



STARTER KIT



IDEAS, RESOURCES, AND METHODS
FOR NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION
& CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN PEER
GROUPS



IFM-SEI



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PEACE COMMUNICATORS

IDEAS, RESOURCES AND METHODS FOR NON-VIOLENT
COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN PEER
GROUPS

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WHAT IS **CONFLICT?**

Conflict is not only an absence of war. The conflicts we see in the news are often violent: wars, invasions and oppression of one group by another. But what about the everyday level of conflict? Not just between groups of people with weapons but in classrooms, homes and workplaces, between people like you and me.

Now, learning to resolve conflicts between ourselves and in social groups won't solve these bigger geopolitical conflicts, as they are large and complex and need political solutions, not just personal ones.

However, as organisations of IFM-SEI and educators for peace, we believe that understanding and being able to act in terms of interpersonal conflicts can be a part of creating cultures of peace.

An understanding of conflict is a recognition of the complexity of even the most seemingly simple conflict between two people. And when we recognise that we are able to confront the often scary presence of conflict in our personal lives, this might make us braver in confronting conflict politically; it will enable us to work better together for IFM-SEI's goals of peace and socialism.

All war is conflict, but not all conflict is war. One of the biggest reasons behind the conflict is that people are unwilling to accept one another's realities. There are many different causes for every conflict, and this resource has been developed by IFM-SEI members to shed some light on this complexity and take a step towards being brave enough to create peace and confront conflict in our day-to-day lives, hoping that this might radiate outwards so that our members and young people can be those responsible for building cultures of peace.

★ HOW TO USE THIS STARTER KIT?

The following Starter Kit contains a number of activities for exploring interpersonal conflict with groups. We have not timed the activities, as it will depend on how you use them and on the size of the group, how long each one might take. Each activity should generally provide you between an hour and two hours of content, and possibilities of extending them and going deeper into the topic are often included in the descriptions.



This toolkit is a continuation of IFM SEI's work on conflicts, representing a companion to the Building Bridges Toolkit that focuses more on large-scale and geopolitical conflicts and our organisation's approach to peace and conflict education.

These two approaches also represent two sides of the same coin – in an experiential sense, training conflict resolution on an interpersonal level can allow children and young people to believe that it is also possible on an international level.

INTRODUCTION TO

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION is a method of understanding how conflicts can arise through people having different needs, especially in instances when these needs are being overlooked on the one hand, and not expressed clearly on the other.

ITS KEY COMPONENTS ARE COMMUNICATING TO NAME:

- ★ **OBSERVATIONS:** What is happening in a situation? Not that this person is being bad and another person is being badly treated, but as much as possible, a neutral interpretation of what is going on.
- ★ **FEELINGS:** Trying to describe as clearly as possible how a situation makes us feel. There are many words for doing this, so try and be as precise as possible, or use a number of words to describe complicated feelings. Focus on explaining your own feelings and listen to others name theirs.
- ★ **NEEDS:** Conflicts are often due to unrecognised needs. What are your needs in this situation, and have they been met? If not, why not, and what could change to make this possible without compromising the needs of others?
- ★ **REQUESTS:** Taking this last point about 'what could change', formulate requests of others in this situation, that you feel could lead to your needs being more recognized. Be aware that a request is something that can be answered with a "no" and that the negotiation between your needs transla-

ted into requests, and the needs and the boundaries of others is a delicate process. Make your requests both concrete and doable for others.

STEP 1 | Brainstorm situations in which somebody shouts at somebody else in anger in a conflict:

- ★ What is the conflict about?
- ★ What do they say?

STEP 2 | Now play these conflicts out in pairs and encourage participants to act as if they are very angry or frustrated.

STEP 3 | Now ask them to reformulate the angry response using the above elements of non-violent communication.

STEP 4 | Discuss with everybody at the end if they find this a useful approach to conflict.

STEP 5 | End with a short activity to calm down and get rid of the 'angry roles' that people have been playing. This could be:

- ★ a simple de-rolling where participants shake their limbs and different parts of their body to 'shake off' the role;
- ★ a guided meditation where the educator talks the group through letting go of their roles with eyes closed;
- ★ a simple nice, and calm closing activity such as a massage circle.

