

# Let's Resolve Conflicts Together



## K-12 Classroom Activities -2001-

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# Conflict Management Week

## K-12 Activity Guide

Enclosed you will find a selection of activities and worksheets for grades K-12, focusing on the importance and benefits of cooperation, listening and conflict management skills. With heightened awareness to issues of school safety, it is important for schools to take an active role in promoting constructive responses to conflict. The resources in this guide will help you do that.

A first step in promoting constructive responses to conflict is to gain an understanding about conflict. Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of living. Managing conflict is difficult for many people because they have not been taught how to resolve differences in cooperative, nonviolent ways. However, appropriate responses can be learned. Conflicts abound in part because individuals have different values, needs and desires. If the cause of a conflict is understood, the possibility of a lasting resolution is greatly enhanced. Communication problems can lead to misunderstanding and make conflicts more difficult to resolve. In addition to learning steps of a conflict management process, teachers may also work with students to enhance the communication skills used in conflict management. These include understanding blocks to communication, being aware of nonverbal communication, using "I" statements and using active listening skills.

Making use of themes of conflict can invigorate subject areas across the curriculum. Studies have shown that comprehension and retention of material was enhanced when students applied conflict concepts and skills in academic subjects. There are numerous ways to infuse conflict management into every area of the curriculum. For further ideas and assistance visit [www.state.oh.us/cdr/schools/curriculumindex.htm](http://www.state.oh.us/cdr/schools/curriculumindex.htm) on the Commission's Web site as well as the National Curriculum Integration Project at [www.ncip.org](http://www.ncip.org). For further school conflict management resources, visit our Web site at [www.state.oh.us/cdr/](http://www.state.oh.us/cdr/) and go to *schools* or contact:

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# **SOLER Energy**

Non-verbal active listening is called body language. Body language includes silent signals that people give with their bodies. This is done by the way a person looks as she/he speaks, sits, stands, and uses facial expressions. A conflict manager demonstrates positive body language by radiating SOLER energy. SOLER is an acronym that helps students remember important non-verbal cues that let people know they are listening.

## ***S***

stands for "squarely." When standing or sitting and talking to a person, never slouch. Position yourself so that you squarely face the speaker.

## ***O***

stands for "open stance." This means that conflict managers should never cross their arms in front of their chest, but rather have their arms down to their sides or fold their hands in front of them. This is done to look attentive and not bored or uncaring.

## ***L***

stands for "lean forward." When talking to a person the conflict manager should lean a little forward so the person can see that attention is being centered completely on him/her.

## ***E***

stands for "eye contact." Eye contact is the most important part of body language. If eye contact is not made, the person speaking might think that she/he is not being listened to, respected, or cared for. In some cultures eye contact is a form of disrespect. Conflict managers need to be aware of the cultural background of the people with whom they are working.

## ***R***

stands for "relax." Just relax! Relaxing puts all the people involved in the discussion at ease.

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# **Button Piles**

This is a demonstration of a conflict resulting from limited resources. It evokes the feelings associated with conflict situations and illustrates different conflict management styles.

## **Materials:**

- Enough buttons (or beans) for each member of the class to have several
- A timer

## **Instructions:**

Divide the class into groups of five. Pass out a few buttons to each person in the class. Be sure to give some students more buttons and some fewer. This indicates that in real life not everyone has the same resources (financial, material, education, etc.) Explain to the class that the purpose of the game is simply, "Whoever has the most buttons at the end of two minutes wins. Ready, Set, Go!" Observe the individuals in the groups and watch for competitors, compromises, avoiders, accommodators, and collaborators. After two minutes stop the play. Have students count their buttons and announce the winner.

## **Discussion Questions:**

- How did you feel playing this game? Why?
- How was it like a real conflict situation?
- Was there a problem with the instructions? (Not enough information.)
- Does that happen in real life?
- Did you feel like anyone wasn't playing fair? Were there any rules?
- What unspoken rules did everyone accept? (Not physically hurting others?
- Staying within group?)
- Did anything happen to make you angry?
- What did you do when you got angry?
- What different methods were used to get the buttons?
- Who tried intimidation? Negotiation? Ganging up?
- What conflict management styles were identified?

