



Conflict Management for Youth

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Housekeeping

This session is focused on youth and will not be recorded.

Slides will be available on the PTC site shortly after PTC.

I encourage as much interaction as this format will allow.

Please chat.

Please chat some more!

Definition of Conflict

There is no clear definition of conflict. M. Afzalur writes that one consideration is if it is a situation or a type of behavior. He defines conflict as "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities."

Disagreement can be mild and easily solved or it can escalate to conflict.

I consider conflict as acting on a disagreement to escalate it to disorganized thought, leading to heightened emotion, leading to action that intends to cause harm to self or others.

In this session, I will focus more on individual conflict or interpersonal conflict and less on group conflicts.

Types of Conflict



Internal – inner thoughts and feelings

Content - ideas, issues, facts

Relationships - interpersonal incompatibilities

Processes or tasks - doing things, choosing things

Affective - emotional, distrust, loyalty

Cognitive - difference in perspective and judgement

Forming/Storming/Norming/ Performing

Scenario: Buying new scout t-shirts

Red versus blue shirts

When does disagreement move to conflict?

When does conflict move to resolution?



Common Beliefs that move individuals towards conflict

Superiority – An individual holds feelings of being better or more entitled

Injustice – An individual feels mistreated that affects them in a major way

Vulnerability – This might present as an anxiety, not feeling in control, or feeling of always being in harms way

Distrust – An individual presumes others are hostile and have bad intent. The individual acts with hostility and does not form healthy relationships.

Helplessness – An individual believes outcomes will be bad no matter what they do. They believe they lack abilities, sufficient help, or that the world is against them.

~ Eidelson, Roy; Eidelson, Judy. "Dangerous ideas: Five beliefs that propel groups toward conflict". American Psychologist. 58.

More forms of conflict

Two other areas of common conflict arise from competition and poor communication.

~ Matt Doeden

How conflicts escalate or de-escalate

Escalations

Higher and stronger emotions

Disorganized or misinformed thinking

Misperceptions of communication

Misperceptions of intent

Physical or emotional tactics

Reciprocity

Alliances or groups



What to do to de-escalate



Stay calm or in control of your emotions

Practice deep breathing techniques

Think clearly before speaking, practice patience with yourself and others

Take a break from the person or situation

Go do a physical activity to reduce stress

Ask for clarification of meanings, intent, and outcomes, go back to EDGE method to explain things

De-escalate continued

If things are physical, try to move away or create a safer place

Downplay reciprocity, practice empathy

Bring in others in your alliance, buddy system

Bring in a neutral mediator, SPL

Call authorities (scout leaders, parents, police)

Solutions

Each person agrees to some extent or fully that the solution will resolve the conflict or de-escalate to a better condition. A solution can be favorable to one person or a compromise between both. A solution is actionable and has a measurable outcome. A solution may spell out consequences for not adhering to it or for further escalation of the conflict.

Negotiation

Set up a controllable situation – comfortable area, allies or authorities, calm emotions

Discuss possible solutions and how they might be carried out

Use good communication skills to clearly state your position

Use active listening skills to take in the other person's message

Discuss how certain words and actions are not compatible with the Scout Oath and Law

Choose a solution that works for both parties and discuss what a good outcome looks like

If you need to try several solutions, set up SMART goals for each

Come together at an agreed time to discuss how the solution(s) is working and if anything needs to be modified

Win It All/Competition

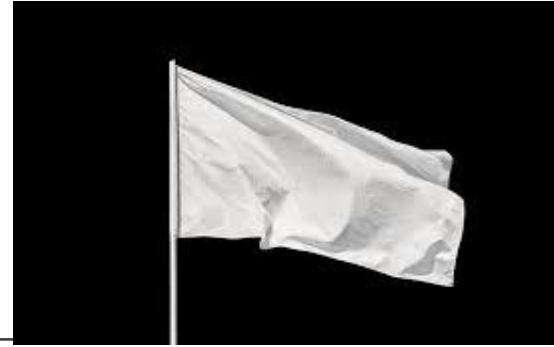
Competition is a way to give complete solution to one person and complete loss to the other. Some things can't be divided or earned equally. So you compete. Sports, single items, "the best" title, president. Through striving to win, each person improves skills and tries to reach higher goals



Mediation

If you cannot reach a solution, call in a neutral mediator such as an adult scout leader, a parent or other authority figure to walk through the above steps and help reach a solution. Peer mediators are often helpful to guide each person to clearer thinking or novel solutions.

Accommodation



There are times when you simply don't have the time, energy, or resources to resolve the conflict. You can sometimes choose to simply let the other person win, walk away without resolution, or take only a small resolution. In longer term relationships, this can be balanced by the other person offering an accommodation at another time. This is generally better for smaller conflicts with less emotional weight

Win-Win Solutions / Collaboration

Sometimes you work towards a compromise in which you bring in more factors. There may be a good solution but it will feel unequal. So one side adds something the other wants that may have little or nothing to do with the original conflict. Offer ice cream, a favor, learning a skill, time together. It makes a compromise feel like both sides are gaining an equal amount.

With collaboration, you work towards a solution in which both people are completely happy. The solution gives each person what they want without taking away from the other.

For example: each of you is hungry and one wants a taco while another wants noodles. Very few places will have both. Try the food court at a mall. Both people can get what they want and share a meal.

How to apologize sincerely

A sincere apology when needed can help communicate your ownership of conflict and rebuild trust. A sincere apology contains these parts:

Admitting you were wrong or your part in a conflict

Acknowledging the other person's feelings

Saying you wish to apologize or you are sorry

Stating how you will change your behavior in future

Sometimes you can ask for their forgiveness or feedback but you need to judge if the person is ready to hear this and respond.



Digital and online communications

It is easy to fall into conflict in online communications. You try to say something clearly but it is misconstrued because there is no nonverbal cues or facial expressions to fill out the messages intent. You might also overstate your words or type something in too strong a language. You forget there is a real person, not just a screen.

Think through your message. Choose words carefully. Take time to compose and edit if needed.

Report any escalating problems you have and leave the space if necessary. If another person appears to be bullying or threatening, report to authorities

Final Thoughts

Good communication and personal control helps you deal with the conflict. You improve your skills with practice and over time become a better communicator and better able to resolve conflict.



References

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