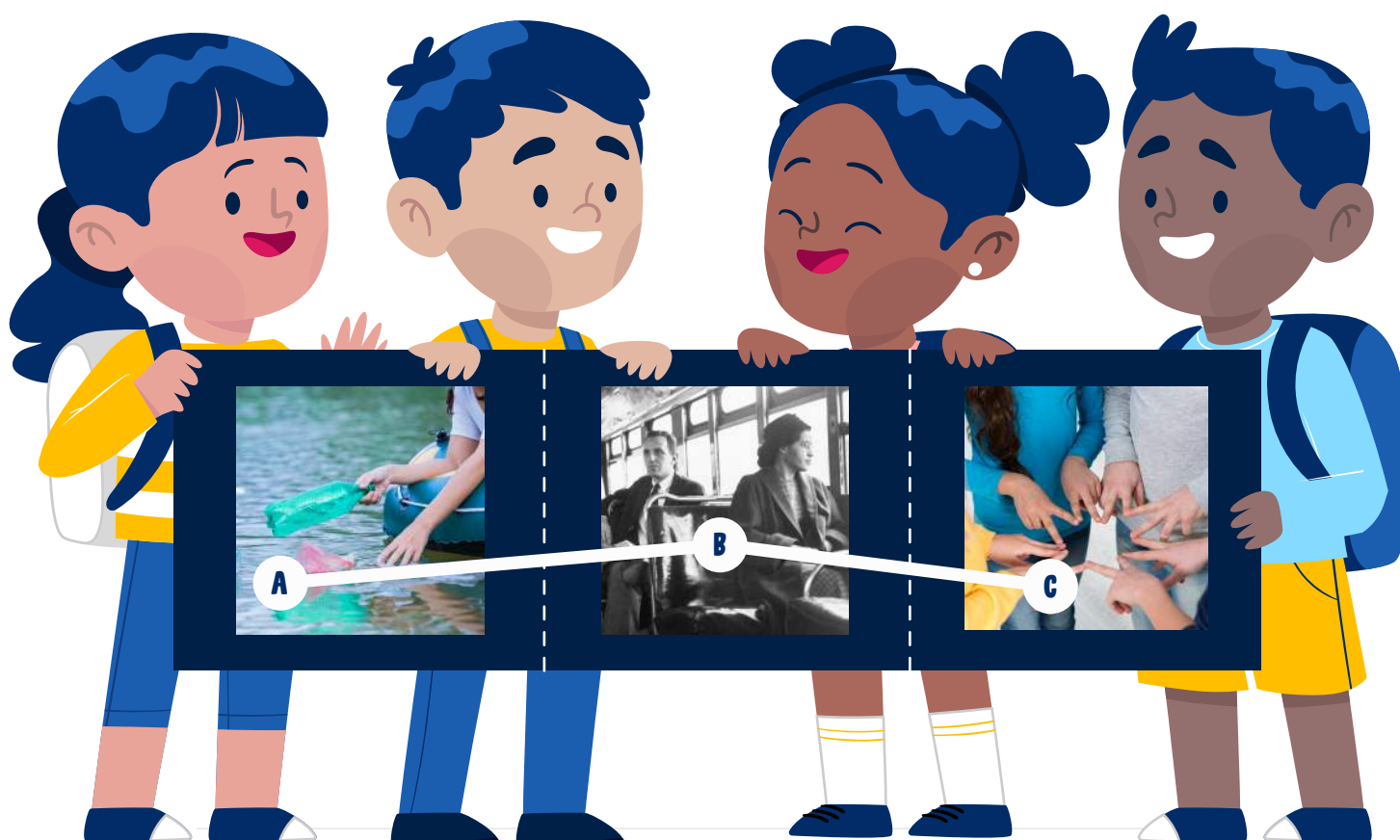
ACTION MAPS

IDEAS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Use these action maps to discuss the personal, local, and global impact of either historic actions to address conflict situations or ones that the group plan to carry out.

Gather the impacts on different levels, and then discuss barriers to these and how you might overcome them.

These examples were created by a group of young people discussing conflict resolution.





A | DEMONSTRATION FOR CLEANING DNIPRO RIVER



PERSONAL IMPACT:

Confidence, experience, feeling of belonging, empowers you, expanding the knowledge on the issue.



LOCAL IMPACT:

Renewing the local cleaning system, inspections on the factories, communal cleaning days, pointing out factories that pollute the river, connecting people and organisations.



