

WALKING THE TALK

Resolving your conflicts

Target competency	Use prosocial behaviours
Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solve problems Communicate appropriately
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a four-step strategy to resolve conflicts Try solutions before asking for adult help



REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

In the last workshop, we talked about activities that could help you calm down when you feel like a tornado in your body and head. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how it went.

* The challenge was to put into practice a calming activity.

THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

It's morning. Leo, Charlie and the rest of the group had a good night's sleep in the cabin. The students are just finishing their breakfast when Mr. Steve, the bus driver, speaks up: "Good morning, everyone! This morning, I received a second radio message. I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that there's no bus available to pick us up. The good news is that we're very close to Camp OFF-TRAIL. Pack your backpacks and fill your water bottles. We're leaving in ten minutes."

Before you know it, Charlie, Leo and the other students are on their way to camp. Everything is great with Leo. Only, since breakfast, Charlie has been acting strangely around him. She's not talking to him. When he asks her questions, she doesn't answer. She doesn't even look at him. Leo doesn't know what's going on. They usually make jokes and laugh together.

Charlie is angry with Leo. Last night around the fire, he didn't share his chocolate bars with her, while everyone else shared what they'd brought. And afterwards, he disturbed everyone by dancing before going to bed.

But Leo doesn't know that Charlie is angry with him. He plucks up the courage to go see her and asks her why she won't talk to him anymore. Charlie finally replies: "You only think about yourself! I don't want to talk to you!" "Well then, me neither! You're not my friend anymore," replies Leo. Charlie and Leo will have to find a solution to their conflict if they want to have a great day at Camp OFF-TRAIL.

DID YOU KNOW?

Conflicts are inevitable and represent a highly educational and beneficial experience in a student's development.

Adults often perceive student conflicts in a pejorative light, or try to implement strategies to avoid them. However, when students learn to manage conflict, they are equipped to assert themselves, communicate effectively and respectfully, know their limits, listen to others and be open to a diversity of viewpoints.

You can help students resolve their conflicts by implementing the following strategies:

- Listen to each student's version of the story;
- Ask students to name their emotions;
- Rephrase to understand the problem;
- Help students come up with solutions;
- Encourage students to apply the chosen solutions;
- Congratulate students on resolving their dispute.

The student's initial reaction is not necessarily the most appropriate. Encourage them to calm down and use language rather than acting out.

(Thauvette, 2020)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Gather the students in a seated circle. Ask them if they ever argue with their friends or family, like Leo and Charlie did. Ask them if they know what to do when this happens.
2. Explain that you are all going to learn about the four steps to resolving conflicts. For the first step, you can explain that it's important to calm down before reacting in an argument. It's much easier to find solutions when you're calm than when anger takes over. Ask the students to place one hand on their stomach and one hand on their heart. Invite them to close their eyes and breathe in slowly, taking calm, deep breaths. Repeat the exercise five or six times and explain that breathing calmly can help them calm down before resolving their conflict. What's more, their breathing is silent and invisible. So they can use it to calm down without anyone knowing. Don't hesitate to reinvest the calming techniques presented in Workshop K5.4.
3. For the second step, invite the students to work on their listening skills. Still seated in a circle, play the telephone game by whispering a single word into the ear of one student, who then whispers it to the next, and so on. Ask the last student in the circle to say the word aloud. Ask them if the starting word stayed the same and if it was easy or difficult to listen well. Explain to students that when they're in a conflict, it's very important to listen carefully to what the other person has to say.
4. For the third step, explain to the students that they need to find solutions to resolve a conflict. Based on Leo and Charlie's conflict, ask students how they would feel in that situation, and then what they would suggest to Leo and Charlie to resolve their conflict. You can also randomly select a few situations from the *Conflict situations* supplementary sheet (below) and ask students to practice finding solutions for each one. To do this, ask the students to stand up and pass an object indicating the turn to speak (ball, hat, block, etc.) around the circle. When a student has the object in hand, they can name a solution or remain silent and pass it on to their neighbour. If you feel your students need to move between scenarios, invite them to change places in the circle. Explain that sometimes it's important to go to an adult, but that often they're able to resolve their conflicts on their own.
5. For the final step, explain to students that once they've come up with solutions, it's important to choose one that results in a win-win situation.
6. Give students the *Resolving your conflicts in four steps* handout and ask them to explain the four steps to their parents.
7. End the activity by telling students that, thanks to their help, Leo and Charlie have settled their dispute. You can cite a solution mentioned by the students during the workshop to end the conflict.



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COMPLETION ACTIVITY

Read the final story: After settling their conflict, Leo and Charlie finally arrive at Camp OFF-TRAIL. A nice surprise is waiting for them! In fact, there are plenty of surprises in store! The camp has many activities including archery, butterfly watching and even birdhouse building! Cool! It looks like another fun-filled day for our adventurers, who say: “See you again next year!”

Explain to the students that this was the last activity for Leo and Charlie this year. Tell them that, even though Camp OFF-TRAIL is over, you encourage them to continue using the strategies they've learned to make themselves (and others) feel good. Ask 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. If you wish, you can also give your students the OFF-TRAIL certificate of participation. You will find these documents on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To reinvest what you've learned, you can display the “*Resolving your conflicts*” poster in the classroom, which you can find on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students. When a student experiences a conflict, look at this poster with them and guide them through the steps to resolve it.

To work on your students' listening skills, you could also ask them to close their eyes and listen to as many sounds as possible around them for 20 seconds. Then ask them to name a few. Remind them that, when in conflict, it's very important to listen to what the other person has to say.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Côté, G. (2009). *Me and You*. Kids Can Press



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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

Conflict situations

List of situations to suggest to students to stimulate the search for solutions:

- A friend snatches the ball out of your hands;
- A friend doesn't want to play with you;
- A friend tells you you're no good;
- A friend pushes you;
- A friend cheats during a game;
- A friend doesn't want to help you pick up the materials you used together;
- You want to play by yourself, and several friends want to play with you;
- You want to read the book your friend is reading right now;
- A friend keeps touching your things and you don't want them to;
- You want to talk to your teacher before your friend does;
- A friend of yours lied and you don't agree;
- A friend doesn't want to talk to you anymore and you don't know why.



HANDOUT TO PRINT

Resolving your conflicts in four steps



Step 1
Calm down



Step 2
Listen and
express
yourself



Step 3
Find solutions with
the other person



Step 4
Choose a solution
together and apply it



If necessary, repeat the 4 steps or ask an adult for help

(Fakih, 2019; Motoi, 1995; Motoi & Villeneuve, 2006; Thauvette, 2020)

