they need?

Continue to invent solutions.

Instead of giving up, Bill decides to keep inventing solutions and try to get the situation to deescalate:

Bill suggests to Leon that he can change his parties to Saturday night. Leon admits that he could live with this if the stereo goes down at

3:00 a.m. Bill agrees and they have resolved the conflict.

Bill then asks James why he wants the parties stopped. James has had time to cool down, and to watch Bill and Leon resolve their problem. James does not work on the weekend so what is it that he really wants? Can he live with noise on Saturday night? When he thinks it over, James realizes that he doesn't mind the parties, really. He is more annoyed with Bill for not inviting him. This is a problem Bill can handle. Until now he had assumed both James and Leon had an open invitation. Now he invites James to the parties.

The conflict is resolved. Friday nights are quiet so Leon can get his rest. Saturday night is party night. Bill enjoys his friends, including James who stays until the end. And it was all done without the police.

CONCLUSION

It would be nice in the conclusion of the Learners' Handbook, if we could promise you that conflict resolution skills will make your life one sweet song from now on. This handbook was never meant to be an answer to all your problems. It was meant to offer some new ideas and approaches to how you can handle conflict.

These five principles are the basis of these ideas.

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly .
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

Too often, whether a conflict is with a loved one, a co-worker, or the U. S. Congress, it ends in frustration because the people involved have no tools to help them work out a solution. It is our hope that this handbook has provided some ways to solve conflict. We hope that you will use these tools in a wide variety of places: at home, in school, and even in dealing with the government. It is our hope that you will use them often and well.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS MANUAL

WORKSHOP ONE

- **Overview**
- **Outline**
- **Activities**
 - The Who, What, and How of Arguing
 - Ideas about Conflict
 - The Conflict Escalator, Part One
 - Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs
 - Successful Conflict Resolution
 - Conflict Map #1
 - Kisses
- **Handouts**
 - Ideas about Conflict
 - The Conflict Escalator
 - Conflict Escalator Story #1
 - Conflict Escalator Story #1 - Example
 - Conflict Escalator Story #2
 - Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs
 - Conflict Map - Example

WORKSHOP ONE OVERVIEW

I. PREVIEW

The first workshop opens with a general discussion of underlying beliefs about conflict. An ice-breaker activity, *The Who, What, and How of Arguing*, introduces the learners to what the conflict resolution workshops are all about. It is designed to help the learners see that they have plenty of experience with conflict and plenty to say about it.

Next, learners are invited to look at the underlying beliefs upon which the workshops are based:

1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
4. We can learn these skills through practice.
5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

The instructor explains to the learners that the workshop has three sessions and will focus on four skills: identifying factors which cause conflict to escalate; separating positions and threats from needs and issues; listening and responding to feelings; and restating, reflecting and questioning. **Make it clear to the learners that the focus of the sessions is on developing these skills and applying them to the learners' own conflicts.**

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

When the discussion begins to focus on skills, behaviors, or strategies that affect the outcome of conflict, the instructor should introduce the Conflict Escalator activity. Developing the ability to see escalation and de-escalation is the main focus of the first workshop. The conflict escalator

provides a structure (an escalator) which exposes the ways in which conflict builds from a series of incidents. Once the learners see the escalator, they can understand how their own and others' behaviors influence escalation.

The Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs worksheet teaches the learners to help conflicts to de-escalate. The worksheet helps the learners practice focusing on the issue or need as a means of resolving the conflict. After the worksheet is completed, discussion should focus on examples of positions taken or needs met in the learners' own lives.

Optional - The Kisses activity can be used here to help focus discussion on our assumptions about conflict and how these can cause escalation. Using the Kisses activity here gives the learners a break from discussion and helps expose peoples' assumptions in a non-threatening way. On the other hand, using Kisses at the end of the workshop provides a sense of proof that people actually do the things that were talked about.

III. SHARING and MODELING

After going over the worksheets on the conflict escalator and on positions/threats and needs/issues, the instructor should ask the learners to share stories of conflict in their own lives. The learners are asked to voluntarily reenact their conflicts in the classroom. The volunteer is asked to play him or herself while the instructor takes the opposing part and models the four main conflict resolution skills which the workshop will cover. The goal here is simply to model how each one of the skills plays out in the volunteer's real conflict without explaining too much. This is the learners first real evidence that conflict resolution applies to them. Later on, each skill will be developed and discussed in greater depth.

IV. CLOSURE and EVALUATION

As mentioned above, the Kisses activity makes a nice closing activity because it provides proof that we really do make assumptions that affect the

outcome of conflicts. Also, physical activity is a nice break before summing up the first workshop.

At the end of the workshop, the instructor should summarize the ideas and skills. Drawing a Conflict Map helps bring many wide ranging points together. The map should highlight the main points and skills that the instructor had planned to teach, and also include any innovations or important points that came up in discussion. For example, one class was focused on the context and limitations of conflict resolution, while another class compared conflict resolution styles of men and women. All these things belong on the map. The map provides a visual "definition" of conflict. When the class repeats this exercise in the third workshop, they will be able to contrast the two maps in order to see how their definition of conflict resolution has changed.

After the map has been drawn, the instructor should summarize the goals of the workshop. Conflict resolution skills can seem abstract and learners may ask at the end of a session, "So what was I supposed to get out of all this?" The instructor should answer that question (even if no one asks it) by saying something like "I hope that you will try these skills out. If you think of the escalator tonight in a fight with your husband, or if you try to focus on the issue when your kids are really getting on your nerves, then I consider the workshop a success. It's up to you to decide when and where these skills apply. I'm not here to tell you how to run your lives. But if one little bell goes off in your head next time you're getting mad, and that little thing makes you go 'Hmmm...things are escalating here,' then you've gotten what I hoped you would out of this workshop."

Ask the learners for a verbal evaluation of the workshop. Was it useful? How? What parts grabbed them? What didn't? After getting a verbal response, ask the learners to evaluate the workshop for you in writing. Recognize that talking about conflict is not easy. Thank them for their stories and willingness to try out these ideas.

WORKSHOP ONE OUTLINE - (150 min.)

I. PREVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

The Who, What, and How of Arguing. (15 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Ideas about Conflict. (10 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Optional Activity - at beginning or end of workshop,
Kisses. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The Conflict Escalator, Part One. (30 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

III. SHARING AND MODELING

Successful Conflict Resolution. (30 min.)
Follow activity guide.

IV. CLOSURE AND EVALUATION

Conflict Map. (15 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Optional Activity - Kisses. (20 min. as above)
Follow activity guide.

Wrap up. (10 min.)
Summarize the ideas discussed in the workshop. Ask the participants what they learned that they can use in their everyday lives. Thank them for participating and taking risks.

WORKSHOP ONE ACTIVITIES

Preview Activity

THE WHO, WHAT AND HOW OF ARGUING
Defining Conflict

- Objectives: - To explore the wide variety of ways of behaving in a conflict.
- To introduce the idea that some behavior is more effective in resolving conflict than others.

Duration: 15 min.

Materials: chalkboard, chalk, and handouts

Teacher Background:

Read - Part One of Learners' Handbook, "How We Act In An Argument."

Procedures:

1. List three questions across the top of the chalkboard in this order:
WHO DO WE ARGUE WITH?
WHAT DO WE ARGUE ABOUT?
HOW DO WE ACT IN AN ARGUMENT?
2. Take the questions one at a time. Ask the learners to answer each question. As each question is exhausted, move on to the next one. If the learners are reluctant at first, a few suggestions about who we argue with (teacher, spouse, etc.) usually helps get ideas started.
3. Ask the learners to classify which of the behaviors listed on the board solve conflicts and which do not.
4. Circle or underline those behaviors that the learners classify as resolving conflicts.

(This step is harder than it sounds. Learners may disagree about the merits of different behavior and its use in different situations. Rather than entering the debate, the instructor should highlight each person's point and list it on the board.)

Here are some suggested leading questions:

- Are all conflicts physical? Give me an example.
What happens at the bank/store when things go wrong? Is that a conflict?

When have you solved a conflict really well? Give me an example.
Which behaviors are aggressive?
Which would lead to a fight?
Which would make you feel like you gave in? Give me an example.

Try to keep things moving fairly quickly. At points where the debate seems to be getting repetitive the instructor can help move discussion by asking "Does behavior X help solve the issue that started the argument?" If consensus cannot be reached on a particular point, the instructor can suggest leaving this one blank and moving on, or the class could take a vote on the behavior.

4. Ask the learners if they see any patterns in the list about what kinds of behavior resolve conflict. The answer may be "No." That is O.K. The learners are at least beginning to distinguish between behavior which addresses the issue and behavior which doesn't.
5. Summarize by pointing out that from the list, it seems that there are all kinds of ways we behave in a conflict and that some of them are more effective than others.

Preview Activity

IDEAS ABOUT CONFLICT

- Objectives:
- To provide a brief overview of the beliefs and goals of these workshops.
 - To clarify that these workshops focus on teaching conflict resolution skills, not on making judgments of someone else's behavior.

Duration: 10 min.

Materials: IDEAS ABOUT CONFLICT handout.

Procedures:

1. After completing The Who, What, and How of Arguing activity, the instructor should pass out the Ideas about Conflict handout. Read through the handout once and discuss each point with the learners. It is not necessary to go over each point in depth. With a limited time frame of ten minutes, the instructor's main goal is to make it clear to the learners that the goal of the conflict resolution skills workshops is to develop conflict resolution skills, not to make judgments on another person's actions.
2. Read and discuss these six points:
 1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
 2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
 3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
 4. We can learn these skills through practice.
 5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
 6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

Skill Development Activity

THE CONFLICT ESCALATOR, PART ONE

- Objectives: - To introduce the concept of conflict escalation and de-escalation.
- To lay a foundation on which to teach other conflict resolution skills.

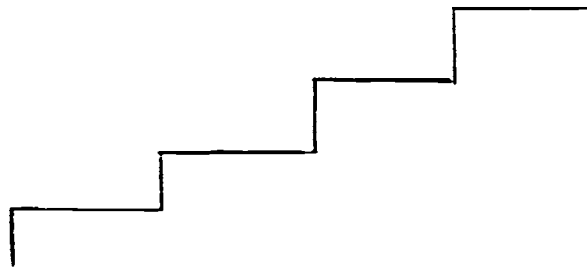
Duration: 30 min.

Materials: chalkboard, chalk, conflict escalator stories #1 and #2, and escalator handouts.

Procedures:

Explanation: the idea of the conflict escalator

1. Explain that when conflict gets worse, people say that it escalates or that when it gets better, it de-escalates. Write the terms "escalate" and "de-escalate" on the board.
2. Draw an escalator on the board as follows:



3. Read Conflict Escalator Story #1 aloud once. Then read it a second time and ask the group to signal you each time the conflict goes up another step. Each time the group identifies a step, write the action on the horizontal line of the escalator. Continue until you are finished with the story.
4. Review each step on the escalator and ask the group to identify what each person was feeling at each step. There may be more than one feeling. Write the words which describe the feelings.

Practice: using the escalator

5. Ask the learners to identify points along the escalator where the person in the story could have done something to cause the conflict to de-escalate. Circle these points. Write down suggestions on what could have happened to cause de-escalation in the situation at each point. The instructor could even draw the escalator going down. In this first lesson on the escalator, there are two main points to focus on:

- A. The "window of opportunity" to resolve the conflict.
The place in conflicts where people are aware that they still have control and choices is called the window of opportunity.

Once the learners begin to look at escalation in their personal conflicts they will suggest situations in which the skills seem inappropriate. They may describe this as "feeling too angry to talk about it" or say that they "simply are not going to take it any more." It is important to validate these feelings and accept that there comes a point beyond which conflict resolution skills do not apply.

Before these feelings take over, however, there is the window of opportunity for using these skills. The instructor should ask the learners to identify the point on the escalator where the conflict has moved outside of the "window" and draw a window around the area where the people in conflict still have choices. As one learner put it, "It's like those times where something in my head says, 'Wait, reality check.'"

Also, allow for a variety of examples in discussion that help show how the window opens and closes. During discussion of the window, the instructor should highlight the flexible context of conflict resolution. The window can be affected by many things: mood (patient or angry); relationship (spouse or store clerk); situation (dark alley or classroom); and a whole set of miscellaneous influences in the real world. Rather than try to define all the influences, the learners need to see that the window changes all the time.

- B. Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs
Once the instructor has introduced the idea of the escalator and shown that there is a window of opportunity to de-escalate, then he or she should introduce the first opportunity to control the conflict. Briefly ask the learners to identify what the fight in the story was really about; i.e., What was the issue?

