

# CONFLICT AT PLAY

## Using positive strategies to resolve your conflicts

Target competency	Use prosocial behaviours
Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with others</li> <li>Use creative thinking</li> <li>Solve problems</li> </ul>
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify some conflict resolution strategies</li> <li>Use a four-step process to resolve conflicts</li> </ul>



### REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

In the last workshop, we talked about social influences and asserting yourself. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how it went.

\* The challenge was to try to exert a positive influence on a friend.

### THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

Tomorrow is the weekend! After the mountain bike ride, Charlie and Leo have dinner with the rest of the group before heading home.

Leo exclaims: “Today was soooooo great, and I can't wait for the weekend! What time should I come over tomorrow to try your new video game? I can't wait to play it. I've been asking my parents for it for months, and they still refuse to buy it.”

Charlie replies gently: “I can't tomorrow after all. Zoey asked me earlier if she could come and try out my game, and I said yes. And, only two people can play it, so you won't be able to come. We'll get together again another time.”

Leo, caught off guard, replies briskly: “But... I don't understand. You invited me first. You promised! Do you like your other friends better? You betrayed me, Charlie!”

Leo turns away, angry, and goes to talk to other people.

Surprised by her friend's strong reaction, Charlie thinks: “Wow! What kind of reaction is that? We'll have plenty of other chances to play together. I told him we'd get back together another time. Now, when I try to talk to him, he's acting like he doesn't even hear me!”

After dinner, as they collect their luggage, Charlie and Leo come face to face. They start to argue.

Charlie says to her friend: “Leo, why did you leave during dinner? And when I talked to you, you pretended not to hear me!”

Leo, still angry, retorts: “I don't want to talk to you! Go away Charlie! You never understand anything!”

## DID YOU KNOW?

"One of the functions of conflict is to enable the construction of fairer relationships, by asserting and advancing everyone's rights. [...] The development of a child's personality is, in part, stimulated by the conflictual relationships they experience with their peers"

(Cala Zonzon, 2018, p. 6)

In addition to the 4 steps suggested in this workshop, here are a few other strategies to help manage conflict:

- Discuss openly and calmly;
- Take the time to clarify your thoughts;
- Try to compromise;
- Seek solutions with the other person;
- Seek social support from your peers;
- Use relaxation and physical activity to calm down before tackling the conflict with the other person.

All these strategies are more conducive to conflict resolution than strategies such as withdrawal (or avoidance) and certain negative strategies associated with dominance and control.

(Feldman & Gowen, 1998;  
Gascon, 2011;

Tuval-Mashiach & Shulman, 2006)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask two students to volunteer to play the roles of Charlie and Leo in front of the group. Place the two volunteers facing each other at the front of the classroom, at opposite sides of the room. Remind the students that this is a role-play and that the conflict is fictitious.
2. Ask the student playing Charlie to explain why she's angry with Leo. Ask the rest of the group to help you identify the source of the conflict. Repeat the exercise with the student who plays Leo.
3. Once the source of the conflict has been identified, ask the class to help Charlie and Leo resolve their conflict. Each time a member of the class proposes a solution, Charlie and Leo move towards each other. Here are some sample questions to help students identify conflict management strategies:
  - What emotions do you think Charlie and Leo might be feeling? How could they name their emotions to the other person?
  - How could they calm down before talking about the conflict with the other person?
  - What could they say to each other to resolve the conflict? What solutions could they suggest?
  - How will they choose a solution?
  - Are there any strategies to avoid?
4. Once you've completed the exercise, give out the *Resolving your conflicts* handout to the students and explain the four stages of conflict resolution, drawing parallels with Leo and Charlie's situation. Remind them that at any time when they're experiencing a conflict, they can use these steps to help them resolve it.
5. To conclude, you can prompt a discussion with the students about the importance of resolving conflicts using the following questions:
  - Can you name any conflicts you've experienced?
  - How did you manage to sort them out?
  - Why is it important to resolve your conflicts?
  - What can happen if you avoid resolving your conflicts?
6. Tell the students that Charlie and Leo have taken time out to calm each other down and have made up. Leo agreed to play video games with Charlie at another time during the weekend.



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## COMPLETION ACTIVITY

Explain to the students that this was the last day of Camp OFF-TRAIL for Leo and Charlie this year. Tell them that, even though camp is over, you encourage them to continue using the strategies they've learned to take care of themselves and feel good. Ask the students how they enjoyed the activities, what they remember, and what they learned. Use the reminder posters to help them or provide reminders as needed. The posters are available on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students.

## ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To encourage the reinvestment of what's been learned, you can display the *Resolving your conflicts* poster in the classroom, illustrating the four stages of conflict resolution. You'll find this poster on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students. When a student is involved in a conflict, you can refer them to the poster and encourage them to apply the four steps.

## READING SUGGESTIONS

- Murguia, B.D. (2020). *We Disagree*. Beach Lane Books.
- Perdew, L. (2020). *The Fort*. Page Street Publishing.



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## HANDOUT TO PRINT

### Resolving your conflicts

When you have a conflict, use these four steps to resolve it:

#### Step 1: Calm down



Go away or get comfortable in a quiet location.  
Take deep breaths, move, draw, write or listen to a guided meditation.

#### Step 2: Listen and express yourself



Listen to what the other person has to say. Give them time to talk.  
Say clearly how you feel.  
Speak about "I". Avoid blaming others. Base your words on facts.  
Explain to them what you need in this situation.



#### Step 3: Find solutions with the other person



Come up with ideas to find a solution that works for everyone.  
If you can't, ask an adult for help.  
Listen to the other person's suggestions.

#### Step 4: Choose a solution together and apply it



Ask yourself what the advantages and disadvantages of each solution are.  
Together, choose the one that appeals to everyone concerned, or compromise.

