



The Seven Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution

An on-line education program for youth.

Prepared by The Conflict Center

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The Seven Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution



Everyone resolves conflicts everyday,
whether we are resolving big problems
or making small decisions the steps are
always the same.

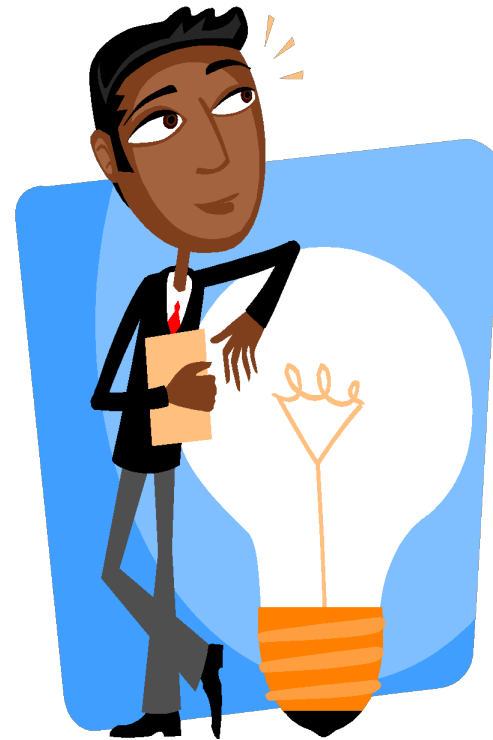


The Seven Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution

- #1 Identify and clearly define the real problem.
- #2 Brainstorm solutions.
- #3 Evaluate the solutions.
- #4 Choose the best win/win solution.
- #5 Implement this solution.
- #6 Choose a follow up date to evaluate.
- #7 Celebrate your success!

The Seven Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution

- While these seven steps sound simple enough to do, each step needs to be carried out with respect for each other and a willingness to be open to new ideas.



When to use the Seven Steps of Resolving Conflict.

- Without any warning we can find ourselves faced with situations daily that require us to choose between options that may or may not meet our needs. All of a sudden we are in conflict!



When to use the Seven Steps of Resolving Conflict

Many times the choices we make to resolve our conflicts will impact not only us but the other people who work with us, or go to school with us, or are in our family.



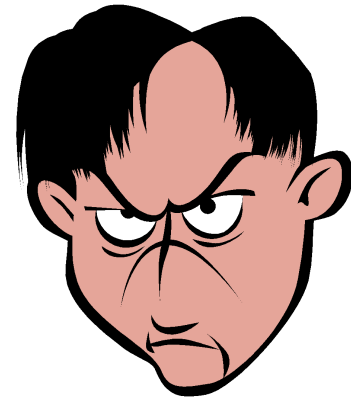
When to use the Seven Steps of Resolving Conflict

- The challenge is:
How can you make a choice that will make you happy and make others happy too?
- This is when you need to use the seven steps of resolving conflict.



When to use the Seven Steps of Resolving Conflict

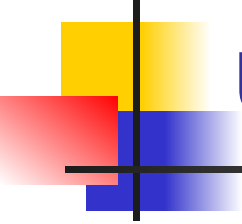
- Using the seven steps of resolving conflict will help you find an good alternative to just being mad or angry.



When to use the Seven Steps of Resolving Conflict

- What if you could work with the others that you are in conflict with and build your friendship rather than giving up your friendship just so you both can get your own way?





First let's look at 2 KEY SKILLS to use for resolving any conflict.

- KEY SKILL A: Being Open to Other Perspectives
- KEY SKILL B: Defining the conflict as a personal need and not as a solution.