6. Repeat steps 3-5 with Conflict Escalator Story #2 until the learners are comfortable with identifying positions and issues.

7. Sum up by explaining to the class that they obviously already know a lot of good conflict resolution skills. Move on to looking at positions, threats, issues, and needs in more detail.

Skill Development Activity

POSITIONS/THREATS and ISSUES/NEEDS

Objectives: - To define the following: positions, threats, issues, and needs.
- To learn to differentiate between positions or threats and issues or needs.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs worksheet, an orange.

Procedures:

Explanation: What are Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs?

1. Discuss the following situation with the learners. As discussion evolves, the instructor should illustrate each step with an orange.

Two people are arguing over an orange. Each wants the orange and neither is willing to give it up. How can they resolve it? Allow time for the learners to suggest solutions.

Continue the story: Finally, a third person comes along and splits the orange in half, giving half to each person. This is a "compromise." Did everyone get all they wanted? Let learners speculate on this solution.

Continue: One dissatisfied person cries out, "Hey, I need the whole peel to make a cake." The other one shouts, "Well all I wanted was the orange pulp for juice."

2. Explain that if each of these people had discussed their real issues or needs, instead of taking a position, they would have resolved the conflict in a way which would have given each of them what they wanted.
3. Explain that when people take a position, what they say often sounds like a threat. On the other hand, when people identify an issue, what they say states their need clearly.
4. Focus on the positions taken in the story. What were the positions taken? What were the real issues involved?
5. Explain that when people take positions they often make threats. Ask the learners to come up with examples of positions people take and the threats which result from those positions.

Practice: identifying issues and responding to positions

6. Read the following examples of positions aloud and ask the learners to identify the real issues or needs behind the position. Then ask them to clearly state the need in a way *that is not a threat*.
 - (a) Position/Threat: If you interrupt me again, I'm leaving.
Issue: You are making it hard for me to speak.
Stated Need: I'm having a hard time speaking here because you keep interrupting me.
 - (b) Position/Threat: Change your clothes right now or you're not going with us.
Issue: The clothing is not appropriate.
Stated Need: I really can't see blue jeans at your cousin's wedding.
OR: I'm asking you a favor, please don't wear that.
 - (c) Position/Threat: If you're late one more time I'll never go out with you again.
Issue: The person is often late.
Stated Need: Look, I really like you, but I have ended up waiting for you every time we go out. That isn't working for me.
7. Distribute the Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs worksheet and have the learners work on it for five minutes. Look at the first example together. Discuss with learners how they would respond to a threat. Ask the learners what their response would be if the the speaker expressed his or her concerns clearly as a need.
8. Ask the class to discuss their different responses. Point out the effects that taking a position or identifying an issue may have on a listener. Which is more likely to lead to a positive response?
9. Have the learners complete the worksheet alone, in pairs, or in groups as they wish.

Sharing and Modeling Activity

SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Objectives:
- To share different styles of conflict.
 - To practice spotting escalation/de-escalation.
 - To practice spotting positions and threats.
 - To practice rephrasing positions as issues, and threats as needs.
 - To adapt these skills to the learners' real lives.
 - To develop basic role-playing skills.

Duration: 30 min.

Materials: chalkboard

Teacher background: familiarity and comfort with all the readings and tools of the workshops.

Part One: Sharing

Procedures:

NOTE - While sharing is going on, the instructor needs to be taking mental notes of any good examples of different tools of conflict resolution that the learners mention, e.g., examples of conflict escalating and de-escalating, or of positions taken and needs met. He or she needs to be familiar and comfortable with these tools in order to spot them in the stories.

1. Begin by explaining that you want to take a look at what happens in conflicts that people have in their lives.
2. Explain that you are asking people to share their stories of conflict and that this may be a difficult thing to do.

SET GROUND RULES

- Respect each others' stories.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- It is your choice whether to share a story.
- No one is obligated to share.

3. It is often easier for people to share how they act in conflict, than to tell a particularly uncomfortable story. The instructor can begin by asking, "So how do people act in conflicts? What do you do?" When a learner has made a suggestion, follow it up by asking the person if he or she can give an example or be more specific. This usually leads to a story.

OR The instructor can think of an example of behavior from the list How Do We Act in Conflict and ask who else in the class does this particular type of behavior. Again, use follow-up questions.

OR The instructor can tell a story that illustrates a type of behavior that he or she does in conflict. Going first provides a model for a reluctant group and shows that the instructor is willing to take the same risks as the rest of the group. Even if the instructor does not *need* to go first, at some point he or she should share a conflict story. Don't ask the class to do something you're not willing to do yourself.
4. Once the sharing is rolling, allow a minute or so for each learner to tell his or her story. Try to make time for everyone who wants to share, but also remain time- and boredom-conscious. Twenty minutes total is usually enough. If a story needs to be brought to a close, the instructor can try to do this by summing up what the story-teller has been saying in a single sentence. For example:
 "So you got really quiet and withdrew when that happened.
 Has anyone else done that?"
 "So you just went off on him. Has anyone else done that?"
5. After 15-20 minutes, move the focus to conflict resolution by citing specific learner behavior to demonstrate specific conflict resolution skills and issues. For example:
 "So when that happened the conflict really moved up a notch, didn't it? Conflict escalation is about exactly that kind of thing."
OR "When you said that, you were making it very clear what you needed, right?"

The instructor should focus on successful resolution examples as well as failures. Don't be afraid to cite examples which failed to resolve the problem (including your own). Keep it real. Recognize along with the group that part of what we are doing is looking at those moments when we are at our worst.

6. Point out that this process begs the question: "Do I want to change?" The final decision lies with each of us, however. No one can decide that for us.

Part Two: Modeling

Procedures:

NOTE: "Modeling" is not the same as "Role-playing." Role-playing involves people stepping outside themselves and adopting roles in order to demonstrate or practice a specific skill. Modeling makes fewer demands on the learners and can be a good introduction to any role-playing you may want to do later when learners are more comfortable with specific skills. In modeling, only the instructor does any acting and needs to feel comfortable with conflict resolution skills.

1. Once the instructor has picked out a few good stories, he or she should begin to move the discussion towards examining the conflicts themselves.
2. The instructor should have specific skills or concepts (Listening and Responding to Feelings, Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs, Escalation and De-escalation, or Reflecting/Restating/Questioning) in mind when he or she focuses on an individual's behavior.
 - A. Highlight the behavior you want to focus on by asking questions like "So what happened when you did that?" or "How did you feel when Joe did that to you?" Follow-up these highlighting questions with "What do you think would have happened if you had said/done...?"
 - B. Focusing your comment on a specific skill, not on a person and using statements like "What do you think would happen if...?" allow the individual to retain control of any value judgements about his or her story. Avoid using statements like "You should have done..."
3. Once the instructor has highlighted a set of skills on the board, (these do not need to be explained in any great detail, that comes in later sessions) he or she should offer to try them out with individuals who volunteer to re-enact the story.
4. Explain that you want to "act out" the conflict if people are willing. Explain that the other person will play himself or herself. Explain that you will adopt the opposing role and model conflict resolution skills that the group has talked about.
5. Ask for a volunteer. Ask the volunteer to provide a little background information and set the scene.
6. The instructor may want to ask for more information on what the issues were and what happened.

7. Ask the volunteer to start the argument. The instructor should let the argument get going, even offering some responses that cause escalation. Once the argument is rolling, then the instructor can shift to using conflict resolution skills.
8. Both the instructor and volunteer are free to drop out of the act for a moment to clarify a point or ask for information. The point is not to perform, but to re-create a real conflict and demonstrate how conflict resolution skills can really be applied.
9. After no more than 5 minutes (try to keep it short and interesting) stop the modeling and begin processing the play.
10. If time allows, after processing the play, select another volunteer to model his or her conflict.

Part Three: Processing

Procedures:

1. Ask the learners to describe what you just did.
 - What worked? When? Be specific.
 - What did not work? Be specific.
 - How was it different from what you started out doing? What changed?
 - Would the things the instructor did be useful in your own lives? How?
 - Where would they help?
 - Where does this kind of thing not apply?
2. Avoid judging or debating the learners' responses. Accept the information and move on. How the learners will use conflict resolution skills in their lives is, in the end, up to them.

Closure and Evaluation Activity

CONFLICT MAP #1

Objectives: - To develop a definition of conflict.
- To summarize the first workshop.

Duration: 15 min.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, paper, and pencils.

Procedures:

1. Explain to the learners that you are going to make a conflict map on the board. Explain that you want all their ideas about what conflict is, what causes conflict, and how to resolve it.
2. Ask the learners to copy the map from the board as you go.
3. Write the word "Conflict" in the center of the board and ask learners to shout out ideas that come to mind.

(See example for how to draw a map.)

Here are some questions to keep the map activity flowing:

What is a conflict?
Is it always physical? When isn't it?
What kinds of things cause a conflict to escalate?
How can you resolve conflict?
How can you cause a conflict to de-escalate?
What else do you think of when you remember an argument?
What have we left out?

4. Ask learners to save their copies of the conflict map.

Optional Activity

KISSES

- Objectives: - To provide proof that our assumptions influence the outcome of conflicts.
- To initiate discussion of our assumptions about competition in conflict.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: chocolate kisses, candies, peanuts, raisins, or even dimes.
(You will not lose more than a dollar.)

Procedures:

NOTE: This activity demonstrates how we often assume that any conflict is a win-lose situation, and how this assumption influences the outcome of conflicts. Without thinking, we often compete with others, even when it is not in our best interest. In Kisses, it is not against the rules to allow the back of your hand to touch the table without giving any resistance. In fact, the quickest way to accumulate kisses is to cooperate - but do not tell the learners that.

1. Ask the learners to choose partners and get into an arm wrestling stance. Demonstrate the position rather than using the term arm wrestling because it connotes competition. If the learners use the term, tell them that the position is the same, but the rules are different.
2. Once everyone is in position, explain the rules:
You may not talk.
You will get one chocolate kiss each time the back of your partner's hand touches the table.
Keep count of your own kisses.
3. Say "Begin!" and allow 45 seconds of play. Stop the activity after 45 seconds and begin discussion.
So what happened? Did you get a lot of kisses?
Did you automatically compete? Why?
Did your partner's gaining kisses mean you lost them?
What actions would help you get more kisses? (list these on the board)
What would have happened if I'd given you five minutes ahead of time to plan?

4. After discussing any difficulties that the learners had "winning," the instructor should pick a volunteer and get in arm-wrestling stance. Tell the volunteer to relax and allow you to win, then you will allow him or her to win. Do this quickly for ten seconds until the learners see the value of focusing on the issue: You will get one chocolate kiss each time the back of your partner's hand touches the table. No where in the rules does it say that you must fight it out with your partner. In fact, cooperation is much quicker. Discuss why we assume that we must fight situations out.

How does what happened here reflect our lives in the real world?

Can you think of a time or a situation where you competed without thinking about it or needing to?

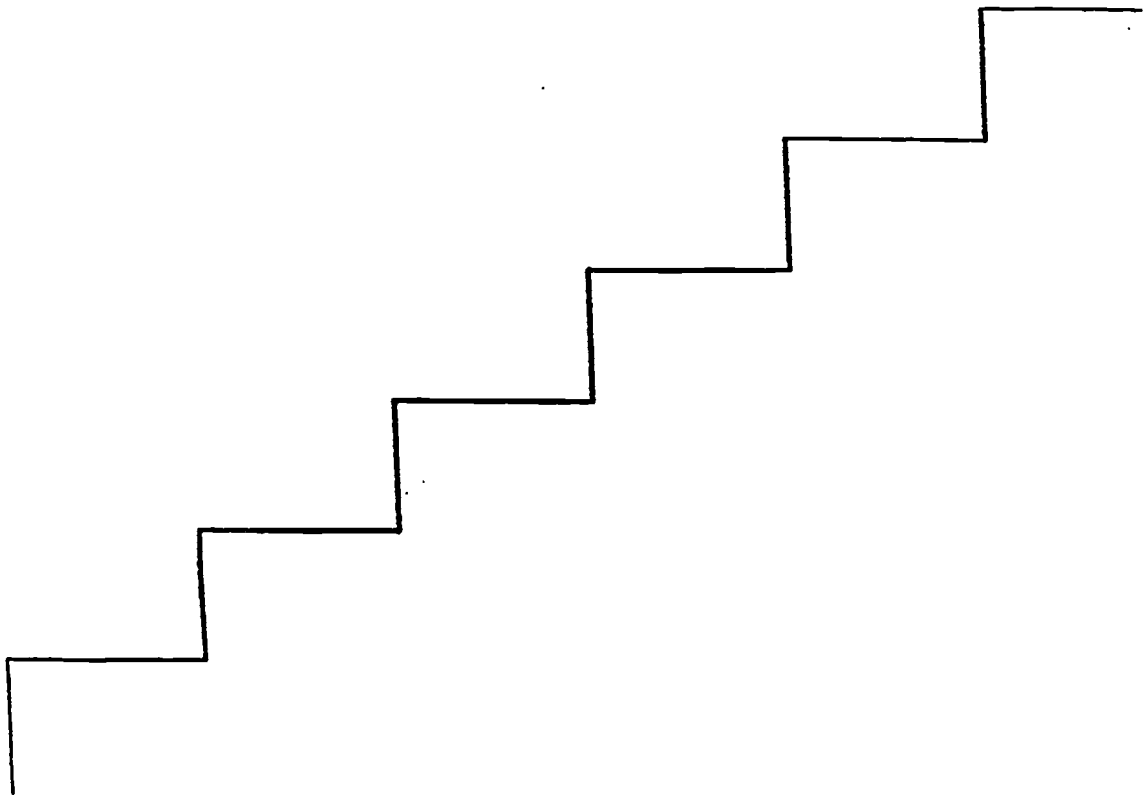
Do you want to share your story?