GLOBAL IMPACT:

Highlighting the issue globally, spreading awareness, encouraging people to take action, nature.



PERSONAL IMPACT:

She was arrested, feeling empowered and powerful when seeing other people supporting, being angry at society and systems, permanent criminal record, oppression.



LOCAL IMPACT:

Oppression, more inequality, riots for equality, other arrests, violence towards black people, violence towards the police, protests to free her, sense of community, a boycott of buses, a divided community, change in KKK, created a movement.



GLOBAL IMPACT:

Laws and conduct changed all over the world; hate, movies, music, icon, history lessons, stronger opinions, precedence, a divided community, inspired other movements, more equality, oppression, tv-shows, shuffle in the US police force, Black history month, inspiration, votes for black people, good folk song, global movement, ongoing racism still today, world-wide protest.



PERSONAL IMPACT:

Watching documentaries, spreading awareness by talking to your friends, buying a book, participating in similar workshops on peace education.



LOCAL IMPACT:

Temporary group gatherings, network growth, people gaining emotional literacy, organizing your own workshops.



GLOBAL IMPACT:

It has become a general practice in schools and a social norm all over the world.

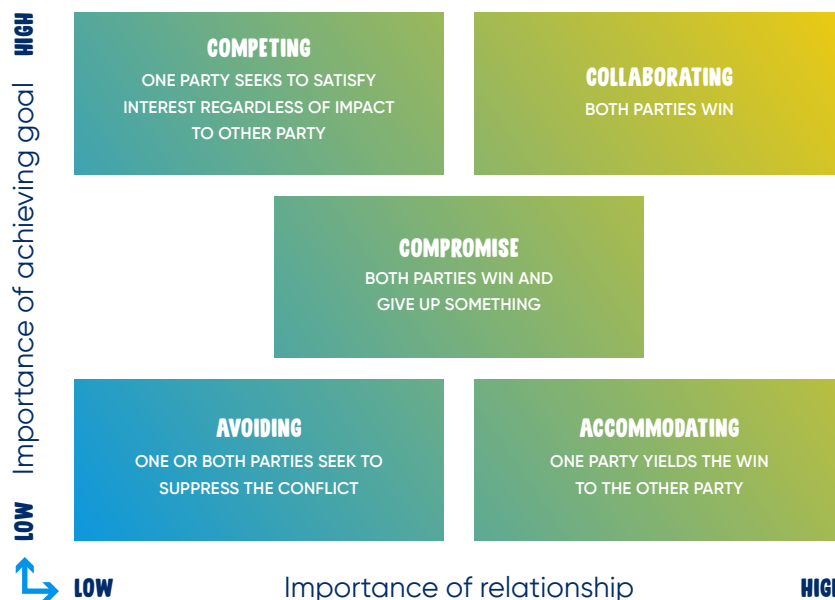
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

STEP 1 Present participants with a conflict that they have to play out or ask them to come up with one from their own experiences.

STEP 2 Ask them to show different examples of ways of intervening in a conflict in a short play; these don't have to be only what they would see as good interventions, but also ones that might make things worse and be counterproductive.

STEP 3 If you are afraid that your participants will only gravitate towards one or two styles, assign them roles.

STEP 4 After the simulation game, present to participants the conflict management graph on the floor and go through with them each of the conflict management styles.



Source: courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-organizationalbehavior/chapter/conflict-management-styles

- STEP 5** | After that tell them to position themselves on the graph how they reacted/played out their role in the conflict.

When they position themselves ask them the following questions:

- ★ Why did you position yourself the way you did?
- ★ How did you feel about your role?
- ★ Does this reflect how you would normally react to a conflict situation?
- ★ If no, then how would you react normally?



CONFLICT SCENARIOS

The following scenarios are scenes portraying examples of conflicts that have occurred during IFM-SEI activities.

Use these as the basis for developing your own scenes. Read them through together, then answer the questions:

- ★ What situations have the people in this room experienced similar to this?
- ★ Brainstorming examples, collect as much detail as possible.
- ★ Then ask different members of the group to take on roles in the scene; they should take a little while to get into character.
- ★ Then, perform the scene, those not taking on a role can either observe or take on the role of somebody attempting to mediate and intervene in the conflict.
- ★ Play the scenes through a few times so that the group can attempt different strategies.
- ★ End with a conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

Below are examples of immediate steps, steps afterwards and tips. See if you can develop these for each of the scenes:

★ **IMMEDIATE STEPS:**

- 1 | De-escalate the situation by separating the parties involved in a conflict.
- 2 | Have Individual conversations and a conversation involving both parties.
- 3 | Collective session.