Developed by Martha Green, PLOWSHARES, Glenford, OH 43739 (614)-659-2322

# Nonverbal Communication

**Materials:** -10 index cards labeled with the following words:

- Scared
- Irritated
- Sad
- Worried
- Hurt
- Angry
- Excited
- Snobby
- Bored
- Guilty

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

## **Procedure:**

1. Introduce the concept of body language through a demonstration that sends the class a "mixed message." For example, storm into the room, slam a book down on your desk, stand with your arms crossed, frown, stamp your foot, and say, "Today will be a great day; we will do some really interesting and fun things today." Then ask the class how they felt about the words you were saying. Did they believe them? Were they comfortable with them? Why not? How else were you communicating Which was more believable?
2. Discuss the concept of body language with the class. (We all communicate on two levels: in verbal and nonverbal ways. Feelings are often communicated through body language.)
3. Ask for volunteers to demonstrate, through body language, the words (feelings) written on the index cards; have the class identify the feelings being demonstrated.

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Adapted form Project Response and Conflict Management Training Guide

# Questioning Game

## **Objective:**

Students will understand the differences among the following types of questions: yes/no, narrow or close-ended, and open-ended.

## **20**

Play 20 questions with the class. You should select a person, place, thing, or event\* - factual or fictional. Tell the students that they may ask you 20 questions that require a yes or no response. Keep a tally of the number of questions the students ask. The game is complete when twenty questions have been asked or someone in the class correctly guesses the identity of the person, place, thing or event.

## **10**

Next, play 10 questions with the class. Again, you should select a person, place, thing, or event. This time the students must ask narrow or closed-ended questions that require short answers. Examples include: Where were you born? New York. How old are you? 40 years old. In what century did you live? The fifteenth century. Keep track of the number of questions. The game is complete when ten questions have been asked or the class correctly identifies the person, place, thing or event.

## **5**

The final question game is five questions. Again, you should select a person, place, thing, or event. This time students should ask open-ended questions that elicit a lot of information. Examples of open-ended questions include: "Tell me about yourself." or "Tell me about a big event in your life?" The game is complete when five questions have been asked or the class correctly identifies the person, place, thing or event.

\*Students can learn academics while learning about different types of questions. You may want to select a person, place, thing, or event that the students read about in art, language arts, music, science or other courses.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What was the difference between the different types of questions?
- What kind of question would you ask if you wanted to get a lot of information about something?
- What type of question would you ask if you wanted to get more information about a specific item?
- Can you give examples of when it would be good to use each type of question?
- Can you give examples of when it would not be good to use each type of question?

# **Conflicts Offer Learning Opportunities**

## **Objective:**

- Students will learn that not all conflicts are negative or a waste of time.
- Some conflicts provide individuals with an opportunity to learn.

## **Procedure:**

1. Have the class develop a list of conflicts that resulted in them learning something they didn't know before the conflict occurred.
2. Discuss some of the conflicts, how they developed, and why they provided a learning experience.

## **Discussion:**

- How can a conflict be a positive experience?
- Do you think about the saying, "two heads are better than one"?
- Is it possible to make all conflicts positive?
- What can we do to make all conflicts in our classroom a learning experience?

# Practicing Verbal Listening Skills

## **Objectives:**

Students will:

1. Be introduced to and practice restating.
2. Ask questions if they don't understand.

**Materials:** Watching the Listener Worksheet (see the next page)

## **Procedure:**

1. Remind the students of the "Are You Listening" activity earlier in this section.
2. Ask them if they can think of anything that would have helped them remember better. Explain that saying what they heard and asking questions can help.
3. Demonstrate these skills. Ask a student who walks to school to explain how she/he gets there. Restate, ask clarifying questions, give the directions to the class.
4. Ask a pair of volunteers to tell each other how they get from the door of their house to the kitchen. Have listeners listen, ask questions, and restate to the class. Tell the listeners what they did well, what was "thumbs up".
5. Divide class into groups of three. Have students take turns being the speaker, the listener and the observer. Explain that the observer's job is to tell the listener what was "thumbs up."