WORKSHOP ONE HANDOUTS

IDEAS ABOUT CONFLICT

1. Conflict is a natural part of life.
2. Our assumptions affect the outcome of conflict.
3. Certain skills can help resolve conflict.
4. We can learn these skills through practice.
5. The instructor will demonstrate some skills which will help us explore ideas about conflict resolution.
6. Each of us must adapt and use these skills in our own way. No one else can tell us what will or will not work in our lives.

THE CONFLICT ESCALATOR



CONFLICT ESCALATOR STORY #1

The Cigarette

Diane and Audrey work in the same area next to each other. The building has a no-smoking policy inside the building, and Diane is allergic to smoke. She has walked into the bathroom and found Audrey smoking.

Diane says, "Will you put that ugly thing out!"

This makes Audrey angry so she says, "You can't tell me what to do! Got that?"

Diane responds with, "I can say anything I please. Smoking in here is against company policy. I'm telling you that."

Audrey says, "Hey, it's raining out. I got a right to have a break when I want it."

Diane responds, "You don't have any rights in this bathroom. I'm telling you put it out right now, or else..."

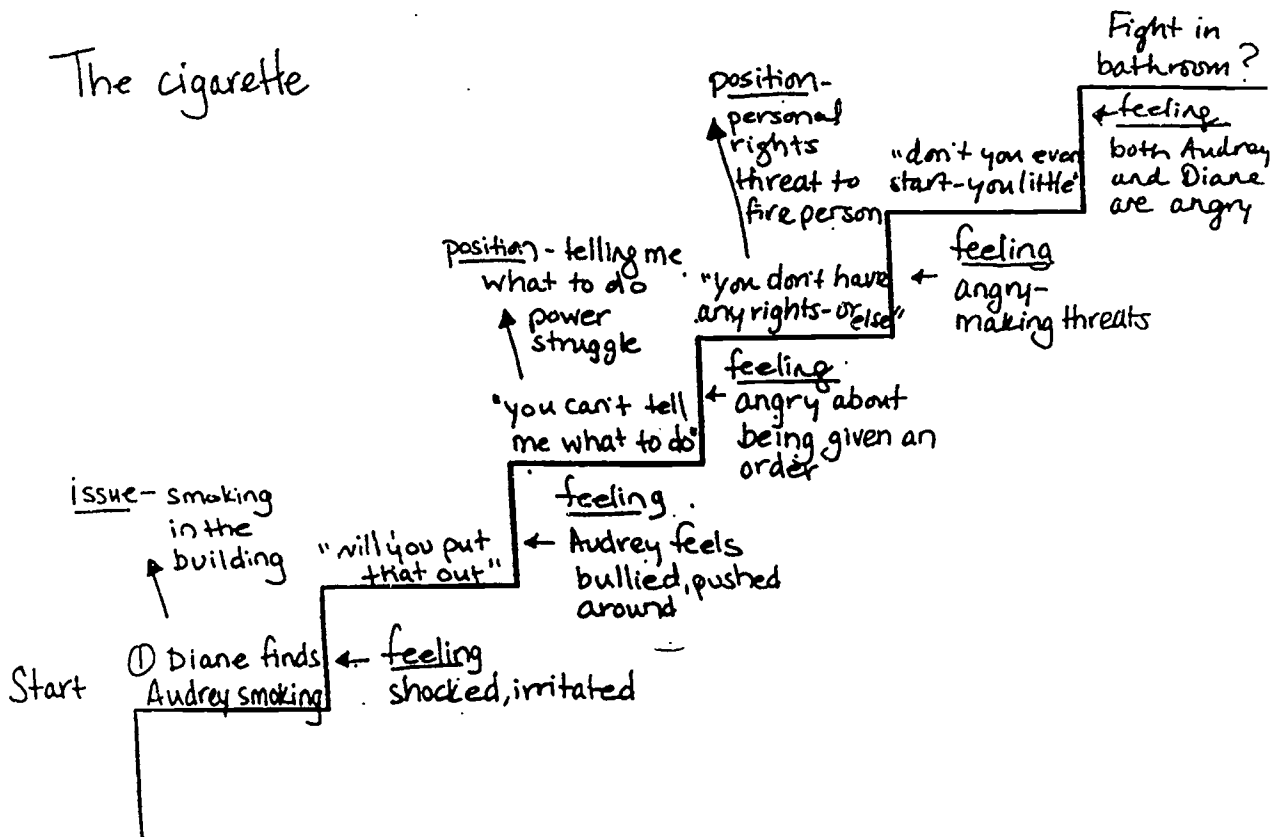
Audrey blows smoke in Diane's direction, and shouts, "I've got rights!"

Diane turns towards the door and announces, "I'll get you and your rights bounced right out of here!" She starts to leave.

Audrey flings the cigarette down and moves to block the door. She says, "Don't you even start, you little..."

The two women glare at each other silently, each with one hand on the door.

CONFLICT ESCALATOR STORY #1 - Example



CONFLICT ESCALATOR STORY #2

A Day in the Park

It is a sunny day and James has taken his 12-year-old son to the park. Across the street from the park are several apartments. James has been sitting on a bench, when he hears a loud shout behind him. He turns around just in time to see his son stumbling down the steps of one building and a very angry older woman with a broom at the top of the three steps.

James heads over to the scene shouting, "Hey, lady, lay off my son!"

The woman glares at him and says, "If that weasel-faced, mud-ugly little thing comes near here again, I'm telling you..."

James responds by saying, "I'm telling you, don't touch him. Hear me?"

The woman says, "If that boy doesn't quit ringing my doorbell, I'll lay hands on him alright!"

James points out, "If you touch him, I'll touch you!"

The woman says, "I'll fix your son's butt!" and moves inside the house.

A man with a beer in his hand appears behind the woman and says, "Excuse me, did I hear you just threaten my sister? I've got a problem with that."

The man moves out in front of the door.

James says, "Oh really. Well, I've got a problem with her beating my son. Do you have a problem with that?"

James steps up one of the steps to the building.

The man says, "I think I've got a problem with you," and moves down the building steps.

POSITIONS/THREATS AND ISSUES/NEEDS

1. Position/Threat: "You do that again and, so help me, I'll..."
Issue: I do not like it when you do that. I want you to stop.
Stated Need: Please don't make that noise. It really bothers me.

2. Position/Threat: "You never pay me back. I'm never going to lend you money again."
Issue:
Stated Need:

3. Position/Threat: "You cut me off like that again, we're going to get into it."
Issue:
Stated Need:

4. Position/Threat: "I'll come home when I want. Do you have a problem with that?"
Issue:
Stated Need:

5. Position/Threat: "You come in late again, I'll fire you so fast your head will spin."

Issue:

Stated Need:

6. Position/Threat: "Don't you threaten me. I'll call the cops."

Issue:

Stated Need:

7. Position/Threat: "Look at this bili. You get off that phone now."

Issue:

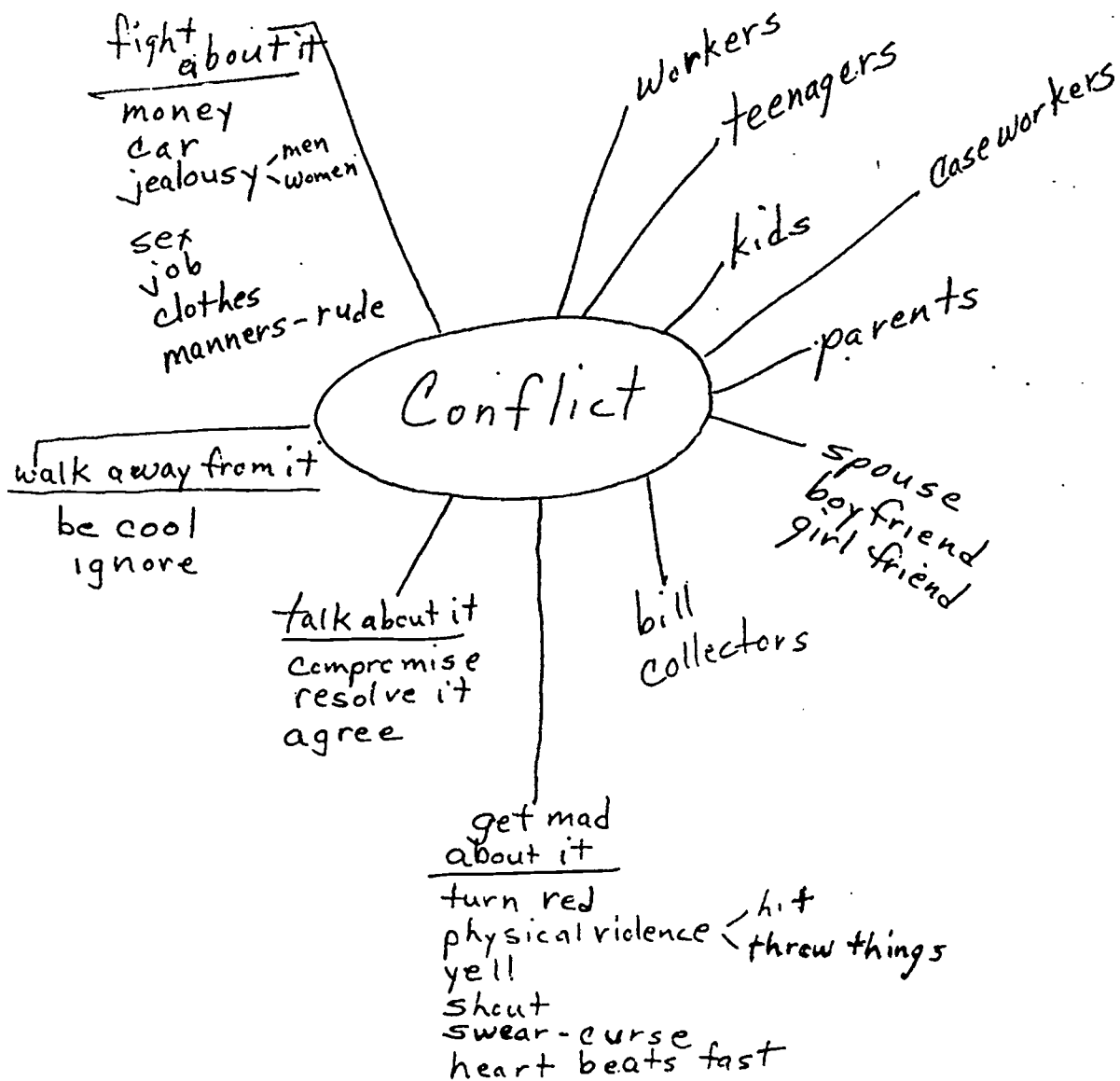
Stated Need:

8. Position/Threat: "Turn that T.V. down or I'll bust it."

Issue:

Stated Need:

CONFLICT MAP - EXAMPLE



CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS MANUAL

WORKSHOP TWO

- **Overview**
- **Outline**
- **Activities**
 - The Conflict Escalator, Part Two
 - Listening and Responding to Feelings
 - Conflict in Literature and Movies
 - Conflict Escalator, Positions/Threats and
Needs/Issues, and Listening for Feelings
 - Wrap Up
- **Handouts**
 - The Conflict Escalator
 - Listening and Responding to Feelings

WORKSHOP TWO OVERVIEW

The second workshop develops the conflict resolution skills of escalation and de-escalation in more depth and introduces the skills of listening and responding to feelings.

