

Learning Objectives

- ✳ To understand the term global conflict and that it can bring about positive and negative changes.
- ✳ To practice communication and assertiveness skills.
- ✳ To develop empathy for consequences of conflict on individuals, and practice using positive self talk in resolving personal conflict. [extension activities]

Total Time
45 mins
+15 mins
extension
activities

Teacher's Notes

This is the second in a series of two lessons in citizenship on the theme of conflict. The lesson also uses communication techniques that build on learning from the DEAL Communication and Active Listening lesson.

Ground rules: This lesson involves discussion work, please read the ground rules before you begin.

Resources

- ✳ Photocopy Worksheets 1-3: Mediation role play. Each group of three students needs 1x scenario sheet 1x mediator sheet 2x national representative sheet.
- ✳ Post-it notes and two large sheets of paper as a graffiti board.
- ✳ Collect resources that depict or describe conflict to use with the extension activity e.g. newspaper articles or record a television news broadcast.

Introduction

Ground rules: In this lesson we will be covering some sensitive issues. You may be affected personally by one of the topics that we are discussing today, or you may know someone else who is. Please be respectful and thoughtful of others, and treat the subject responsibly. If you would like to talk to someone after the lesson, you can go to ... (please either give the contact person in the school, for example a school counsellor, or an outside number, for example Samaritans).

Recap: Learning points from the Dealing with Conflict lesson. If students have not completed Lesson 4, use the following definitions of conflict to introduce this lesson:

Internal conflict – arising out of making personal choices and leading to feelings of anxiety, confusion or indecisiveness.

External conflict – with other people, often family, friends and teachers and leading to feelings of anger, fear, jealousy and hurt.

Global conflict – involving different groups of people, cultures and societies and often caused because basic needs go unmet or interests and values are challenged.

(Definitions taken from Lifetracks – Career Productions)

Time
10 mins



Starter:**1 Consequences of global conflict**

The purpose of this exercise is to make students aware that the process of conflict is usually destructive but the change resulting from it can be perceived as positive or negative.

Explain: You will be working in groups of four. Half the groups will think of positive changes that global conflict situations can bring about. The other half will think of negative changes. One person in the group should keep a list. After 5 minutes I will ask each of you to write one example on a post-it note and stick it on one of the sheets at the front.

Take feedback: Ask a student to come and read out what is on some of the post-its. Remind them about other examples they may have seen or heard on TV and in the media such as:

Positive changes – peace, justice, sustainable development, democracy, respect for human rights.

Negative changes – violence, oppression, abuse of human rights, unemployment, economic instability.

Discuss: Conflict does something destructive to achieve something some people believe is constructive. How do students feel about this? Is there a better way of achieving change?

Time
10 mins**2 Conflict Resolution: Mediation Role Play**

The purpose of this exercise is to develop students understanding of the complexity of global conflict resolution and to practice communication and assertiveness skills.

Explain: Conflicts between countries arise because states often have competing national interests and opposing views on international issues. Such conflicts vary in their levels of intensity from mild diplomatic disagreements through to violent wars.

This exercise is for you to learn some conflict resolution skills. You will be working in groups of three. One will be a UN Mediator, chairing the discussion. The Mediator must not take sides but make sure each country gets their say, and encourage them to come up with a solution.

The other two will each represent one of the two countries involved in the conflict. National Representatives should put their case forward and make suggestions on how you think the situation should be resolved.

Take 5 minutes to read the scenario and prepare your role. You might want to take some notes. You then have 10 minutes to run the role play. At the end you will be asked to feedback your solutions to the class.

Handout: Mediation Scenario Worksheets. Each group of three students needs 1x scenario sheet 1x mediator sheet 2x national representative sheet.

Feedback: After 15 minutes take feedback from the class.

- * How did it feel to do the role play?
- * What was difficult about being a UN Mediator?
- * What was difficult about being a National Representative?
- * How do you think this compares with real life?
- * How does it compare to the way you resolve conflict in your own life, for example family conflict?

Reflect: Mediation is a difficult skill and often has to be used in very high pressure situations. Any person working to resolve conflict needs to be a strong communicator and have a positive assertive attitude towards finding a solution whilst not compromising the needs of the people affected. If possible, think about using these skills in your own life.