## **Closure:**

Ask a few students to tell what was good about the listening in their group.

## **Adaptations for Grades 3-6:**

Groups of three:

- give directions from their home to a relative's home.
- give directions for a favorite game.
- describe a scene in such a way that others can draw it.

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# Watching the Listener

1. Did the listener demonstrate these non-verbal skills?

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
-relaxed	_____	_____
-open	_____	_____
-lean	_____	_____
-eye contact*	_____	_____
-square	_____	_____

*\*when culturally appropriate*

2. Which verbal listening skills were demonstrated by the listener?

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Did the listener encourage the speaker?	_____	_____
Did the listener ask the speaker about feelings?	_____	_____
Did the listener restate what the speaker said?	_____	_____
Did the listener ask open-ended questions?	_____	_____
Did the listener show the speaker appreciation?	_____	_____

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# Understanding Our Reactions to Trigger Words

## **New Concepts:**

1. Body Language - demonstrate
2. Trigger words - define
3. Building anger - short or long fuse

## **Activities:**

1. Hassle line demonstrates body language. The group is divided in half and each half should stand in a line facing the other half. The children on one side should pretend that they wore a new white sweater to school that day and that a person standing across from them just squirted ketchup on them in the lunch room. As each student reacts to the ketchup on his/her shirt, say "Freeze." Students should observe their body positions, voice tones, feelings, facial expressions, etc. Discuss roles of both students. Students can switch roles and re-enact role play.

2. Feeling Pantomime: The teacher can whisper or write on paper feeling words. One student pantomimes the feeling by using exaggerated body postures, the other students have to guess the feeling. (i.e: shy, frightened, angry, joyful.)

3. Trigger words: Students generate a list of powerful trigger words for them and their friends. The teacher can share her personal trigger word if she/he feels comfortable. Emphasis has to be on the idea that it's only a trigger word if it makes you MAD. Trigger words are targeted to our most vulnerable spot.

4. Do the balloon demonstration to show building of anger. Use a balloon and give examples of a day filled with negative comments or experiences. Blow up the balloon with each comment. When balloon is filled to capacity, POP with a pin to show why we explode. There is NO other way for bad feelings to escape. Then blow up balloon, showing once again how distended it becomes when the pressure of angry feelings builds. This time, let out hot air slowly, gradually, through the mouth of the balloon. Notice how it regains its relaxed state, when feelings are released by expressing them constructively.

**Homework:** Students can demonstrate the balloon experience to classmates or to family.

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# Looking at My Trigger Words

**Triggers:** Thinking about and answering the questions on this worksheet will help you understand what triggers your anger. You won't need to share your answers.

- What are my trigger words?

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- What kind of body language makes me angry?

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- How do I know I'm angry?

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- How do I react to my triggers?

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Do I have a long or a short fuse? (In other words, do I lose my temper slowly or quickly?)

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## **S.O.S. Steps to Resolve a Conflict**

**S**tory

**Each person tells his/her side of the story including using an "I" message to say how each feels.**

**O**ptions

**Both people suggest possible solution options.**

**S**olutions

**Both agree on a solution.**

**Make sure the option agreed to is safe, fair and will work for both people.**

Developed by Gayle Hines and Vivia Roberts Park Layne Elementary School, New Carlisle, Ohio. Based on "Steps to Resolve a Conflict" by The Community Board Programs, Inc.

# **S.O.S: Steps to Resolve A Conflict (cont'd)**

## **Begin with the Big Cs:**

- Calm Down
- Cool-Off
- Chill-Out

## **Remember to:**

- Find a good time and place to talk.
- Listen to what the other person is saying.
- Focus on the problem-not the person.
- Acknowledge feelings.
- Avoid the blame game.
- Get all of the facts.