★ **STEPS AFTERWARDS:**

- 1 | Acknowledged lack of proper info and conversation flow.
 - 2 | Re-evaluate practices and information flow.
- Make sure that all leaders get all the necessary information
- 3 | beforehand and that when an event is starting, everyone is on the same page.

TIPS:



MAKE SURE THAT ALL THE LEADERS HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATION.

IMPLEMENT DAILY MEETINGS.

MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE HAS ALL THE NECESSARY INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY ABOUT CHILDREN WHO HAVE ACCESS NEEDS.

★ **SCENARIO I:**

INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

★ **SETTING: A LOCAL SUMMER CAMP**

★ **CONTEXT:**

Two children got into a fight because they were supposed to share a tent. They had previous bullying in the background both ways. The leader responsible for the tent sharing wasn't aware of previous instances. The boy wasn't happy and got heated up. This resulted in him punching the other child.

Before, there were problems with behavioural challenges, and the child who punched the other also had severe ADHD, which caused him to get angry in a spur of a second.

No leader was present during the altercation. The child who got punched came to tell a leader. The children were separated to de-escalate the situation. Then we had a conversation separately with each party and, after that, collectively with both parties included.

After the matter was resolved, we had a session the next day with all the participants on the matter and that violence is never acceptable, also providing tools and help to these kinds of situations.

★ SCENARIO 2:

ARGUMENT ABOUT FOOD AND ORGANISATION - DISAGREEMENT WITH A COOK

★ SETTING: AN IFM-SEI CAMP

★ CONTEXT:

The cook had overseen the kitchen for 40 years of camps. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the delegations in the village have leaders who are related. They have already camped together many times. One of the adults had insulin-based diabetes. KP has sugar-based diabetes. One of the adults has worked for a catering company and in restaurants. One of the younger leaders is a chef.

KP would loiter in the kitchen when others should have been in charge. This was due to power. When the others would take charge, she would override the choices made. She would then get unprofessional, making mean comments to parties.

The first issue was with the diabetic adult. The food provided was not sustaining her needs, which could cause death. The cook had the other type of diabetes and refused to try and understand. The adult yelled at the cook.

The second issue was with a 20-year-old, and the cook had known her since the 20-year-old was a baby. Due to this, she gave her no respect. When it was their turn to cook, she changed the menu to be more inclusive and enjoyable. The KP made comments which were not respectful. This was due to her not wanting courgettes mixed with her bacon.

The third issue was that the young adult would help cook every meal. The cook did not respect him. He then cut his finger, and she refused to help. This resulted in the 20-year-old adult speaking to the KP about her actions and the whole village being very upset.

★ SCENARIO 3: BULLYING BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

★ SETTING: A LOCAL SUMMER CAMP

★ CONTEXT:

There was an openly gay participant, and he was vocal about his sexuality. Other children in his group, for example, hid his water bottle and were visibly annoyed by this person. They said that it was the only thing that he was talking about. A participant who didn't participate in the bullying told the boys they had to return the bottle and later told the leader.

MASCULINITY AND CONFLICT

STEP 1

Either gather together pictures from magazines or take a pile of magazines and have participants look for gendered pictures (i.e., pictures seemingly clearly depicting men or women). Then work through the questions:

- ★ What are the differences in how men and women are shown?
- ★ What types of qualities would you associate with these representations?
- ★ How would these representations of gender influence attitudes toward conflict?