Time
25 mins

Optional Extension Activities

1. Human impact of global conflict

The purpose of this exercise is for students to empathise with the consequences of global conflict on individuals.

Hand out: Copies of resources you have prepared or show the TV recording. In pairs ask them to write answers to the following questions:

- ✿ What is the context of this conflict – what country it is, how old is the young person involved, how long has the conflict been going on etc?
- ✿ Imagine you are going to interview that person for a newspaper report. What 4 questions would you ask? Make a list of these.
- ✿ What do they think the young person's responses would be, particularly in terms of how they are coping with that aspect of the conflict? Do they have any advice to offer about how to cope in the situation?

If it is appropriate to the group, you may like to use the hot-seat technique for this activity where one student plays the role of being a young person affected by a particular aspect of global conflict.

Take feedback: in the most appropriate way to your group. Focus on the similarities in the way that the young person is coping in the global conflict situation, to the way that the students in your group cope with personal conflict.

OR

2. Resolving personal conflict

Explain: There continues to be a lot of conflict around the world, with terrible consequences for the people affected. In this country, there is often divided opinion about whether or not people should go to war. With media coverage being so sophisticated, we can see what is happening elsewhere day to day. People are often torn between wanting to help the situation but feeling powerless to do anything.

This is an example of personal conflict because the situation we are in is not the situation we want to be. This can make people feel anxious or angry.

Ask: Do you know anyone who reacts very badly to reports about conflict in the media? In your opinion, can individuals make a difference to global conflict?

Explain: When people experience personal conflict, there are often different 'voices' in your head arguing the two sides of the argument (not to be confused with people suffering from some mental health problems in which they experience hearing voices that appear to be real). In psychology this is called self talk. We use self talk to think through scenarios, work out what options we have, make choices and then reflect on the consequences of those choices. It is a bit like having a debate with yourself.

Ask: Can you think of an example of where you use self talk to analyse a situation?

Explain: In this exercise we are going to try this self talk debate as a class. Imagine the two groups you are in represent the self talk in someone's mind. The statement you are debating is: "I should be doing something to stop this conflict".

I want you to split into two groups depending whether you agree or disagree with the statement. If you're not sure then just pick one to balance out the numbers. The disagree group will represent reasons why individuals might not be able to do something about it. The agree group should give reasons you can. Take turns to put forward an argument.

15 mins
each
activity



OR
Time
15 mins



Debate: Give students 5-10 minutes to debate before taking some time to reflect.

Reflect: Reflect on the function of self talk. In reflecting encourage students to take responsibility but also reassure them that keeping a peaceful situation in their own lives is equally as important to preventing and resolving conflict.

Self talk is a powerful tool in motivating us to do something new or stopping us from doing something risky or pointless. It is an important part of deciding the way we act. Sometimes people feel overwhelmed by all the things going round their head, and it is important to talk to others to help work through some of these thoughts and feelings.

In this example, we discovered some of the positive things we can do to influence global conflict.

For instance, write a petition and send it to the government, take part in a protest, raise money for a charity that helps victims of conflict, get together a group of you and speak to the younger years in the school about it. Finally, even if you do not get involved in this you may be doing things in your own life that resolve conflict for example at home or at school.

In life there are often situations which are bigger than ourselves and we feel powerless to do anything. However, if each person takes responsibility for doing something then this can add up to a lot. Everyone is a citizen of the world and each of us can make a contribution, including a contribution to our own homes and communities.

Reflect and Discuss

Use at least 5 agree / disagree statements on conflict as the basis of an activity that allows students to demonstrate their learning.

The activity could take the form of one of the following:

- * students position themselves along an agree / disagree continuum according to their response;
- * students show an agree / disagree card in response to the statement;
- * students stand up / sit down in response to the statement;
- * students use a show of hands to indicate their response.

The agree / disagree statements could include:

- * conflict always lead to violence
- * there are never positive changes associated with global conflict
- * I am confident that I have the skills to deal with conflict
- * conflict is a part of our lives.

Summary

- * Ask students how they might apply what they've learned today
- * Summarise that conflict mediation relies on strong communication skills under pressure
- * Resolution of conflict whether it is personal, external or global relies on people taking a person reacting assertively rather than passively or aggressively to the situation, and creating a honest, open and positive environment for discussion
- * Ensure students know where to go for help either in school or out of school if they want to talk further about any issues raised.