## **S - STORY**

1. Both people agree to talk about the problem and follow ground rules:
  - One person talks at a time.
  - No interrupting.
  - No name-calling or put-downs.
  - Be honest.
2. One person tells his/her side of the story, using "I" statements to say how they feel.
3. The other person restates what the first person said (e.g. "What I hear you saying is...") and may ask questions to clarify understanding.
4. Now, the second person tells his/her side of the story, including "I" statements.
5. The first person then restates what the other person said and may ask questions to clarify understanding.
6. Agree on what the problem is.

## **O - OPTIONS**

Brainstorm options with both people suggesting possible solution options (e.g. "Well, how about ..."). Remember no evaluating - all suggestions are accepted at this point and written down.

## **S – SOLUTION**

1. Evaluate options. Look for options that are safe, fair and will work for both people.
2. Choose a solution where both people can be winners.
3. If it doesn't work, get back together and discuss other options.
4. If this doesn't work and there is still a problem, ask someone for help.

Developed by Gayle Hines and Vinia Roberts, Park Layne Elementary School. Based on "Steps to Resolve a Conflict," Community Board Program, Inc.

# Listening Games

**Telephone Line:** Have everyone lineup across the room. The first person on one end of the line should think of a sentence to whisper to the next person in line. Have each person pass the message down the line, whispering to the person next in line. (You may only give the message once: do not repeat it to the next person. It is important to speak as clearly as you can without speaking so loudly that others will hear.)

What message was received by the last person in line? What was the original sentence? How did it change?

The "telephone" game is often used as an example of how rumors get started. It shows how easy it is to misunderstand even when you are TRYING to listen. Can you think of an example from your own experience of a time when a simple misunderstanding led to bad conflict?

**Cooper Says:** This exercise emphasizes attentive listening and cooperative attitudes. "Cooper" Says is essentially the same game as "Simon Says" the difference is that in Cooper Says no one is ever out. If a person mistakenly does an action that Cooper did not say to do everyone laughs and keeps going. (Cooper is short for "cooperation".)

A person is selected to be Cooper. Cooper leads the group by saying, "Cooper says" (S/he mentions an action, e.g. wave hands, bend down, jump in place) and at the same time performing the action. The others listen carefully and follow Coopers' lead in performing the actions. Occasionally Cooper will mention and perform an action without using the phrase "Cooper Says." When Cooper does this, the others are not to perform the action. They must listen carefully to play correctly.

**Mirrors:** This exercise is a visualization of the reflective listening concept. Partners face each other: one is a person, the other the mirror. The "person" slowly makes body and facial movements. The "mirror" reflects back what the other person is communicating by repeating the same movements together with the "person" just as if s/he was a mirror image. Stop and change roles so that each person has an opportunity to be both a person and a mirror. How accurate is the reflection?

"Cooper Says" and "Mirrors" contributed by Martha Green, PLOWSHARES, Glenford, OH 614-659-2322

# **Button Piles and Conflict Styles**

This is a demonstration of a conflict resulting from limited resources. It evokes the feelings associated with conflict situations and illustrates different conflict management styles.

## **Materials:**

- Enough buttons (or beans) for each member of the class to have several
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## **Instructions:**

Divide the class into groups of five. Pass out a few buttons to each person in the class. Be sure to give some students more buttons and some fewer. This indicates that in real life not everyone has the same resources (financial, material, education, etc.) Explain to the class that the purpose of the game is simply, "Whoever has the most buttons at the end of two minutes wins. Ready, Set, Go!" Observe the individuals in the groups and watch for competitors, compromises, avoiders, accommodater, and collaborators. After two minutes stop the play. Have students count their buttons and announce the winner.

## **Discussion Questions:**

- How did you feel playing this game? Why?
- How was it like a real conflict situation?
- Was there a problem with the instructions? (Not enough information.)
- Does that happen in real life?
- Did you feel like anyone wasn't playing fair? Were there any rules?
- What unspoken rules did everyone accept? (Not physically hurting others? Staying within group?)
- Did anything happen to make you angry?
- What did you do when you got angry?
- What different methods were used to get the buttons?
- Who tried intimidation? Negotiation? Ganging up?
- What conflict management styles were identified?

Developed by Martha Green, Plowshares, Glenford, OH 43739 (614)-659-2322.