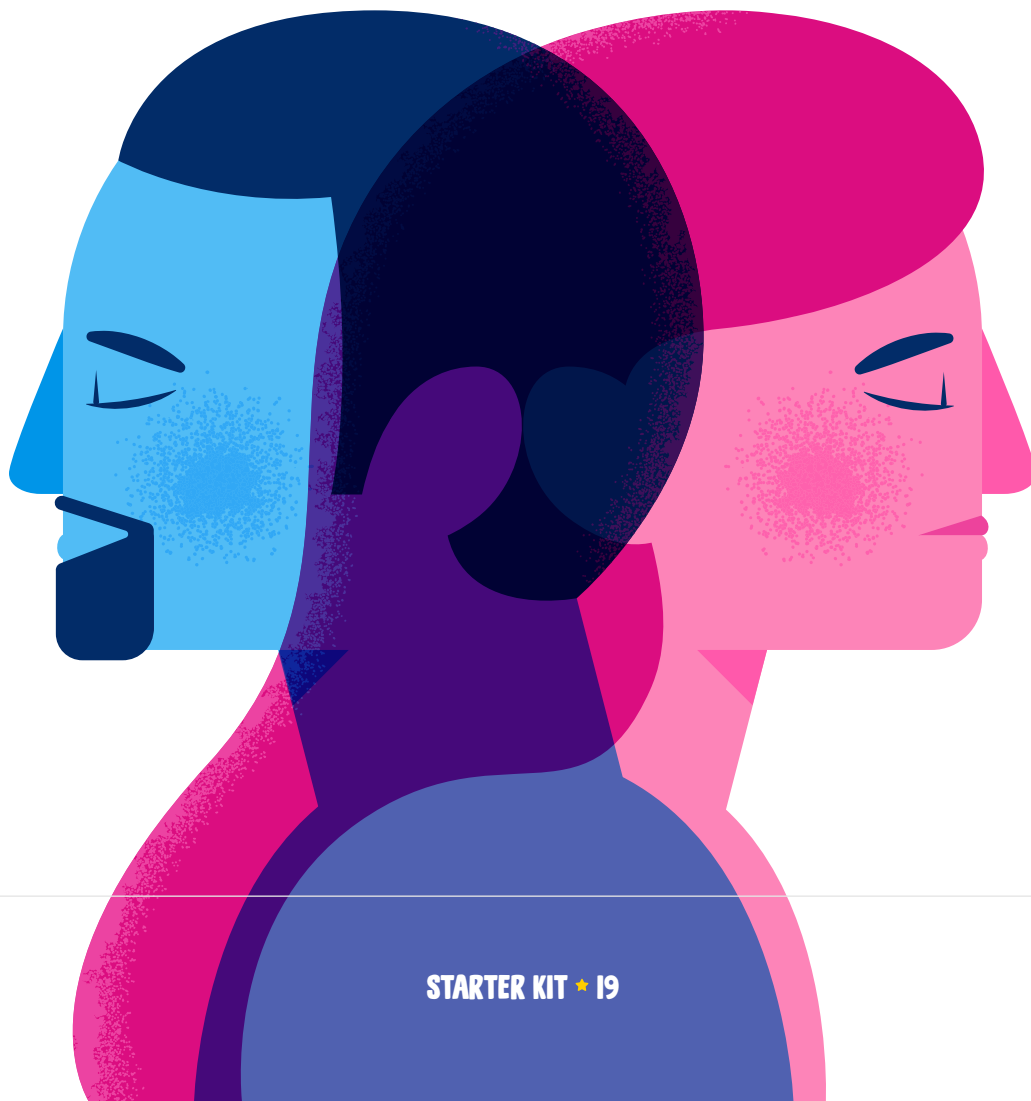
STEP 2

Read the below definition and discuss ways in which we can allow a spectrum of gender expressions in our day-to-day lives and educational work.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY (DEFINITION):

Hegemonic is a word meaning that something, for example, an idea or particular group, is culturally dominant at the expense of others. Hegemonic masculinity is a word that we use to talk about the way that we are often taught (through institutions, culture and family) that there is one particular way of exhibiting masculinity, of being a man, and that all others are of less worth.

This hegemonic type of masculinity is also defined by a large number of traits that define masculinity in opposition to femininity (being a woman); qualities such as being aggressive, strong, decisive, not appearing to show emotions and holding an important position or earning a lot of money. Other types of masculinity, ones that involve showing emotions, or doing caring tasks not seen by society as manly, for example, are given less value and seen as secondary. The idea that there is one single way of being a man prevents a spectrum of gender expression and also marginalizes women, queer and non-conforming men and gender non-conforming people



TEAM STRUCTURES AND CONFLICT

This is an activity to consider the structural causes of interpersonal conflicts and can be particularly useful for people working in group contexts, or for the reflection of a particular group.

