RESOLVING CONFLICT

5 LESSON

AGENDA

- Starter
- Paper Tiger
- Resolution
- Conflict Resolution Games
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the importance of being assertive when addressing conflicts.

Students will identify the steps to conflict resolution.

Students will apply the steps to conflict resolution to recurring conflicts in their own lives.

Materials Needed

- Comics pages, one set for each group of four students (Starter)
- Several pieces of paper cut into long four-inch-wide strips (Part II)
- One or two board games, such as Sorry, Chutes and Ladders, Life, etc. (Part III)
- Art materials, including one piece of butchers paper or cardboard for each group of three students; markers; glue; construction paper; and found objects such as buttons, fasteners, bottle tops, etc. (Part III)

Starter *(3 minutes)*

Divide the class into groups of four and give each group a set of comic strips. Tell students to find one comic strip that is built around a conflict. Have them cut it out, paste it on a larger piece of paper, and answer the following questions:

- Who are the parties in the conflict?
- What is the nature of the conflict?
- What emotions are depicted in the comic strip?
- Does the comic strip show a win-lose, lose-lose, or win-win situation?
- Could this conflict be resolved as a win-win situation for the parties involved?

Have each group present its comic strip to the class and discuss the above issues. Some groups may wish to discuss what is inherently funny about the comic they selected. Remind students that conflict is a part of our everyday lives and that sometimes it helps to find humor in difficult situations, even ones involving interpersonal conflict.

Part I Paper Tiger *(5 minutes)*

Purpose: Students identify the importance of being assertive and facing conflict head-on.

1. Students analyze a quote.

Write the following Zen proverb on the board: “You must turn and face the tiger to learn that it is made of paper.”

Ask students what they think the proverb means. Lead students to understand that the “tigers” in the quote are the conflicts and challenges that present themselves to us. Elicit from students the understanding that the quote is about having the courage to face our challenges directly. Tell students that when we face our conflicts and address them, we often find that they are not as overwhelming as we had thought. Sometimes our biggest obstacles are in our own minds (“made of paper”) and the challenge can be handled head-on.

2. Students recognize the importance of being assertive when addressing conflict.

Ask students to recall what they learned about being assertive in “Lesson 5: Learning to Be Assertive” of Module Three: *Setting and Achieving Goals*. Ask students to describe what they think happens to passive people and aggressive people in conflict situations. (Students might respond: Passive people often find themselves on the losing end of a win-lose situation. Aggressive people might let their anger get out of control or resort to violence).

Tell students that “turning to face the paper tiger” means addressing your conflicts in an assertive manner with the goal of a win-win resolution.

Part II Resolution *(15 minutes)*

Purpose: Students identify and order the steps to resolving conflicts and apply the process to the conflicts in their own lives.

1. Students identify the steps to conflict resolution.

Explain to students that they are going to recall and list the steps to conflict resolution, based on what they have learned in the past four lessons. Then, they will prioritize the steps.

As students recall the steps, write their responses in a place where everyone can see. Discuss each of their ideas, defining the steps to ensure that they don’t overlap. (See the list below for likely student responses.)

2. Students order the steps to conflict resolution.

Ask volunteers to each write one of the steps on a strip of paper and post it with the other steps in no particular order in the front of the room. Discuss the best order for the steps and arrange the strips in the order decided.

Student responses are likely to include the following steps in a similar order:

1. Identify the source of the conflict.
2. Identify the needs and wants of the two parties.
3. Say what you mean: communicate responsibly, using I-statements and avoiding generalizations, name-calling, and stereotypes.
4. Use anger management techniques to control emotions.
5. Look for common ground with the other person.
6. Consider all available resolutions.
7. Work toward a win-win situation and find a solution that is acceptable to both parties.
8. If no acceptable resolution can be found, bring in a mediator.

3. Students revisit their conflict resolution goals.

Ask students to look at the conflict resolution goals that they have developed throughout this module. Instruct students to use the steps to resolution to devise a plan for assertively addressing the conflicts that they are dealing with in their own lives.

Encourage students to work independently to create a plan that they can monitor and that will help them assess their progress. Circulate as students work, offering feedback or advice as needed.

Part III Conflict Resolution Games *(30 minutes)*

Purpose: Students create games to demonstrate the steps to conflict resolution.

1. Students identify the characteristics of a board game.

Say, “Now that you know how to resolve conflict effectively, you can practice and share your expertise with others.”

Divide students into groups of three or four. (You may want to consider letting them choose their own groups for this activity.) Tell students that they are going to create games that demonstrate the steps to conflict resolution.

In order to help students identify the characteristics of a board game, show them one or two examples. Help students plan their own games by holding up one of the games and asking questions such as the following:

- What is the goal of this game?
- What is the broad concept of this game?
- How is the board designed?
- How do you advance to the next square, level and so on?
- How are obstacles presented?
- How do players win and lose this game?

Give groups time to explore a variety of games and suggest that they answer similar questions in order to understand the strategies of published board games.

2. Students create conflict-resolution board games.

Provide the groups with butchers paper or cardboard and art materials. Remind them that their games are to demonstrate exemplary ways to resolve conflicts. To do so, they will have to structure the game around conflicts that occur in daily life. Encourage them to be creative in the design of their games.

Allow students about 25 minutes to design their games. You may want to set aside an additional class period to allow students to exchange and play each others’ games.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to share their action steps for resolving conflict. Ask the class to comment on what in this module they think has helped them most with their goals for conflict resolution. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- It is important to be assertive when addressing the conflicts that we face.
- The steps to conflict resolution can serve as guidelines for our own conflict resolution goals.

Student Assessment

1. Describe a conflict you have seen in a movie or on TV. Analyze this conflict according to the steps of conflict resolution.
2. Describe a conflict that you have been in and then rewrite it, undoing the crucial moment that led to the conflict.
3. List three conflict resolution strategies that can help you.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The great tragedies of history occur not when right confronts wrong, but when two rights confront each other.”

Have students discuss the meaning of this quote and how it relates to conflict between two people.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have groups of students create “living statues” of conflict and then of resolution by posing in a scene.

Ask each group to explain its formation and how it would resolve the conflict shown in its first statue.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about the challenges they face when trying to be assertive in conflict situations.

As a class, compile one list of the challenges that students face and allow them to offer suggestions on how to overcome these challenges.

Using Technology

Students watch an episode of their favourite TV show. Have students identify the way conflict was resolved. Was anyone demonstrating assertive behaviour.

Homework

Have students reflect on their achievement with regard to their conflict resolution goals.

Have each student create a certificate of achievement for someone else in class.

Additional Activity

Have students read excerpts from *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela.

Discuss how Mandela confronted his own conflicts while acting as a mediator to others.