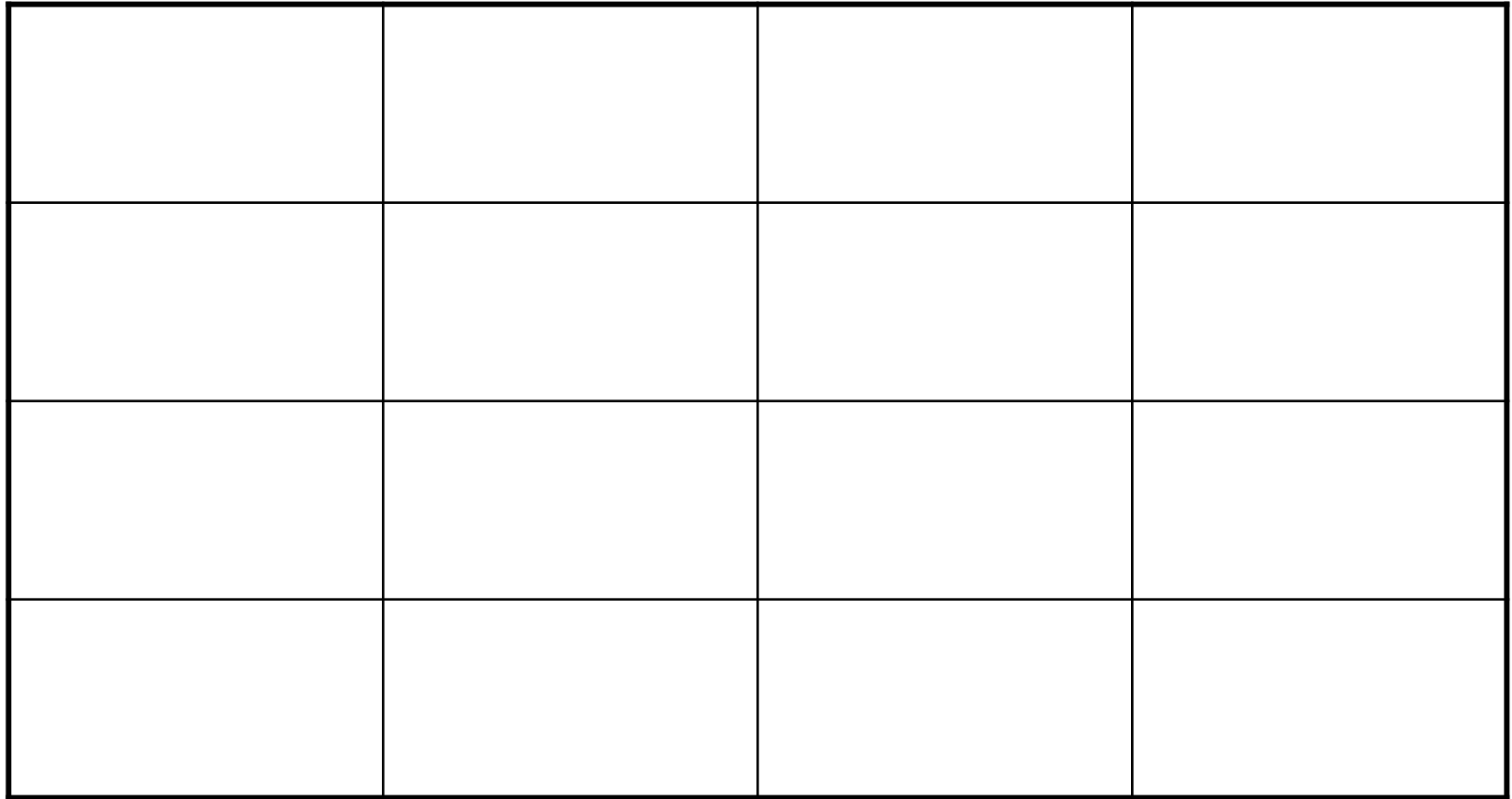


KEY SKILL A: Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Being open to the perspectives of other people involved in the same conflict is a critical skill for resolving conflict.
- Have you ever considered that the same conflict may not be experienced in the same way for another person?

Perspective Rectangles

How many rectangles do you see?

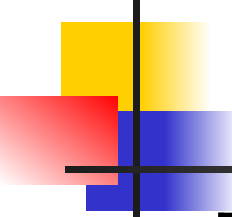


Being Open to Other Perspectives

- In the previous exercise, if another person were to count up a different number of rectangles, does this mean *they are wrong*?



Ask another person how many rectangles they see.



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- In the previous exercise if *you* were to come up with a different number of rectangles than another person, does this mean *you are wrong?!*



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Maybe you could all be looking at the same set of rectangles and all have different answers.
- Could you all be right?
- YES!