# Identifying Behaviors that Satisfy

## Basic Needs

**Purpose:** To help students recognize that many appropriate and inappropriate behaviors can satisfy needs and to help them choose appropriate behaviors.

**Materials:** "Getting Our Needs Met" handout

**Background:** It is important to help individuals to identify their need(s) in a information: conflict because this will help them to analyze their behavior and adopt behavior that will not only end the conflict, but also satisfy their need(s). William Glasser, Ph. D. states in his book Control Theory: A New Explanation of How We Control Our Lives that the behavior of all individuals is result of an attempt to meet one or more basic needs. It is important to note that whether behavior is appropriate or inappropriate, it is an attempt to meet at least one need. By analyzing conflicts in this way, individuals can learn to change inappropriate behaviors to appropriate behaviors to meet the desired need(s).

There are many appropriate and inappropriate behaviors individuals can choose to meet their psychological needs. Many times individuals have not learned or considered other more appropriate behaviors. In these situations, brainstorming a list of potential behaviors is important. Some times individuals may not be given an opportunity to satisfy their needs. In these situations, these individuals and/or their advocates may need to educate and negotiate with others to create appropriate opportunities for the individual to meet their psychological needs. The following is a short list of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors that individuals may exhibit to meet their psychological needs.

### Power

(feeling important, being respected)

#### **Appropriate behavior**

- cooperative leader
- discipline
- talking about problems
- acknowledge frustrations and failures
- including others
- respectful of different cultures

#### **Inappropriate behavior**

- bullying
- punishment
- hitting
- put downs, name calling, teasing
- excluding others
- prejudice

### **Belonging**

**(loving, sharing, cooperating, fitting in with others)**

#### **Appropriate behavior**

- participating in athletics
- participating in academic or civic clubs
- becoming a team leader or active member
- being a thoughtful, caring, supportive friend
- celebrating days that are special to your friends
- appreciating differences
- sharing interests and hobbies (Nintendo, Internet, skateboarding, music, etc.)

#### **Inappropriate behavior**

- joining gangs
- overspending on clothes, activities, gifts, etc.
- bullying others
- skipping school or defacing ("tagging") property
- having sex and using alcohol and other drugs
- excluding others by name calling, avoiding, etc.
- stealing clothes or other "in" items to be "cool"

### **Freedom**

**(making choices)**

#### **Appropriate behavior**

- allotting time for family, friends, studying and other interests
- choosing elective classes
- standing up for what you believe is right, even if others disagree
- choosing a part-time job or an extracurricular activity
- choosing what to wear or what to eat
- deciding what to see a movie, watch videos, see a concert

#### **Inappropriate behavior**

- always letting someone else make decisions for you
- skipping classes
- excluding or abusing individuals or groups based on prejudice
- deciding not to study
- using alcohol, drugs and having sex
- violating curfew or other family or school rules

### **Fun**

**(laughing, playing, finding joy in life)**

#### **Appropriate behavior**

- participating in athletics
- listening or playing music
- reading materials

#### **Inappropriate behavior**

- use of alcohol and other drugs
- having sex
- prejudice against individuals or groups

## **Security**

**(feeling safe from put downs, ridicule, physical abuse)**

### **Appropriate behavior**

- communicating effectively
- using conflict resolution skills
- talking to a trusted adult or improving social skills
- talking openly with friends
- developing an action plan
- participating in development of classroom or school safety rules (as appropriate)

### **Inappropriate behavior**

- bullying or hitting others
- using put downs for others
- isolating one's self physically or emotionally
- masking feelings
- using alcohol and other drugs
- skipping or dropping out of school

### **Directions:**

Give students the "Getting Our Needs Met" handout and ask them to complete it in small groups. After they have completed the worksheet, ask them to share their answers. Write their ideas on the chalkboard.

### **Processing:**

Discuss the various kinds of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Ask the students if the inappropriate behaviors really meet their needs - or in the long-run, do the inappropriate behaviors reduce their ability to satisfy other needs in the future? Ask students how inappropriate behaviors can be changed to appropriate behaviors.