I. PREVIEW

In the preview activity, the instructor should use the conflict escalator to preview listening and responding to feelings. Review with the learners the role that feelings played in escalation and de-escalation before moving on to the skill development section of the workshop.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Have the learners practice spotting escalation and de-escalation in their own conflicts. Discuss how positions/threats and issues/needs affect the conflict escalator. Have the learners complete the listening and responding to feelings worksheet and practice identifying how emotions can cause conflict to escalate and to de-escalate. Ask learners for stories of how emotions influenced a conflict in their own lives and draw the example (whether escalating or de-escalating) on the Conflict Escalator.

The literature and movies skill development activity provides a great example of conflict resolution skills being applied in a complex and "real" situation. Have the learners watch a movie scene or read a script which involves conflict resolution and discuss the different skills used in the story. After the learners have watched or read the selection, it can be used to begin discussion of the learners' own conflicts in the sharing and modeling section of the workshop.

III. SHARING and MODELING

This part of the workshop helps the learners adapt conflict resolution skills to their own lives. In the second workshop, the instructor should try to focus on sharing examples of escalation and de-escalation, stories of times when a learner has taken a position or successfully addressed a tough issue, and stories of the effects of feelings in the learners' conflicts. The instructor can model other types of behavior also, but try to keep focused on escalation and de-escalation, identifying positions and issues, and listening and responding to feelings.

IV. CLOSURE and EVALUATION

Review each section of the second workshop and the conflict resolution skills that were developed in it. As in the first workshop, take time to wrap up by discussing points that the learners made and asking them for a written evaluation of the session. Ask the learners how they might use the skills they learned tonight at home or tomorrow at work. Ask them to compare their own lives to the selection they watched or read. Thank the class for their effort and cite specific people who told stories or took some kind of risks.

WORKSHOP TWO OUTLINE - (120 min.)

I. PREVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

Introduction. (10 min.)
Review conflict escalation and de-escalation and identifying positions and issues. Briefly explain that today's session will focus on developing the skills of listening and responding to feelings in a conflict.

Conflict Escalator, Part Two. (25 min.)
Follow activity guide.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Listening and Responding to Feelings. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Conflict in Literature and Movies. (25 min.)
Follow activity guide.

III. SHARING AND MODELING

Conflict Escalator
Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs
Listening for Feelings. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

IV. CLOSURE AND EVALUATION

Wrap Up. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

WORKSHOP TWO ACTIVITIES

Preview Activity

THE CONFLICT ESCALATOR, PART TWO

- Objectives:
- To review the role of conflict escalation and de-escalation in the learners' own stories of conflict.
 - To review identifying positions and issues, and to preview listening and responding to feelings.
 - To introduce the idea of a window of opportunity to cause conflict to de-escalate.

Duration: 25 min.

Materials: chalkboard, chalk, and The Conflict Escalator, Part Two handout.

Procedures:

1. Review the definition of the terms "escalation" and "de-escalation." Explain that you want to focus on skills that cause conflict to de-escalate.
2. Again, draw an escalator on the board.
3. Explain that you need a conflict escalation story. Explain that the story must really escalate, or go through the roof. However, this doesn't mean it has to be violent. It may be a story that just makes someone really mad.

Ask the learners, "Can anyone think of a situation that would end up in a conflict?"

If no one offers one, the instructor can either remind them of one from the previous workshop, or offer an example from his or her own life. This usually breaks the ice and a flood of stories appear.

4. The first time a volunteer tells the story (real or fictional), just listen. The instructor should try to get a sense for where the escalation occurred. The escalation, itself, may need to be drawn out. Often stories begin at the point where the conflict exploded. The instructor may need to backtrack and ask questions that reveal the actions and feelings that led up to the explosion.

5. The instructor should explain to the class that he or she wants to place the story on the escalator. Ask the volunteer to repeat the story a second time. Ask the class to signal each time the conflict goes up or down a step. Each time the class identifies an escalation or de-escalation, write the action on the horizontal line of the escalator. Continue until you are finished with the story.
6. Review each step on the escalator and ask the volunteer to identify what he or she was feeling at each step. There may be more than one feeling. Write the feeling next to the action.
7. Ask the group and the volunteer to identify what the other person(s) in the story may have been feeling at each step. Write the feeling next to the action.
8. Ask the learners to identify positions taken or threats made in the story. Also ask them to identify the issues and needs that were the basis of the conflict.
9. Ask the learners to identify the feelings that played a role in the escalation of the conflict.
10. Ask the learners to point out places along the escalator where someone in the story could have done something to cause the conflict to de-escalate. Remind the learners that this area is the "window of opportunity" of conflict resolution. Circle this area. Write down learners' suggestions on what could have happened to cause the situation to de-escalate inside the window.
11. Briefly summarize how each suggestion might lower the escalator. With each suggestion, draw a step down on the chalk board.
12. Thank the volunteer for his or her story.

Skill Development Activity

LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO FEELINGS

Objectives: - To be able to distinguish feelings from ideas or actions.
- To practice responding to feelings in a conflict.

Duration: 20 min.

Teacher Background: Read Part One of the Learners' Handbook

Materials: Listening and Responding to Feelings worksheet.

Procedures:

Explanation: identifying feelings in a conflict

1. Announce to the class, "I am going to read some sentences to you from the worksheet. After I read each sentence I want you to tell me what the feeling is behind the sentence." Explain that there is more than one right answer because everyone feels and experiences things differently.

Then, tell the learners, "After we distinguish the feeling, I want us to invent a response that addresses the feeling without causing escalation. What is a response that wouldn't tick people off?"

2. Read each sentence from Speaker 1 on the Listening and Responding to Feelings worksheet and have the learners decide what feeling is being presented. Be careful to distinguish between ideas, actions, and feelings. Some sentences may be read in different ways to further demonstrate how tone of voice or inflection can show different feelings.

Practice: de-escalation of feelings in a conflict

3. After deciding the feelings in the first few sentences on the worksheet, have the learners invent a response to those feelings that validates them. Have them write the response down as Speaker 2 on their worksheet. Allow for a variety of responses and discuss the outcome of each one. At the same time, keep an eye on the clock. Twenty minutes of this activity is enough.
4. Have the learners complete the worksheet alone, or in groups as desired.

Skill Development Activity

CONFLICT IN LITERATURE AND MOVIES

- Objectives:
- To provide an example of escalation and de-escalation in a movies or literature.
 - To provide an example of listening and responding to feelings.
 - To provide an example of ignoring positions and focusing on the issues.

Duration: 25 min.

Materials: Copies of selections from literature and/or television, VCR, and video tape selections which include examples of conflict resolution. Examples of excerpts from movies include the opening scenario in Grand Canyon where Danny Glover resolves conflict with the gang and the scene in White Men Can't Jump in which the girlfriends reach a compromise. The scene in To Kill a Mockingbird in which Gregory Peck talks down the mob in front of the jail and in Fried Green Tomatoes when the fight between the two main characters is resolved are good selections from literature. Another option would be to look for examples of conflict escalation and de-escalation in All in the Family or The Simpsons.

Optional: Conflict Escalator worksheets.

Teacher background: Conflict Resolution Skills Learners' Handbook. Focus on "5 Principles of Conflict Resolution."
Preview tape or written selection.

Procedures:

Explanation: conflict resolution skills in a movies or literature.

NOTE - The instructor needs to be familiar with the scene or passage to be used. He or she should be able to map the conflict, represent it on the escalator, identify positions/threats and needs/issues, identify feelings, and be aware of the role which various characters play in causing the conflict to escalate or de-escalate.

1. Introduce the passage. Explain that literature and movies often tell the story of a conflict and how that conflict is addressed. Explain that you want the learners to look for the conflict resolution skills used in the story. Explain that later you will discuss the story in terms of conflict escalation,

positions/threats and issues/needs, and listening and responding to feelings.

2. *Optional* - Ask learners to write down the skills that they notice during the story. Have them focus on escalation and de-escalation, positions/threats and issues/needs, and listening and responding to feelings.

Practice: spotting conflict resolution skills in movies or literature.

3. View tape or read passage.
4. After viewing, have the learners discuss the conflict in the story. Begin with a broad discussion: "So what happened?" but eventually focus discussion on specific examples of skills. For example:
 - How did the scene escalate and de-escalate?
 - Where did people take a position?
 - What were the needs/issues? Were they met?
5. During the discussion, the instructor should break the scene down into specific skills on the chalkboard. Draw the scene using the conflict escalator. Make a list of positions, issues, and feelings.
6. Bring the discussion to a close by asking the learners (if it doesn't come up on its own) if the skills used in the passage apply to their own lives? Possible follow-up questions include:
 - Does all conflict have to be dangerous?
 - Where and when is conflict likely to occur?
 - What was the setting in the passage?
 - Is that setting a common one in which conflict occurs?

Sharing and Modeling Activity

**CONFLICT ESCALATOR
POSITIONS/THREATS and ISSUES/NEEDS
LISTENING for FEELINGS**

- Objectives:
- To share stories of escalation and de-escalation.
 - To practice identifying positions and needs in the learners' own lives.
 - To model and practice escalation and de-escalation.
 - To model and practice identifying and addressing needs.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: chalkboard

Teacher background: familiarity and comfort with all the readings and tools of the workshops.

Part One: Sharing

Procedures:

1. Review ground rules:
 - Respect each others' stories.
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - It is your choice whether to share a story.
 - No one is obligated to share.
2. The instructor can begin by asking:
"So, what do people do that causes conflict to escalate? What happens? What things happened in the movie we watched (or passage we read) which cause conflict to escalate or de-escalate?" The instructor should review the issues, positions, and feelings identified in the literature and movies activity.
3. Follow this review up by asking the learners if anyone can give an example of a conflict where all these skills came up in their own lives. This question usually leads to a story. The instructor may have to follow-up with questions in order to get the learners to be specific.

OR the instructor may tell a story from his or her own life.
4. Once the sharing is rolling, allow each learner two minutes or so to tell his or her story. Try to allow time for everyone who wants to share, but also

remain time- and boredom-conscious. Five minutes is usually enough. If a story needs to be brought to a close, the instructor can try to do this by summing up in a single sentence what the story-teller has been saying.

5. After about five minutes, move the focus to conflict resolution by citing specific learner behavior to demonstrate specific conflict resolution skills and issues. For example:
"So when that happened the conflict really moved up a notch, didn't it?"
The instructor can even demonstrate this example on the Conflict Escalator on the board.
OR-
"When you said that you were making it very clear what you needed, right?"

NOTE: The instructor should focus on successful resolution examples as well as failures. Don't be afraid to cite examples that failed to resolve the problem including your own. Keep it real. Recognize along with the group that part of what we are doing is looking at those moments when we are at our worst.

Part Two: Modeling

1. Once the instructor has picked a few good stories, he or she should ask for a volunteer to act out the conflict in one of the stories. Review modeling with the learners and explain that the other person will play himself or herself and the instructor will model the conflict resolution skills that the learners have practiced.
2. Ask for volunteers with a story of conflict. Allow the volunteer to provide a little background information and set the scene.
3. As in Workshop One, ask the volunteer to start the argument. The instructor should let the argument get going, even offering some responses which cause conflict escalation. Once the argument is rolling, then the instructor can shift into modeling.
4. Both the instructor and the volunteer are free to drop out of the act for a moment to clarify a point or ask for information.
5. After no more than five minutes, stop the modeling and begin processing the play.

6. Ask the students to describe what the instructor and volunteer just did.
 - What worked? When? Be specific.
 - What did not work? Be specific.
 - What did the people in conflict do to make it escalate?
 - What did the people in conflict do to make it de-escalate?
 - What were the issues?
 - What were the positions? Were threats made?
 - What feelings came up? How do the learners know?

Closure and Evaluation Activity

WRAP UP

Objectives: -To review the conflict resolution skills covered in the second workshop.
-To give the learners a chance to evaluate the workshop and the effect it might have on their lives.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: none

Teacher background: familiarity and comfort with all the readings and tools of the workshops.