Conflict in a group is very normal, and as we have been exploring in this toolkit, part of the life of any cooperative process. When talking about group processes, we use the: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing model to think about different phases. Forming is the initial founding of the group, which is generally followed by conflicts (storming) as different personalities, needs and styles of working come into contact with one another; this is then followed and accompanied by the norming stage, whereby norms of working together and compromises are reached, then hopefully ending in the performing stage where the group is able to work together to achieve its goals.

This activity aims to look at the structural reasons for certain conflicts, but it is important to remember that conflict is very normal in a group process, thus we do not wish to get rid of it, but rather to successfully negotiate it by affording it space.

STEP 1 | Draw a graph with two axes, one marked stress levels and one marked circumstances (see example).

STEP 2 | Brainstorm a number of things that might make a group of people more stressed (these can be events, underlying circumstances or day-to-day problems).

**STEP
3**

Place them along the circumstances axis, and then decide together how these different things affect the stress levels by moving the line up to show them rising or down to show them sinking.

**STEP
4**

Discuss and come up with a number of conflicts that may occur as a result of these situations.

**STEP
5**

Lastly, consider ways in which each of these could be worked on to reduce stress levels.

STRESS LEVELS AND CIRCUMSTANCES



This is an example of the chart you'll draw yourself. One axis shows a circumstance and the other how it affects the group's stress levels (based on your/the group's estimation). The core of the activity is to consider strategies for dealing with these circumstances to reduce the stress caused by the structural circumstance.

POINT OF NO RETURN?

MEDIATION IN EXTREME SITUATIONS

This is an activity that can help when there are two parties in a conflict that seem completely unable to see one another's point of view, this could be individuals, but this method is particularly useful for a large group conflict. It should be led by at least two facilitators.

STEP 1

The two facilitators ask the two parties to write down their view of the conflict: the reasons for it, how it makes them feel, the specific actions that have upset them, what they feel they need to address or resolve it etc.

STEP 2

When the conflict parties have done this, ask them to do the same, but for how they imagine the other side sees the conflict.

STEP 3

Then give the respective parties the sheet from the other group, and ask them to look at it along with the facilitator: what are the main differences? What does this tell them about the conflict? What do they feel about what is written? Does anything there surprise them?

The activity is meant as a first step in allowing people to see one another's point of view, even if they may not currently be able to communicate without worsening the conflict; however, if this method goes well, it can easily be the beginning of a more classic mediation process.

CONFLICT CLOSE UP

This is an activity to consider how we all relate differently to conflict, and how conflict is also something that provokes a large range of different emotions in people. It is good for beginning to deal with the topic of conflict in a group.

STEP 1 | Stand in the centre of the room and announce the following to the group: "I am conflict."

STEP 2 | Consider how you typically react when you experience a personal conflict. Position yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that conveys your initial response to a conflict. Pay attention to your body language as well as your distance from the conflict.

You might want to use this activity at different points during your work to see how people's attitudes to conflict change as you work on it, or perhaps during a specific conflict to get an idea of people's feelings around it.

STEP 3 | Discussion Questions

- ★ What are some reasons you are standing where you are?
- ★ If where you are standing signifies your initial reaction, where might you stand after taking some time to think about the conflict?
- ★ What are some things that would cause you to move?
- ★ How might our reactions influence the course of the conflict?

Source: s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2070/2016/08/The-big-book-of-Conflict-Resolution-Games.pdf

CONFLICT ICEBERG

EMOTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN CONFLICT

This is an activity to recognise that conflicts have lots of underlying reasons and that there are normally lots of good explanations as to why they have happened, even if people's behaviour in the moment is not always okay. We talk about the iceberg because, on average, only 10% of an iceberg's mass is visible above the surface of the water, making it a good metaphor for underlying or unconscious reasons for conflicts, as although we can't immediately see them, they are often bigger than the conflict itself.

STEP 1

Draw an iceberg on a piece of paper, with about 10% above the water, then a line across the paper to show the water line and the rest of it beneath.

STEP 2

Ask the group to give an example of an interpersonal conflict that happens in a particular moment. Place this above the water on the iceberg.

STEP 3

Have a discussion about all the things that there might be "beneath" that determine and feed into this conflict.

STEP 4

To close, discuss how this idea helps us work on conflicts and their resolution.



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