# Getting Our Needs Met

Individuals have five basic needs: power, belonging, freedom, fun and security. It is important for individuals to identify their need(s) in a conflict because this will help them to analyze their behavior and adopt behavior that will end the conflict and satisfy their need(s). Conflicts are often the result of an individual's choosing to satisfy their needs in an inappropriate way. In the first column list appropriate ways students can satisfy their basic needs. In the second column list inappropriate way that students choose to meet the same need.

**Power:** the need for feeling important and being respected

Appropriate ways to achieve power

Inappropriate ways to achieve power

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**Belonging:** the need for loving, sharing, cooperating, and fitting in with others

Appropriate ways to belong

Inappropriate ways to belong

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**Freedom:** the need to make choices and decisions

Appropriate ways to exercise freedom

Inappropriate ways to exercise freedom

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**Fun:** the need for laughing, playing, and finding joy in life

Appropriate ways to have fun

Inappropriate ways to have fun

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**Security:** feeling safe from put downs, ridicule, and physical abuse

Appropriate ways to feel secure

Inappropriate ways to feel secure

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# **Choosing A Conflict Management Style**

In every situation we are responsible for our actions. Conflict situations offer each of us an opportunity to choose a style for responding to the conflict. The key to effective conflict prevention and management is to choose the conflict management style appropriate for the conflict. Most of us have a favorite style that we use in conflict situations, but we are all capable of choosing a different style when it is appropriate.

Five main types of conflict management styles are described below: Cooperative problem-solving, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising. Animals are associated with each style to help you remember the differences among the styles. Remember that animals, like people, may have a favorite style, but they may also choose to adopt a new style in special situations.

Review the five styles and then proceed to the following activities. Teachers may want to refer to additional information located in Section Three, Resources for Skill Enhancement.

## **Cooperative Problem Solving**

Choosing a cooperative problem-solving style enables people to work together so everyone can win. Using this style, people try to find a solution that will help everyone meet their interests and help everyone maintain a good relationship.

A **dolphin** usually chooses a cooperative problem-solving style. Dolphins use whistles and clicks to communicate with each other to catch food cooperatively and to summons help. For example, when a dolphin is sick or injured, other dolphins will help it to the surface so it can breathe.

Although the dolphin usually chooses to be a cooperative problem solver, it can also choose other styles depending on the situation. For example, if a dolphin has a baby and a shark is in the area, the dolphin will choose to use a competitive style to deal with the shark. Continuing to use its favorite style of cooperation would greatly endanger the life of the baby dolphin.

## **Competing**

Choosing a competitive style means that a person is putting his/her interest before anyone else's interests. In fact, sometimes people who use the competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they ruin friendships.

A **lion** can be a symbol of a competitive style. The lion's roar helps the lion to satisfy its interests. For example, if the lion's family is hungry and needs food, the lion may use its strength and loud roar to get the food because it is important for the family. However, the lion can also choose to use a compromising or accommodating style when playing or resting with a lion cub.

People choose a compromising style when it is important for them to satisfy some of their interests, but not all of them. People who compromise are likely to say, "let's split the difference" or "something is better than nothing."

A **zebra** can be a symbol for the compromising style. A zebra's unique look seems to indicate that it didn't care if it was a black horse or a white horse, so it "split the difference" and chose black and white stripes. However, a zebra may not choose a compromising style for all things. A zebra may choose a cooperative or competitive style like the dolphin or lion depending on the situation.

### **Avoiding**

People who chose the avoiding style do not get involved in a conflict. A person choosing the avoiding style might say "you decide and leave me out of it."

A **turtle** is a symbol for the avoiding style because it can avoid everything by pulling its head and legs into its shell to get away from everyone. A turtle also chooses other styles at times. It does not always choose to stay in its shell, because it would miss out on everything from eating to swimming.

### **Accommodating**

People who choose an accommodating style put their interests last and let others have what they want. Many times these people believe that keeping a good friendship is more important than anything else.