Procedures:

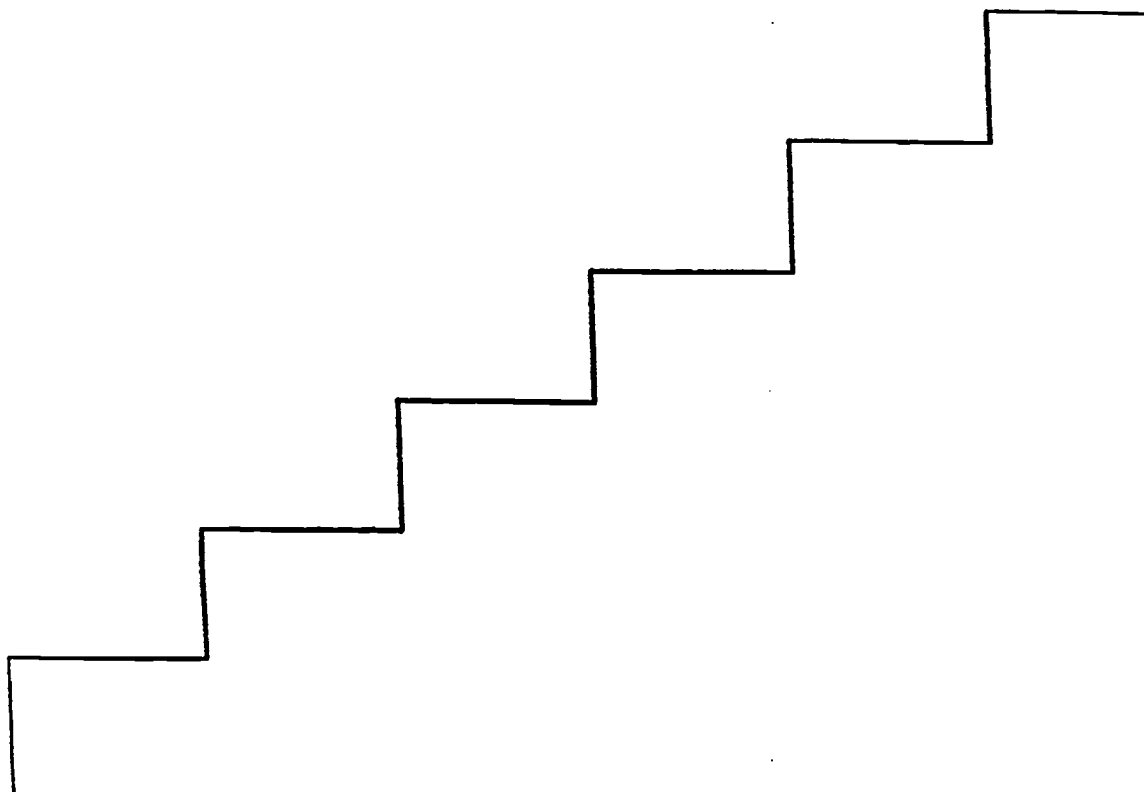
1. The instructor should begin the discussion by reviewing the conflict resolution skills and telling the learners what skills he or she hopes the learners will walk out of here and use tonight or tomorrow:
The Conflict Escalator,
Identifying Positions/Threats and Issues/Needs, and
Listening and Responding to Feelings.
2. To sum up the purpose of the workshops, the instructor should paraphrase the closing statement suggested in the closure and evaluation section of the overview of the first workshop:

"So what was I supposed to get out of all this?" learners may ask at the end. The instructor should answer that question (even if no one asks it) by saying something like "I hope that you will try these skills out. If you think of the escalator tonight in a fight with your husband, or if you try to focus on the issue when your kids are really getting on your nerves, then I consider the workshop a success. It's up to you to decide when and where these skills apply. I'm not here to tell you how to run your lives. But if one little bell goes off in your head next time you're getting hot, and that little thing makes you go 'Hmmm...things are escalating here,' then you've gotten what I hoped you would out of this workshop."

3. Final Question:
Ask the learners to describe how they might use the skills that were covered in the workshop. After getting a verbal response, ask the learners to describe their use of these skills in writing. If some learners say that they would never use the conflict resolution skills, ask them to describe what they would do in a conflict situation.
4. Thank them for their stories and willingness to try out conflict resolution ideas.

WORKSHOP TWO HANDOUTS

THE CONFLICT ESCALATOR



LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO FEELINGS

1. Speaker 1: I just can't figure it out. I give up.
Feeling: defeat, hopelessness, embarrassment.
Speaker 2: It sounds like you're feeling really beat. What can't you figure out?
Outcome: Speaker 1 feels heard; conversation opens up.

2. Speaker 1: Wow, eight days until Christmas vacation!
Feeling: happy, excited.
Speaker 2: I hate snow. It's really a pain to drive in.
Outcome: Conversation stops.

3. Speaker 1: I hate it when you don't call!
Feeling:
Speaker 2:
Outcome:

4. Speaker 1: That's a stupid idea. Why do you always say things like that?
Feeling:
Speaker 2:
Outcome:

5. Speaker 1: I'll never get this. Buzz off.

Feeling:

Speaker 2:

Outcome:

6. Speaker 1: I see you speak to her again, and you're D.O.A.

Feeling:

Speaker 2:

Outcome:

7. Speaker 1: For crying out loud, I'll take the trash out later!

Feeling:

Speaker 2:

Outcome:

8. Speaker 1: I just got home. Don't mess with me, hear?

Feeling:

Speaker 2:

Outcome:

9. Speaker 1:

Feeling:

Speaker 2:

Outcome:

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS MANUAL

WORKSHOP THREE

- **Overview**
- **Outline**
- **Activities**
 - Miscommunication Race
 - Robbery Report
 - Reflecting/Restating/Questioning
 - Reflecting/Restating/Questioning Situations
 - Conflict Map #2
 - Summary
- **Handouts**
 - Miscommunication Race #1
 - Miscommunication Race #2
 - Robbery Report
 - Reflecting/Restating/Questioning
 - Windfall
 - Lifeboat
 - Heart Transplant

WORKSHOP THREE OVERVIEW

I. PREVIEW

The third workshop focuses on developing the conflict resolution skills of Reflecting/Restating/Questioning. The learners practice empathizing with another person's emotions, repeating another person's ideas or thoughts, and asking questions for clarity. Begin by verbally previewing the idea of miscommunication. Ask for examples of the kinds of words and actions that succeed or fail when talking to another person in a conflict situation. The Mis-communication Race provides an ice-breaker to start discussion.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Have students complete the Reflecting/Restating/Questioning worksheet and then move on to the Reflect/Restate/Question Situations. The situations activity can require a lot of processing between each situation.

Allow plenty of time for discussion, sharing, and modeling. It is not written in stone that the group must complete all three situations. It is better to discuss one situation in depth, than to move too quickly over all three.

III. SHARING and MODELING

The instructor should focus on modeling the communication skills of reflecting emotions, restating ideas, and asking questions for clarity. The third workshop is slightly different from the first two. In the third workshop, the reflecting/restating/questioning situations may take up most of the class time and most of the sharing or modeling done will be based on discussing these situations, instead of the learners' personal stories.

IV. CLOSURE and EVALUATION

The last workshop should summarize the three sessions. Rather than focus solely on new conflict resolution skills, the instructor should expand the discussion into a re-evaluation of the concept of conflict resolution. Repeat the conflict map activity and allow the learners to note any changes they may want to make in their "definition" of conflict resolution. The closing map and discussion should summarize the skills taught and also incorporate any innovative ideas about conflict that the group may have discussed. At the end of the third session, the instructor should thank the learners for their time and courage.

WORKSHOP THREE OUTLINE - (125 min.)

I. PREVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

Preview. (10 min.)

Introduce three questions for brief discussion:

When does communication go wrong?

What happens when communication goes well?

What role do feelings play in communication?

Mis-communication Race. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Optional Activity
Robbery Report. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Reflecting/Restating/Questioning. (20 min.)
Follow activity guide.

III. SHARING AND MODELING

Windfall. (30 min.)
Follow activity guide.

IV. CLOSURE AND EVALUATION

Conflict Map. (15 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Summary. (10 min.)
Follow activity guide.

Wrap up. (10 min.)

Summarize the ideas discussed in the workshop. Ask the participants what they learned that they can use in their everyday lives. Thank them for participating and taking risks.

WORKSHOP THREE ACTIVITIES

Preview Activity

MISCOMMUNICATION RACE

Objective: - To begin to explore some of the difficulties involved in communicating with each other.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: chalkboard, chalk, two miscommunication drawing handouts.

Procedures:

1. Explain to the class that this is going to be a communication race. Explain that when the race is over, you want to talk about the difficulties involved in communication.
2. Divide the class into two teams.
3. Explain the goals and the rules:

NOTE: The drawings should have as many (or more) figures as there are learners on each team. Add shapes to the original drawings as needed.

Each team will try to copy a string of shapes: circles, squares, triangles, etc. Draw a sample on the board.

One person on the team will be chosen as the "sender." Only the sender can see the original picture and only the sender can talk. The sender can not draw.

No one else can talk or ask any questions.

Give each sender an original drawing of a string of shapes.

The receivers must listen to the sender's directions and try to draw an accurate picture on the board.

The picture on the board should be an exact copy of the original picture.

As each receiver finishes one shape, he or she passes the chalk to the next receiver.

The teams have two minutes to finish and fix their picture.

4. When each team is ready say, "Begin!"
5. Call out the time every thirty seconds until two minutes are up.
6. After the race is over, allow the senders to draw an accurate picture on the board so everyone can see it.
7. Ask the class what the problems were with getting an accurate picture.
Move into discussion questions:
 - What would have made the activity easier?
 - Did not seeing the original make it harder?
 - How did not being able to talk make things harder?
 - How did the time pressure affect communication?

Preview Activity

ROBBERY REPORT

Objectives: - To explore the difficulties of communication.
- To initiate a discussion of communication skills.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: copies of Robbery Report worksheet.

Procedures:

1. Ask for three volunteers who believe they are good listeners. Number the volunteers one through three and send them out of the room.
2. Pass out copies of the Robbery Report worksheet and explain the activity.
3. When the first person is called in, the instructor will read the robbery report to him or her.

Next, volunteer 2 will come in and volunteer 1 will repeat the report from memory to volunteer 2.

Then, volunteer 3 will come in and volunteer 2 will repeat the report from memory to volunteer 3.

Finally, volunteer 3 will repeat the report to the entire class.

4. Explain to the learners remaining in the class that when the activity starts they should note any changes in the story being told by the volunteers when compared to the story on their worksheets.
5. When the volunteers have completed the activity, read the original report out loud to the entire class.
6. Ask the volunteers:
How did you feel as you tried to remember the story?
What made it difficult or easy to remember?
7. Ask the entire class:
How did the report change each time?
Was anything important left out?
What would have made it easier to remember?
What gets in the way of clear communication?

Skill Development Activity

REFLECTING/RESTATING/QUESTIONING

Objectives: - To practice the skills of reflecting, restating, and asking questions.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: Reflecting/Restating/Questioning worksheet.

Procedures:

Explanation: the idea of Reflecting, Restating, and Questioning

1. Explain that even when a person is trying to listen, he or she can hear incorrectly or misunderstand what was said. Explain that in the heat of conflict, it is even easier to misunderstand.
2. Explain that, to avoid a misunderstanding, it is often helpful to check back with the speaker, summarizing or restating the ideas and feelings that he or she just stated. Emphasize that it is not necessary to repeat every word, but try to get the main points and feelings.

Practicing: Reflecting/Restating/Questioning worksheet

3. The instructor should pass out the Reflecting/Restating/Questioning worksheet. Look at the examples together and discuss with the learners what emotion is being expressed, what the speaker is thinking, and what clarifying question the second speaker could ask.
4. After doing the two examples, the instructor and the learners should complete the worksheet together.
5. As the learners complete the worksheet, discuss different responses. Do different learners see different emotions? Does everyone agree on what the underlying idea is? What responses or questions would make the speaker angry? What kind of responses or questions would help resolve the conflict?

Sharing and Modeling Activity

**REFLECTING/RESTATING/QUESTIONING
SITUATIONS**

Objectives: - To practice the skills of reflecting, restating and asking questions.

Duration: 30 min.

Materials: Windfall handout.

Procedures:

Explanation: the idea of Reflecting, Restating, and Questioning in situations

1. Announce to the learners that they will now practice the skills of reflecting, restating, and questioning. Explain that in this activity, each person gets a chance to speak, but before they do, he or she must restate and reflect the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker to that speaker's satisfaction.
2. Explain that the group should pick six volunteers to be in the first activity. The rest of the class will observe. Also explain that if other people want to try this, there will be another round after the first.

Practice: Using the skill of Reflecting, Restating, and Questioning

3. Distribute the Windfall handout to students. Have each learner read the handout and follow the directions. Emphasize that each person will have a chance to speak and that each person must paraphrase the previous speaker's position before they state his or her own.
4. Explain that the instructor will act as the referee. The referee's job is to make sure that, before someone speaks, he or she reflects/restates or asks a question about what the previous person said. After each group has completed the activity, use the following discussion questions to discuss what happened:

How did you feel when you heard your opinion restated and your feelings reflected?