Time
5 mins



Time
5 mins



WORKSHEET

Worksheet 1

Mediation Exercise - Conflict Scenario

Alpha and Omega are two countries on the brink of war. Historically there have been tensions because of differences in religion and culture. Recent initiatives like cultural exchanges and trade agreements had improved the situation. However, there has been an exceptionally long period of drought and both countries are struggling for resources.

Alpha has put a pipe to drain water from the only major fresh water supply, the Aqua River. It is on their land so they are entitled to do this. The water is being used to irrigate farm land which is the main source of food for the population.

The lower half of the Aqua River flows through Omega. The water flow has significantly decreased since the pipes were laid. They used to use the water in industry across the country. 60% of the population is employed in that industry and if the industry goes bankrupt the country will be thrown into poverty.

Fighting has broken out in some places along the borders. The armies got involved initially to keep the peace but there have been instances of soldiers attacking each other or civilians. The situation is critical and people are desperate for a solution that will restore the peace.





WORKSHEET

Worksheet 2

Mediation Exercise - Instructions for the Mediator

You are the mediator trying to resolve this conflict. Your job is to help the two parties to find a solution together. You have to make sure both parties get a chance to have their say. You should try not to suggest solutions yourself, but encourage them to think of ways of solving this situation or, if it is too big to solve at once, to at least take a step in the right direction.

You should start the conversation by explaining what you have come together to discuss.

Starter to welcome people and set the ground rules:

Thank you for coming. We are here today to talk about The aim is for everyone to have a chance to state their case and to try to find a way we can resolve the situation. I ask you both to respect each others opinions and try to be as open minded as possible. Can I ask one of you to go first by explaining their case?

Useful phrases

Reflect what is being said

- * I think what [name of other person].. is saying is that...
- * To summarise what has been said so far...

Acknowledge and explore people s feeling

- * It seems you are both feeling angry, can you explain where that comes from and what could be done to improve the situation?

Showing respect whilst moving the conversation on

- * Thank you that gives us a good overview, lets hear from the other side now.
- * That's an interesting point, what do you [other person] think about that?
- * I am not sure we are going to agree on this right now, can we come back to this later?

Exploring options and making choices

- * You have explained the current situation, what are the solutions you would propose?
- * It seems like there are two options, can we agree to choose one?
- * How do you feel about the solutions proposed by the other side, which one do you think could work best?
- * So it sounds like we agree on ...

Acknowledging people s contributions and closing the discussion

- * Thank you both for speaking so openly, congratulations on finding these solutions.
- * We didn't find a solution but these are difficult issues and I think we've made some good progress.
- * I think you will agree it was a useful discussion, I hope we can meet again to think about this further.

WORKSHEET

Worksheet 3

Mediation exercise - Instructions for National Representatives

You are the National Representative of a country sent to negotiate a solution to the current conflict. You will be talking to the Representative from the other country but there will be a mediator present, to help you find a solution.

The mediator will start the discussion and then ask you to state your case, and give your point of view of what options there are for a solution.

You will need to negotiate with the other side for how you can find a solution that might not be perfect but will be a good first step. In your negotiations be aware of how you come across:

- * Keep calm. It is good to say how you are feeling but if you are aggressive in your tone or body language they may become angry too.
- * Check your body language, is it open or closed, assertive, passive or aggressive?
- * Keep checking with them that you've understood what they've said. It shows you are listening and often people feel better just knowing they have been heard.
- * Create a positive environment by always being honest and reassuring them you want to find a solution.
- * Be confident and assertive in standing up for what you believe but not being aggressive or passive.

Useful phrases

Check you ve understood and show you are listening.

- * I think what you're saying is
- * So have I understood right that what you are suggesting is ...

Acknowledge their feelings

- * It sounds like you/ your people are feeling ...

Explore the options

- * So what do you think about doing this ...
- * I'm not sure we are going to agree on this one. What other solutions do you see?

Being assertive

- * I feel [say the emotion] because [explain the reason]. What would help is [suggest a solution].

Taking little steps

- * What about as a starting point we agree to...
- * We might not be able to solve this today but as a first step how do you feel about...