

## Case study for resolving conflicts with children.

### ***Objectives:***

1. Establishing your communication skills to be able to resolve conflicts carefully and peacefully.
2. Understanding and building upon one's own self-awareness and self-care patters.
3. Discover the golden conflict resolution skills.

### ***'You solve it!'***

Conflicts are present in many family situations. Indeed, conflicts within families are inevitable and, in themselves, are not necessarily negative; problems arise from inadequate or ineffective resolution of conflicts. While many families can manage conflict, some families are unable to resolve conflict situations effectively. In families where conflict resolution is ineffective, negative feelings like anger or frustration may arise and chronic problems in family functioning may develop. More dramatically, conflict situations can intensify, leading to crisis or family violence.

If conflicts are handled well they can strengthen family relationships. If handled poorly they may create power struggles, hostility, resentment and disharmony. Ineffective conflict resolution is a factor in the problems that face the families of many children in the child welfare system. As suggested above, this may adversely affect other aspects of the family

functioning. One way of helping such families is to enhance their ability to manage conflict situations more constructively by teaching them conflict resolution skills.

***The Win-Win strategy:***

Win-Win is the style of persons who hold a high concern for self and for others. These persons confront conflicts and use negotiation strategies to resolve them. Win-Win is the most constructive style of managing conflicts since the aim is to bring about decisions or solutions which are satisfying to all persons involved. This is the ideal prototype for managing conflict. Since Win-Win negotiators recognise the importance people attach to their needs, they are not totally preoccupied with meeting their own needs but are prepared to try to understand what others needs as well. Thus, they try to make certain that all views are heard and all parties have their needs met. Their commitment to finding solutions which are acceptable to all, as well as their sensitivity, belief in others, and objectivity make them good and constructive family members. The problem solving approach is based on a value that all members' needs are important and on a commitment to finding mutually acceptable solutions. Using this approach the abuse of power, manipulation and withdrawal are minimized. Family interactions, in general, become more constructive and harmonious and relationships are strengthened.

**Task:**

After reading and learning about this 'Win-Win situation' approach, make yourself think of a scenario in which you as a parent have heard that your child is not happy with the relationship you have with him at the time being. He/she did not come to face you but instead they opened up with a friend of yours. How will you deal with such a situation? Try to come up with ways and means relevant to your actual realities and relationship with your children in order to come up with the best ways in which you can revolve around this issue while taking into account this suggested 'win-win' approach.

\*Tips to keep in mind:

1. The golden conflict resolution skills are to: **Listen up, talk it out and get the facts.**
2. Instead of calling names, it is very important to listen to your children and make them understand how important it is for such a value and practice to be mutual between you two.
3. When listening, we will understand and get all the facts and that helps everyone to understand what the problem is.
4. When you are angry, listening is not the easiest thing to do. Therefore, you should help yourself and listen to your children, look right at them when they are talking and concentrate on what they are saying. In case you do not understand something, ask them to explain themselves better.
5. Once you as a parent get the facts, it is important to perceive the end result as a project/goal and that in order to work out such a project/goal, you have to work it out

together. This notion of working it out together will give space for compromise which is something that everyone involved in the conflict can agree to.

***Most importantly:***

- 1) Do not yell.
- 2) Do not call names.
- 3) Do not blame.
- 4) When you talk try to be as kind as you can with your words.
- 5) When you listen, talk things out and get the facts, your children will be more likely to understand the problem. You will lead by example!
- 6) Good communication requires you to encourage your children to talk with you about what they are feeling and thinking.
- 7) Good communication involves listening and talking in ways that make children feel important and valued. Communicating well with children helps them develop skills for communicating with others.
- 8) When it comes to the development of good communication with your children, it is very important to set aside time for talking and listening to each other. Family meals can be a great time to do this.
- 9) It would be ideal to turn off phones, computers, and televisions when you and your children are communicating. This will give them the feeling that you as a parent is completely focused on the interaction or conversation. It is important to create a space in which your children are given the opportunity to talk about all kinds of feelings, including anger, joy, frustration, fear and anxiety. This helps your child

develop a 'feelings vocabulary'. That being said, it's best to wait until you have calmed down from strong emotions like anger before you talk about them. It is also important for you to try your best to tune in to what your child's body language is telling you, and to at the same time try to respond to non-verbal messages too. For example, you can ask questions like: "You are very quiet this afternoon. Did something happen at school?" It is also very fruitful to involve your children in conversations. Such involvement can be achieved by simply asking, "What do you think about that, Stella?".

***Debriefing:***

- 1) When you hear the word conflict what do you think of?
- 2) How do conflicts make you feel?
- 3) Do you think that you will be able to cultivate this 'win-win' approach with your children?
- 4) Are there any aspects of such approach that do not complement your way of life? If yes how would you change/ adjust such an approach?

**Activity: Conflict – How do you see it?**

Game: 'How Do You See It?'

Time: 30 to 40 minutes

Family Group Size: Any

Materials: One copy of the Conflict—How Do You See It? handout (provided in annex 1) for each family member, pens.

## OBJECTIVES

- To understand our perception of conflict
- To consider a different perspective on conflict
- To learn techniques to better handle conflict
- To build trust

This activity helps family team members to:

- (1) become more comfortable with conflict,
- (2) consider the positive aspects of conflict, and
- (3) understand the possible benefits to themselves and the team.

Mode: Have the family/ parent and child pair up. Provide each participant with a copy of the handout. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for participants to interview each other. Follow with a discussion of the interviews and then go over the discussion questions. If the children are young and not really aware of the concept of conflict, it would be ideal to watch this video together in order for them to get a more solid and vivid picture before engaging in the activity.

The video can be freely accessed on: Handling Everyday Conflicts - More Elementary Health on the Learning Videos Channel' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p2UbPsR9CU>

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Variation: Have family members switch partners every three questions to increase the level of trust within the team.

**Further discussion questions post activity:**

1. Were your children's perspectives different from your perspective?
2. What were some things you learned by considering another's perspective?
3. Does discussing conflict like this make it "less scary"? In what ways?
4. Is conflict good or bad?
5. What are some ways in which conflict is detrimental to the team?
6. What are some ways in which conflict enriches the team?

**References/Further reading:**

- Handling Everyday Conflicts - More Elementary Health on the Learning Videos Channel' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p2UbPsR9CU>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p2UbPsR9CU>
- 'Communicating well with babies and children: tips' - <https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/connecting-communicating/communicating/communicating-well-with-children>

Annex 1:

**H A N D O U T**

**Conflict—How Do You See It?**

1. How do you define conflict?

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2. What is your typical response to conflict?

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3. What is your greatest strength when dealing with conflict?

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4. If you could change one thing about the way you handle conflict, what would it be? Why?

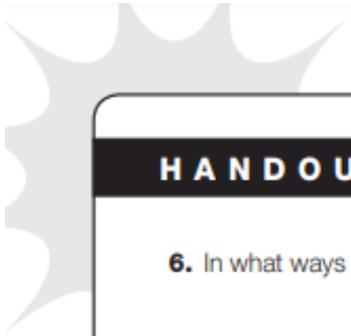
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5. What is the most important outcome of conflict?

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## HANDOUT

**6.** In what ways have you seen your team benefit from conflict?

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**7.** How can conflict be detrimental to a team?

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**8.** What do you do when someone avoids conflict with you?

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**9.** What are some reasons you choose to avoid conflict?

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**10.** What can you do to promote a healthy attitude toward conflict within your team?

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