How did it feel to reflect/restate another person's opinion?

Did reflecting/restating help or hurt the conversation? How?

What makes it difficult to reflect/restate/question?

When is it important or useful to reflect/restate/question?

Optional - After the class has tried Windfall, if the instructor feels that the class can handle hotter situations, try the two other situations provided: Heart Transplant and Lifeboat which touch on stereotypes. Obviously, the potential for negative emotions and conflict increase in these scenes. It is important that the class feels comfortable with opening up these issues before trying them. It helps a great deal if the class has a good grasp of conflict resolution skills and if the instructor allows plenty of time for discussing the activity and unwinding.

Closure and Evaluation Activity

CONFLICT MAP #2

- Objectives: - To re-examine the visual definition of conflict and conflict resolution.
- To help summarize all three workshops.

Duration: 15 min.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, paper, and pencils.

Procedures:

1. Explain to the learners that you are going to repeat the conflict map activity on the board so that everyone can see any new ideas or changes that have appeared in the class's definition of conflict.
2. Ask the learners to copy the map from the board as you go.
3. Write the word "Conflict" in the center of the board and ask learners to shout out the ideas that come to mind.

(See example in workshop one of how to draw a map.)

4. The instructor and the class should try to remember all ideas and discussions that came up during the three workshops. Ask learners to get out the first Conflict Map and look at it for ideas.
5. Here are some new questions:
 - What is conflict?
 - Do you think differently about conflict now than you did before the workshop? How?
 - What kinds of things do you think of now as causing a conflict to escalate?
 - How can you affect conflict?
 - How can you resolve conflict?
 - How can you cause conflict to de-escalate?
 - What things affect the outcome of a conflict?
 - Can every conflict be resolved successfully?
6. Take time to note differences and changes from the first map.

Closure and Evaluation Activity

SUMMARY

Objectives: - To review the workshop series.

Duration: 10 min.

Materials: blackboard, chalk.

Procedures:

1. Review the content of each session. Write "Workshop one," "Workshop two," and "Workshop three" on the board. Ask learners what they remember from each workshop. Add to their lists to create the following review on the board.

Workshop one

Context of conflict - The Who, What, and How of Arguing

Beliefs about conflict- Kisses activity

-looked at what we do instinctively when challenged

-introduced the possibility of changing our response

Skill development- Seeing the Conflict Escalator

Skill development - Separating Positions/Threats from Issues/Needs

Workshop two

Skill development - Using the Conflict Escalator

Skill development - Listening and Responding to Feelings

Workshop three

Skill development - Reflecting/Restating/Questioning

Skill development - Reflecting/Restating/Questioning Situations

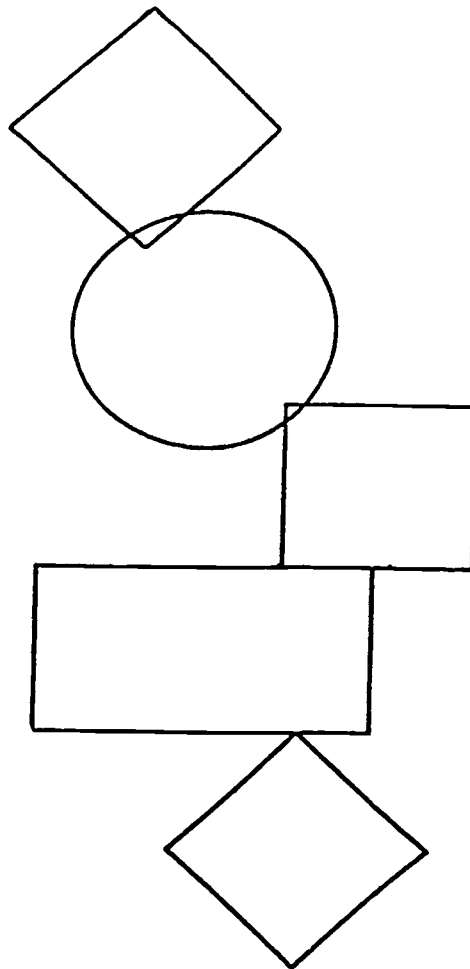
2. Thank the learners for their participation and willingness to talk about conflict and take risks.
3. Ask them for a written evaluation of the workshop series.

WORKSHOP THREE HANDOUTS

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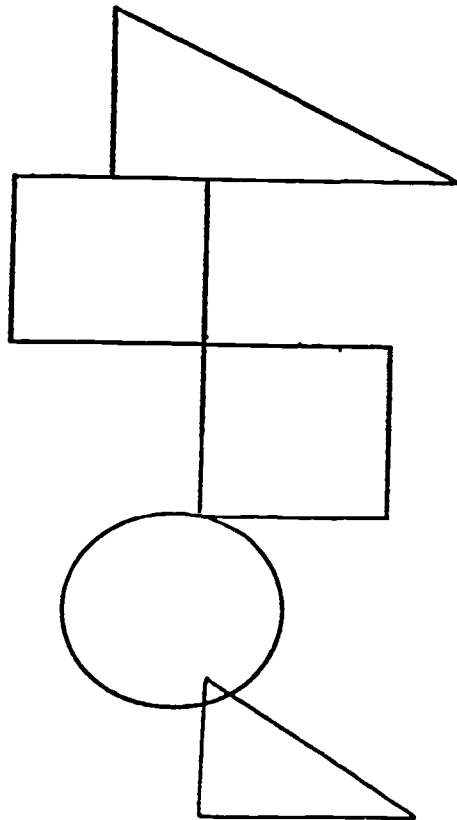
MISCOMMUNICATION RACE #1

Below is an illustration. Study it carefully. Do not let anyone else see it. You are to direct the group to draw the picture. Start with the top square and describe it carefully. Then go on to the rectangle, and so on. Be sure to explain the position of each figure to the one above it. No one can ask questions. You must be clear enough in giving directions that each person can try to draw their part of the picture from your directions. Be sure no one can see the picture.



MISCOMMUNICATION RACE #2

Below is an illustration. Study it carefully. Do not let anyone else see it. You are to direct the group to draw the picture. Start with the top triangle and describe it carefully. Then go on to the square, and so on. Be sure to explain the position of each figure to the one above it. No one can ask questions. You must be clear enough in giving directions that each person can try to draw their part of the picture from your directions. Be sure no one can see the picture.



ROBBERY REPORT

The Message:

Please listen carefully because I have to go to the hospital right away. I just called the police station from the gas station on the corner. Wait here and report a robbery to them. I was walking into Johnson's Hardware Store, and this guy in a black t-shirt came running out and almost knocked me over. He was carrying a white bag, and it looked like he had a gun in his left hand. He was wearing a Levi jacket with the sleeves cut out and a green and blue plaid shirt over the t-shirt and blue jeans with a hole in the right knee. He had skinny legs and a big stomach. He wore wire-rim glasses and high-top red Converse sneakers. I think he was bald, with a brown moustache and about six and a half feet tall, maybe in his mid thirties. I called the police.

DIRECTIONS: For each repetition of the report, note anything the person missed, added or changed from the previous report.

First volunteer:

Second volunteer:

Third volunteer:

REFLECTING/RESTATING/QUESTIONING

For each of the following angry statements, either restate the idea, reflect the emotion, or ask a clarifying question.

Speaker 1: You are so stupid. Why can't you ever get here on time?

Emotion of Speaker 1: angry, frustrated

Idea of Speaker 1: He is tired of the other person always being late.

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Example: I think you're mad because I'm late. Can we talk about this later when you're not going to rip my head off?

Speaker 1: I hate you for being such a jerk!

Emotion of Speaker 1: Angry

Idea of Speaker 1: Unclear. Is being a jerk really an issue?

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Good Example: Thanks a lot. What did I do to you?

Bad Example: Go ahead say that again!

Speaker 1: If you don't take the garbage out, I'll never let you borrow my car again.

Emotion of Speaker 1:

Idea of Speaker 1:

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Speaker 1: If I see you talk to her again, we're finished.

Emotion of Speaker 1:

Idea of Speaker 1:

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Speaker 1: You say anything like that again, and you can forget about next weekend.

Emotion of Speaker 1:

Idea of Speaker 1:

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Speaker 1: Don't you ever touch me again, or I'll beat the daylights out of you.

Emotion of Speaker 1:

Idea of Speaker 1:

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

Speaker 1: I really can't do this math, so would you stop trying to help me.

Emotion of Speaker 1:

Idea of Speaker 1:

Speaker 2: Reflection of Emotion/Restatement of Idea/Clarifying Question:

WINDFALL

Your class has just been given \$5,000 by an anonymous donor. You must decide which one of you will get the money. The donor has insisted that all the money must go to one person, or it will go back to the donor.

Write down two reasons why you should be the one to get the money.

When everyone is ready, someone should start by giving one reason why he or she should get the money. The next person should restate/reflect (questioning first if needed) what the first person said and then make his or her own argument for receiving the money. Allow five minutes for this activity.

After each person has practiced reflecting/restating and had a chance to make his or her argument for getting the money, then the group has ten minutes to decide who gets the money. During this open discussion, anyone may speak, but he or she must always begin speaking by restating what the previous person just said, or by reflecting that person's feelings or by asking a question about what the previous person just said.

The instructor is the referee. The instructor's job is to make sure that anyone who speaks reflects, restates, or questions the previous speaker before making his or her own argument for the money.

The instructor will warn the group when they have two minutes to make a decision. If the group does not pick someone, then no one gets the money.

LIFEBOAT

You are one of a group of people stranded in a lifeboat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Land is nowhere in sight and just before your cruise ship hit an iceberg and sank, the captain told everyone that you were 500 miles from land. The lifeboat you are in has enough food and water to feed two people for six weeks, but the group has to decide who those two should be.

Write down two reasons why you should be one of the people who stay in the lifeboat.

When everyone is ready, someone should start by giving one reason why he or she should stay. The next person should restate/reflect (questioning first if needed) what the first person said and then make his or her own argument for staying in the lifeboat. Allow five minutes for this activity.

After each person has practiced reflecting/restating and had a chance to make his or her argument for staying in the lifeboat, then the group has ten minutes to decide who stays in the life boat. During this open discussion, anyone may speak, but he or she must always begin speaking by restating what the previous person just said, or by reflecting that person's feelings or by asking a question about what the previous person just said.

The instructor is the referee. The instructor's job is to make sure that anyone who speaks reflects, restates, or questions the previous speaker before making his or her own argument staying in the lifeboat.

The instructor will warn the group when they have two minutes to make a decision. If the group does not pick someone, then no one survives.

HEART TRANSPLANT

You are all doctors at a big hospital. Your group must make a very important decision. There are several patients in the hospital who need a heart transplant. There is only one donor available at this time. Which patient will you choose to receive the heart? Why? Your group must all agree on the choice.

Review the list of patients:

A famous brain surgeon at the top of her career. Single, black woman. No children. She is 32 years old.

A 12 year-old musician. Japanese girl.

A 40 year-old teacher. Hispanic male. Has 2 children.

A 15 year-old pregnant woman. Unmarried, unemployed, white. Has no other children.

A 35 year-old Roman Catholic priest.

A 17 year-old waitress. Black, high school drop-out, unmarried. Helps her family with her earnings.

A 38 year-old scientist close to discovering a cure for AIDS. Chinese woman, no children, lesbian.

After reading the list, choose a patient and write down two reasons why that person should get the heart transplant.

When everyone is ready, someone should start by giving one reason why the patient they chose should get the transplant. The next person should restate/reflect (questioning first if needed) what the first person said and then make his or her own argument for a patient. Allow five minutes for this activity.

After each person has practiced reflecting/restating and had a chance to make an argument for his or her favorite patient, then the group has ten minutes to decide who gets the heart transplant. During this open discussion, anyone may speak, but he or she must always begin speaking by restating what the previous person just said, or by reflecting that person's feelings or by asking a question about what the previous person just said.

The instructor is the referee. The instructor's job is to make sure that anyone who speaks reflects, restates, or questions the previous speaker before making his or her own argument for a patient.

The instructor will warn the group when they have two minutes to make a decision. If the group does not pick someone, then no one gets a transplant.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Learners' Handbook

Conflict Resoluiton Model

Project # 98-3019

Fiscal Year 1993

by

MONTY WILSON

Contents

- Introduction
- Part One: Arguing
- Part Two: Conflict Resolution
- Part Three: Group Conflict Resolution
- Conclusion

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

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AUG 31 1995

RESEARCH OF ADULTS, YOUTH,
AND LITERACY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

"I never said that!"