A **chameleon** is a symbol of the accommodating style because it changes its color to match the color of its environment. By changing its color to accommodate its surroundings, the chameleon fits quietly into its environment. Although the chameleon may always change its color to accommodate its surroundings, it may choose other styles when it is hunting for food, taking care of its young, or hiding from enemies.



## **The Garbage Can**

Inevitably, some students and teachers enter our schools and classrooms each day carrying any number of problems: frustration, anger, fear, disappointment, rejection, jealousy, hunger, etc... Before they leave home in the morning many have encountered conflict.

As you begin a new year, welcoming your new students and setting the tone for your class, introduce your students to "The Garbage Can." Explain that this room, which is yours and theirs together, is a positive place for learning. Tell the students that you understand that they are often carrying a lot of problems, that you'll refer to as garbage, by the time they get to school: they may have gotten up late, missed the bus, had an argument, etc. That garbage is distracting and might get in the way of the learning that will happen here. So, outside the door they may have noticed the garbage can (imaginary.) That's for them to drop all that negative stuff and those negative feelings they may have brought to school with them. If they really want to carry them around all day, they can pick them back out of the garbage can on their way out of class.

When students come in grumpy, just quietly point to the door and say, "You forgot The Garbage Can." The humor disarms them and gives them an opportunity to refocus.

## **The Recycling Bin**

It is important for the teacher to recognize that some students carry problems that can't be discarded. For example, some must return to situations of abuse and neglect. You can introduce your students to the Recycling Bin which, in their mind's eye, sits next to the Garbage Can. Students can be encouraged to see the Recycling Bin as a place where they might put garbage that they would like at some future time to "retrieve," to process with the teacher or another caring adult. The teacher may be able to assist the student in resolving the conflict or may refer the student to an appropriate professional.

The image makes it possible to think of the good use to which "trash" can be put. We recycle something that does not serve us well in its present form in order to make it into something worthwhile. The image not only deals respectfully with student conflicts; it also allows students to either recognize that conflicts can produce positive benefits when dealt with in a constructive manner or, at least, to see that the negative consequences can be reduced.

Developed by Anita Whitely, OSU, Ursuline Academy of Cleveland.

# Writing Classroom Rules

**Objectives:** Students will

1. Understand the need for authority and rules.
2. Develop rules and consequences.
3. Analyze the difficulties in writing consequences and enforcement procedures.
4. Compare and contrast the rules with those in the student handbook.

**Procedures:**

Day One:

- Students will brainstorm games that they play.
- Break students into groups--each group picks a different game and makes a list of the r rules to play the game.
- Each group is asked to find a way to play the game without rules.
  - Class discusses the outcome of the groups' work. Is it possible to play a game and have fun if the rules aren't clear?
- Homework: each student writes 5 to 7 rules for the classroom.

Day Two:

- Read the rules written for homework aloud to the class, anonymously.
- Students will compare and contrast their rules with their classmates.
- The teacher reads the rules she/he would like to have.
- Discuss the rules and have students decide the one they agree upon.
- Write the rules and post them in the classroom.
- Homework: ask students to develop consequences for each rule.

Day Three:

- Discuss the consequences for each rule.
- Compare the consequences to the school/system handbook and policies.
- Brainstorm who the authority is that will enforce the consequences.
- Students will understand how hard it is to accomplish rule writing (making laws), consequences and enforcement procedures.

**Note to the Teacher:** The Day Three activity can be saved and applied to another lesson such as citizenship or writing laws and consequences. Students will also learn that the school/classroom rules (laws) are created within the parameter of a larger governance document such as the code of conduct or student handbook (U.S. Constitution).

Developed by Carole Close, 1996, Martin Luther King, Jr. Law and Public Service Magnet High School, Cleveland, Ohio, under a grant from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management.

# The Peaceable School/Classroom

## Where is our school?

Is there an ethos in our school that is conducive to conflict management? On a continuum of Poor to Excellent, how would you rate our school? How would you rate your classroom, office or area?

- Cooperation

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- Communication

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- Expression of Feelings

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- Appreciation of Diversity

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- Conflict Resolution

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Developed by Anita Whitely, OSU, Ursuline Academy of Cleveland.