"Will you stop!"

"I want to talk to you right now!"

Whether you have used these exact words or not, you probably recognize these three phrases as the beginning of an argument. Most people can think of a time when they have either said these words (loudly) or have heard them from someone else. People argue all the time, and then wish that there was less disagreement in the world. But can you really imagine that you will never have another argument with your spouse, your children, your best friend, or your boss? Can you really imagine that you will never disagree again with your landlord, your neighbors, or a bill collector?

No matter how much you like a person or how much you try to smooth things over, you cannot escape every disagreement. Disagreement leads to conflict. Just like birth, death, and taxes, conflict is a fact of life. It is how you handle conflict that is important.

The Learners' Handbook was written to be used with three workshops that will help you learn conflict resolution skills. This handbook will not teach you how to avoid conflict.

Instead, it will offer some new ideas about dealing with conflict.

The first part of this handbook will explore one way that people deal with conflict: arguing. It will help you understand why people argue. It will also talk about three ways that people can act in an argument.

The second part of this handbook talks about conflict resolution between two people. This is called interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is the kind of conflict most people think of when they remember conflicts in their families, on the street, or at work. This handbook offers five basic principles to help you handle disagreements and resolve conflicts. These five principles are:

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

Conflict resolution is a structured way of using these five principles to solve a problem. It is very different from just blowing your top. It is a set of ideas and skills designed to help you solve problems successfully.

The third part of the Learner's Handbook will look at group conflict resolution. There are some differences between interpersonal conflict resolution and group conflict resolution. The five basic principles still apply in groups. However, having more than two people in a conflict changes how people communicate and highlights the importance of inventing additional solutions to conflict.

We hope that the skills which you learn through this curriculum will be useful to you the next time you find yourself in a conflict. For example, we hope you will use conflict resolution skills when you disagree with your spouse, when you disagree with the phone company, and even when you disagree with local politicians.

PART ONE: ARGUING

People argue when they care about an issue or about each other. It can be easy to walk away from a stranger, but sometimes it seems like you just cannot escape the people you work with, live with, and even love. When people get to know each other, they discover each other's different values and needs. Conflict happens when people value something different than what another person values.

When people disagree about an idea, the way a job is done, or some action by another group, the conflict is about an "issue." For example:

Karen may feel it is important to do the dishes immediately after dinner; her husband may want to relax.

You may want the radio at a high volume; your neighbor may want to sleep.

The issue between Karen and her husband is when to do the dishes. The issue between you and the neighbor is the volume of the stereo.

Sometimes, however, the entire issue is only a smokescreen for someone's feelings about the person they are fighting with. For example:

Karen and James are doing the dishes. Karen drops a dish and James blows up about it. But what is really bothering James is the unspoken fact that Karen forgot to call him last Friday night.

This time, the issue of the broken dish is only a cover for feelings of anger and hurt over the telephone call which wasn't made. The broken dish allows James to vent his feelings, but the dish is not what the argument is really about. People's feelings are an important part of conflict.

Conflict occurs when people do not clearly communicate their feelings and desires to each other. If James does not tell Karen what he is feeling and what he wants from her in the future, Karen may continue to argue about the broken dish. Their disagreement will never get to the heart of the matter: James's feeling of neglect and his wish that Karen would call him next weekend. In order to resolve this conflict, Karen and James need to keep talking long enough to separate the issue of the broken dish from James's feelings about the forgotten phone call.

Communication can be hard because it requires that the people involved take responsibility or ownership for how they

feel and act. It may not be easy for James to admit to Karen that he feels neglected. He may not want to take responsibility for yelling at her about the dish. And Karen may not want to explain why she didn't call. However, James and Karen both need to accept responsibility for their parts in the conflict. Otherwise, they will never understand what is bothering the other person.

Unfortunately, sometimes people argue for power over a person or group. This desire for power can be based on how someone feels about race, gender, class, or a personal bias. The issues or feelings involved in the conflict may be completely lost in a person's desire to win the argument at all costs. In the case of James and Karen, if James decides he is right because it is his house and he is a male, then what James wants is power. James's gender and his property have nothing to do with his feelings or the phone call. He has decided, however, to ignore his feelings and simply make sure he wins the argument with Karen.

In summary, people argue for a lot of reasons.

- People argue because they disagree about an issue.
- People argue because of their feelings about the other person involved in the conflict.
- People argue because they misunderstand each other and have not found a way to communicate clearly.

- People even argue just for the sake of winning. Sometimes the issue is unimportant. The people in conflict are locked in a power struggle to prove their superiority over others.

WHY DO PEOPLE TRY TO AVOID CONFLICT?

If conflict is natural and if everyone will get into it with a person or a group at some point, then why do people fear conflict and work so hard to avoid it? We avoid conflict because society has taught us that conflict is bad. Bad experiences with conflict also teach us to avoid it. Most of us can remember conflicts that forced people apart and damaged relationships. Everyone has experienced or watched others lose lovers or friends, jobs or apartments because of a disagreement. Face it, conflict can feel lousy and have serious results.

Often, the outcome of the conflict depends on how people act. Think about it. How do you act in a disagreement? Do you yell back the minute you feel attacked - "I don't take nothin' off nobody." Do you refuse to speak when someone is angry with you - "I refuse to listen to this junk." Or do you try to listen? - "Hmmm. Maybe you have a point."

We are bound to get into conflict. What is important is how we handle it. Unfortunately, we often turn to arguing.

HOW WE ACT IN AN ARGUMENT

People act in one of four basic ways in an argument. They either **withdraw, surrender, get aggressive, or resolve** the problem.

Withdrawal means removing one's self from the situation. For example:

Karen and James disagree over how much money to spend on a new car. But every time Karen tries to talk about it with James he announces that he has an appointment to keep and walks out the door.

Instead of facing the problem, he has **physically withdrawn** from the situation. Withdrawal does not have to be physical, however. Another possibility of what could happen when Karen tries to talk about the car is:

James withdraws by burying himself in his newspaper and ignoring Karen.

In this case, rather than physically leaving, James has **mentally withdrawn** from the situation. Whether James leaves through the door or through his head, the end result is the same. He has avoided the fight, but left the problem of money unresolved.

Another response to conflict is **surrender**. Some people are so afraid of conflict that they will do anything to avoid it. In the case of Karen, James and the price of the new car:

Karen brings up the problem and James immediately says, "Whatever, we can do it your way."

He has **surrendered**. James has so much fear of a fight that he gives up talking about how he feels about the car in order to avoid a fight with Karen. The problem may seem to be solved, but that does not mean James feels good about the solution. He may believe that Karen forced him to surrender by threatening him with a fight. Since none of his issues or feelings about the car was even discussed, he may feel a lot of resentment. And that resentment will show up in other ways.

Withdrawal and surrender are ways to avoid conflict in which the problem appears on the surface to be solved, but resentment may force a worse conflict later on. Time definitely does not heal unresolved conflicts. Things usually get worse in the long run.

A third way some people deal with conflict is by **aggression**. Aggression is an attempt to resolve the conflict by either physical or verbal force. This time:

Karen brings up the issue of the car. James either

shouts and screams at her until she surrenders or withdraws, or he hits her until she agrees to his solution.

The problem has been solved, right? Wrong. **Aggression** may appear to solve the conflict, but resentment hides just below the surface. Karen may resent James's abusive words and if physical aggression is involved, Karen and James may end up in a legal conflict that is much worse than any problems about a new car.

Withdrawal, surrender, and aggression all fail in one very important way: they do not solve the problem. At best, one person feels satisfied and another feels defeated. Yet this is how most people approach conflict. They think that someone must win and someone must lose. After a few trips through that emotional meat grinder of withdrawal, surrender, or aggression, no wonder people try to avoid conflict.

The next part of this handbook will help you to face conflict, instead of avoiding it. It will show you how to resolve conflict by getting to the issues and feelings involved in a conflict. Does this sound too good to be true or even impossible? It is possible, but have no doubt, it is hard.

PART TWO: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict does not have to end with everyone feeling lousy. There is an important difference between unresolved and resolved conflict. Arguments usually end in unresolved conflict. An argument can start as a tense, polite conversation and turn into a knock-down, lip-splitting brawl. The problem or issue that started the argument gets lost in loud words and bad feelings. Nothing gets done about the issue. The conflict is not resolved.

For conflict to be resolved, the people involved need to work hard to solve the problem. Solving problems is so important and sometimes so difficult that many people study how to do it. The process they study is called **conflict resolution**.

Conflict resolution is a set of steps to help people discuss a problem. It is not easy. It takes practice. For conflict resolution to succeed, the people who are involved have to act very differently from what may feel natural in the heat of the moment. They may have to listen to other peoples' ideas or feelings, even if they seem stupid. They may even have to try to give the other side some of what they want. And they will have to take their time. An argument can be over in fifteen minutes, but conflict resolution can take days.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Communicate - it is essential.

For conflict to be resolved, those involved have to understand each other. Ideas must be expressed as clearly as possible. When one person is speaking, the others must be actively listening. Checking in as you go along helps you to know how communication is going. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice skills to help you communicate with others.

To get a clear idea of what is going on, you will learn to restate, reflect, and question the other person in the conflict.

To help make sure that you understand what another person is trying to say, you will practice **restating** another person's words by saying something like, "What I hear you saying is..." Repeating back what you heard the other person just say helps avoid misunderstandings.

Feelings are another important part of an argument. Learning to recognize another person's feelings and your own feelings can help keep an argument from exploding. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice **reflecting** another person's feelings by saying something like, "It looks to

me like you are feeling... Is that right?" Often, just being aware of your own and another person's feelings (anger, embarrassment, envy) can help you handle a conflict successfully.

When the ideas or feelings in an argument are not clear, you can get more information by asking questions about the ideas or feelings. Asking "How are you feeling?" or "So you want me to ...?" can help clear up confusion.

Another conflict resolution skill that focuses on feelings is listening and responding to feelings. In the middle of a conflict, your own feelings can get in the way of another person's feelings. Practicing talking about your own feelings and asking questions about others' feelings can keep good communication going.

Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.

Sometimes people care more about who wins and who loses than they do about resolving the conflict. When people stop talking about the issue, and begin to feel like they have to win, the conflict heats up or escalates. As the conflict escalates, the people get even more involved in a power struggle. The chances that anyone will solve the problem in a power struggle are not very good. In the Conflict Resolution Skills workshops, you will practice spotting when a conflict is escalating. You will also practice cooling conflicts off by focusing on the issues or

needs that started the conflict.

Take responsibility for feelings and actions.

It is important that everyone involved take responsibility for his or her part in the conflict. When people disagree, feelings often get high. This is not bad in itself. But it is destructive if people aren't aware of or willing to own their feelings.

It is also important to take responsibility for your actions. If mean words were spoken, perhaps an apology is needed. If it had been agreed to save money to buy a car and the money is lost in a poker game, this has to be admitted. In the workshops, the skills of Listening and Responding to Feelings and Restating/Reflecting/Questioning will help you get clear on responsibility for feelings and actions.

A special note about responsibility for blowing up

How many times have you heard this: "You shouldn't get so angry" or "Don't raise your voice to me." It seems that as an adult, you are only allowed to discuss problems in a calm, cool manner, when what you may really want is to yell your head off.

Anger can be frightening, but it happens. Feeling angry is fine. Often it is better to let it out

than to sit on it. Feelings are not good or bad; feelings just are.

What matters is how you act when you are angry. You alone are responsible for the way you act. Storming out of the house or shouting may be O.K., but it has a cost. How is the person you yelled at going to feel when you stop? Physical aggression is never O.K. Pushing, hitting, or beating are never acceptable ways to express anger. If you feel like hitting someone, it is your responsibility to leave the situation. Unless it's self-defense, no one can make you hit them. When you are feeling violent, you are responsible for setting limits on your behavior even when it feels like the fool really has it coming.

When someone blows up at you, you need to understand that now is not the time to try and solve the problem. Allow some time to cool off. Once there has been some time to cool off and limits have been set on behavior, you are ready for conflict resolution.

Separate feelings from issues.

Both feelings and issues are important but they have to be identified and dealt with separately. Cooling off time is essential when emotions are high. Getting clear on the issues

will help prevent emotions from taking over the discussion. If everyone involved has taken ownership of his or her feelings and actions, it will be easier to solve the problem. In the conflict resolution skills workshops, you will practice the skill of restating threats into clear statements that focus on the issue.

Keep inventing solutions.

Many times in arguments we forget to be creative because we are busy defending ourselves from the other people in the conflict. In the heat of the moment, people often see things as either my way or the wrong way. Because of their emotions, people believe that their solution is the only solution. We need to remember that there is often more than one answer to a problem. All the different skills taught in the workshops: **Conflict Escalation & De-escalation; Positions and Issues; Listening and Responding to Feelings; and Restating/ Reflecting/Questioning** help us to invent other solutions.

11 STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This section of the the handbook will give you some specific steps to follow when you are in a conflict. The steps in conflict resolution fall into three stages: Planning, Discussion, and Closure. The five principles we talked about are part of all of the stages. They are important to keep them in mind as you work your way through each stage. You can ask yourself "Am I

communicating? Am I looking for a solution or just trying to win? Am I taking responsibility for what I did and how I feel? Am I aware of the feelings and the issues involved in the conflict? Is there another way to try and solve this?" Ask these questions at each of the steps.

Stage One: Planning

This may seem like a strange thing to do when you feel that an argument is about to happen. Who plans for a disagreement? They just kind of happen. Avoiding moving from a disagreement to an argument is the point of planning in conflict resolution. During the planning stage, you give yourself a chance to cool down and figure out what things you really want from the other person or group. The planning stage of conflict resolution is usually done alone.

Step 1 - Take time out

How often have you jumped on your spouse, friend, or co-worker in a fit of frustration? This is natural; however, it does not solve the problem. Taking time gives you a chance to cool your emotions down, pay attention to the issues that are bothering you, and see your own part in the conflict. It will give you time to think about the other person's points.

Also, taking a little time may also help you see other things that are bothering you. For example:

Karen and James are arguing about the dishes again. When Karen takes a little time out, she remembers what a lousy day she had and realizes that she is angry at her boss.

Because of Karen's lousy day at work, and because she took her frustrations about work home, she picked a fight with James about the dishes. After she took a few minutes to think about it, Karen realized what was really bothering her.

Step 2 - Get clear on what you want and how you feel

This can be one of the hardest things to do. Before you talk to the person in the conflict, make a list of the specific actions you want from him or her, and list what you could do to resolve the conflict. Remember, the other people in the conflict may want something from you. Try to guess what they might ask of you. Know ahead of time where you will compromise. Also, make a list of your own feelings. This will help you control your emotions when you discuss the problems later on.

Step 3 - Take responsibility for what you want and how you feel

Practicing your request ahead of time will help you keep calm and stay focused on the issues. Try using "I" instead of "You." This is part of taking ownership of what you feel. Saying "I feel..." to someone is much less threatening than beginning a sentence with "You are..." Using "I" makes it clear that the person speaking does not blame the other people involved. The statement "I like things neater, and I would like you to hang up your coat when you come in the door," makes it clear what you want and does not suggest a judgment. It just points out that you want things to be different. It does not say that one person is right and one is wrong or that you want the person to be different. On the other hand, the word "You" suggests harsh judgment. "You are always leaving your things lying around!" leaves little room to talk. It suggests that I am right and you are wrong. It is not likely that this will lead to resolution of the conflict.

Step 4 - Make a date to discuss the conflict

Arguments often occur when one person feels jumped on and unprepared to deal with the problem. Conflict resolution takes planning. If the time is not right to confront a problem, pick a different time, one that works for everyone.

Stage Two: Discussion

When you finish planning, approach the person or group in the conflict to begin discussion of the conflict. This is easier said than done. Discussion in a conflict situation is hard work. You will do some things right and some things wrong. Keep track of how the discussion is going. Feel good about each success you worked so hard for.

Step 5 - State your problem and your desire clearly

No one can possibly stop bugging you or meet your needs if he or she does not know clearly what you want. Keep your statements short and focus on what the person does, not on the person. For example, "I don't like it when you swear like that" is a better statement than "I think you are such a pig!" Notice that both sentences start with "I," however, the first sentence tells the person that you don't like swearing. The second sentence says that you don't like him or her. The conflict resolution skills workshops focus on using non-threatening words and staying on the issue the argument was about.

Step 6 - Check in with the person

It is important to make sure the other person understands what was just said. Do not assume that people understand you or that you understand them. Give the speaker immediate feedback so that everyone understands what has been said.

After listening, try using sentences that begin with words like "Are you saying..." or "It sounds to me like you are saying..." Using the skills of Restating/Reflecting/Questioning can help people in conflict manage to check in with each other in spite of angry feelings.

Step 7 - Pop the question

Once the person you are dealing with understands how you feel and what it is you are asking, it is time to ask him or her "Will you do what I asked?"

Step 8 - Give him or her time

Just like you needed time to think about what you wanted, other people may need a few minutes or a few days to think things over. No one likes to feel pressured for an answer. If needed, set a date to get an answer. Also, the other person or people involved may need time to calm down and focus on issues. They may want time to plan their own requests for you. Give them the same time you needed.

Step 9 - Answering the question

The person may grant all of your request or only part of it. The person may say, "I cannot do all you asked, but I'll try 'X' for now." It is very important that everyone involved feel that he or she can live with this solution. Conflict resolution is not

Let's Make a Deal. It may require several cycles of planning and discussion before a solution is found. If you do not feel good about a compromise being offered, it is important to say so now, or you can end up with another conflict on your hands later.

Stage 3: Closure

For conflict to be resolved, the process must have an end. Sometimes disagreements go on and on. One thing leads to another. It is important not to let this happen. Work to solve one problem at a time. Save other issues for another day.

Step 10 - What if the answer is "NO?"

Sometimes the idea of actually solving problems makes people sneer and think "No way, not in the real world! Who are you trying to fool?" There is some truth to this feeling.

It is important not to think of conflict resolution as all roses. Conflict resolution requires that people set aside their emotions and act in ways that do not feel natural. Following the steps is not an easy thing to do. Sometimes the people or group involved in the conflict do not agree about the solution. Everyone involved may need to go through the steps of planning and discussion several times. And after a few meetings, people may decide that these particular needs cannot be met. Conflict resolution is not a guarantee. At this point, the

people involved can agree to disagree and part company. Even if the conflict cannot be resolved, the process may help the opposing sides learn to respect each other.

Step 11 - Plan a check up meeting

Once an agreement has been reached, it is a good idea to check in after a while (two days to two weeks) to see if the agreement is working. At that point you can either agree that the problem is solved, agree to try the solution for an extended period of time, or come up with a new agreement.

Take a minute to congratulate all the people involved. Instead of falling into a pit of failure and problems, you have successfully resolved a conflict. Here are a few basic signs that the conflict resolution process was constructive.

The needs of the people involved were met and the problem was solved.

People are able to live and work together even better than before the conflict.

The people involved in the conflict have improved their ability to resolve conflicts with each other in the future.

THE CYCLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution is difficult. The process of conflict resolution seldom happens in 11 easy steps as described above. For example:

You may state the problem clearly (Step 5). Then when you check in with the other person (Step 6) you may find that you have been misunderstood and that emotions are out of control. That means it is time to go back to Step 1, taking time out.

In Stage 2, the discussion, you might pop the question and then give the other person time to think about it. As time goes on, you may realize that the other person is not just in a time out, but that he or she has withdrawn. As a result, you need to go back to Stage 1, planning. For conflict resolution to work, you have to keep trying.

PART THREE: GROUP CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Most of this handbook has talked about a kind of one-on-one conflict which is called interpersonal conflict. Group conflict is a conflict that involves three or more people. Most people have experienced interpersonal conflict with someone they care about, such as a friend or family member. Group conflict may also be familiar to people in their families, at work, or in the neighborhood.

A group in conflict can use the conflict resolution skills. The five basic principles still apply in groups.

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly.
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

However, interacting with more than one person changes the way people act in conflict, so it is useful to look at group conflict resolution separately from interpersonal conflict resolution.

Communicating is essential, but even harder.

Communication by talking and listening to others is very important. It runs through all three stages of conflict resolution.

When more than two people are involved, communication becomes much more difficult. When more people are involved, the chances for misunderstanding increase. This is because people can only listen to one person at a time. If there are three people in a group, there is room for any one person to misunderstand the other two. Things can get worse as the numbers go up.

Separate feelings from issues.

If the problem being resolved is a bitter one, feelings can often flare up and threaten to stop discussion dead in its tracks. In a group, there can be as many different feelings as there are people. People's feelings need to be dealt with separately from the problem. This is not the same as not dealing with emotions at all. It is very important to recognize people's anger, sadness, or frustrations and to celebrate when conflict resolution is going well. However, the group must agree to try to place emotions on the back burner when the official time to resolve the problem arrives. During conflict resolution, the entire group must try to focus on the problem, not how they feel about it.

Avoid power struggles.

Often what people want to get out of a situation is to win. This leads them to take a position and stick to it. Most people take a position at the beginning of an argument. Look at this example of three neighbors, James, Leon and Bill:

Bill holds loud parties every Friday night. When his two neighbors storm over to his house shouting about last Friday night, Bill immediately takes a position by stating that he can do whatever he wants on his property. Angered by this, James and Leon take a position by threatening that if Bill ever has another party again, they will call the police.

Taking positions leads to making threats and sets up a power struggle in which each side feels that it must never back down or it will lose. In large groups there may be many more than two positions and everyone may feel that they cannot give an inch or they will lose everything.

Now let's look at the whole thing again.

Bill's neighbors storm over to his house right when Bill has just finished reading this Learners' Handbook. Bill sees that Leon and

James are angry, so he lets them blow off steam and suggests they get together later to work out the problem. Having failed to stir up a fight, Leon and James agree. Bill has caused the situation to de-escalate by separating Leon's and James's feelings from the issue of the party's noise.

When Leon and James return much calmer in the afternoon, they insist that all parties must stop. Bill, however, tries to communicate by asking questions about what bothers them about the party. Both neighbors immediately insist that there is too much noise on Friday. Bill asks what is wrong with noise on the weekend? At this point, Leon takes responsibility for what he wants and says that he works on Saturday mornings and cannot sleep with the loud music at 2:00 a.m.

Instead of causing the conflict to escalate by saying that this is not his problem, Bill restates what Leon wants by asking "So, you're saying that what you are really interested in is getting some sleep?" Leon agrees with this. Bill then takes responsibility for his own interests and says that he still wants to have parties, but that he is willing to turn the stereo down at

midnight. Will that solve the problem? Instead of yelling at Bill, Leon sets his anger aside for a minute and points out that all the conversation and cars will keep him awake.

Bill could now cause the conflict to escalate. He could say that he tried to resolve the conflict, but Leon wouldn't compromise, so tough luck, Leon. Instead, Bill sets his frustration aside for a minute and looks at his interests and Leon's interests. Leon wants it really quiet on Friday because he has to work. Bill wants to see his friends on the weekend. Both Leon and Bill want to get along with each other.

Can this conflict be resolved? Is there a way that both needs can be met? Is it possible that everyone could get what they need?

Continue to invent solutions.

Instead of giving up, Bill decides to keep inventing solutions and try to get the situation to deescalate:

Bill suggests to Leon that he can change his parties to Saturday night. Leon admits that he could live with this if the stereo goes down at

3:00 a.m. Bill agrees and they have resolved the conflict.

Bill then asks James why he wants the parties stopped. James has had time to cool down, and to watch Bill and Leon resolve their problem. James does not work on the weekend so what is it that he really wants? Can he live with noise on Saturday night? When he thinks it over, James realizes that he doesn't mind the parties, really. He is more annoyed with Bill for not inviting him. This is a problem Bill can handle. Until now he had assumed both James and Leon had an open invitation. Now he invites James to the parties.

The conflict is resolved. Friday nights are quiet so Leon can get his rest. Saturday night is party night. Bill enjoys his friends, including James who stays until the end. And it was all done without the police.

CONCLUSION

It would be nice in the conclusion of the Learners' Handbook, if we could promise you that conflict resolution skills will make your life one sweet song from now on. This handbook was never meant to be an answer to all your problems. It was meant to offer some new ideas and approaches to how you can handle conflict.

These five principles are the basis of these ideas.

1. Communicate - it is essential.
2. Don't struggle over power - it's deadly .
3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues.
4. Separate feelings from issues.
5. Keep inventing solutions.

Too often, whether a conflict is with a loved one, a co-worker, or the U. S. Congress, it ends in frustration because the people involved have no tools to help them work out a solution. It is our hope that this handbook has provided some ways to solve conflict. We hope that you will use these tools in a wide variety of places: at home, in school, and even in dealing with the government. It is our hope that you will use them often and well.