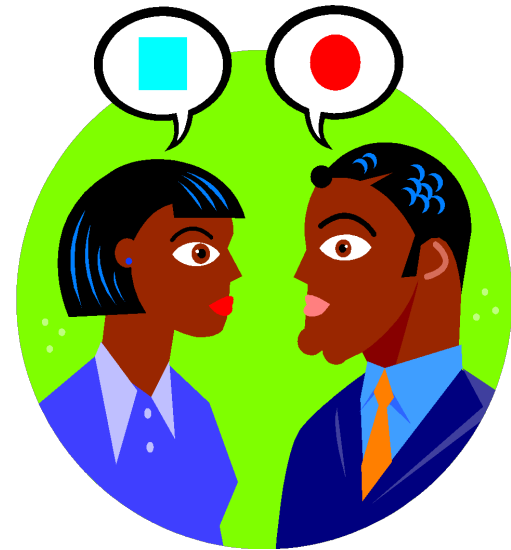
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Maybe you are asking how many rectangles are there really?
- There is no “right” or “wrong” answer, there are only individual perspectives.



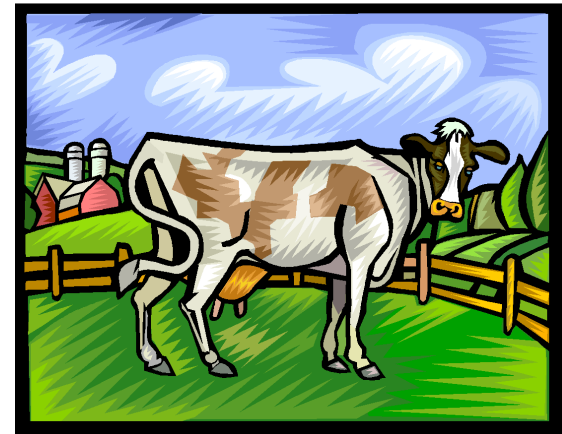
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- When you know that there are *always* more ways to see the same situation... then every person's perspective is important to consider.



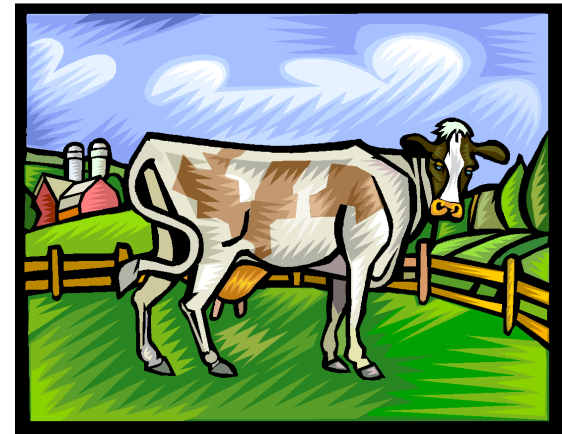
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Consider the story of the Cow Auction. There are two businesses, one business represents a wonderful steakhouse in town. The other business represents a leather boot store.



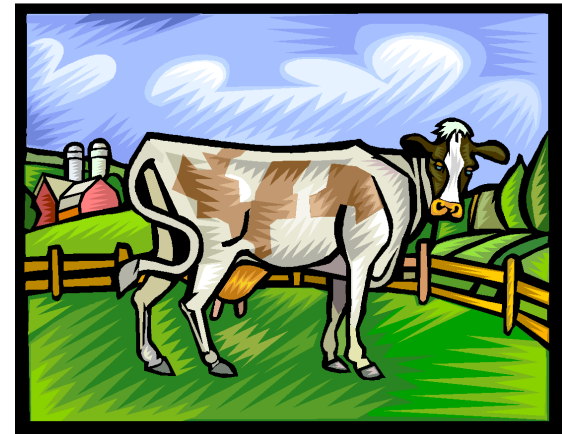
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Both businesses are attending an auction and both are considering the purchase of one particular prize cow for their business.



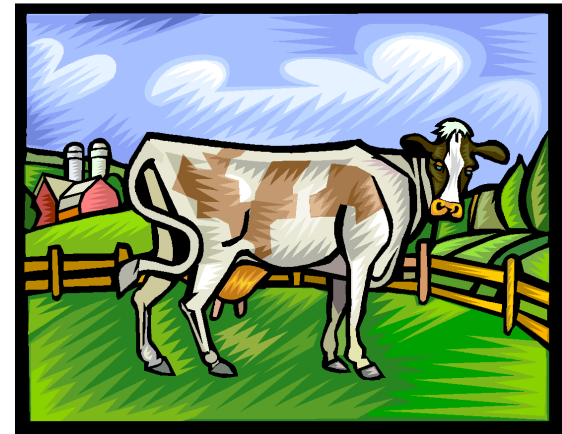
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Both business owners begin to bid against each other driving their costs and the price of purchasing the cow upward.



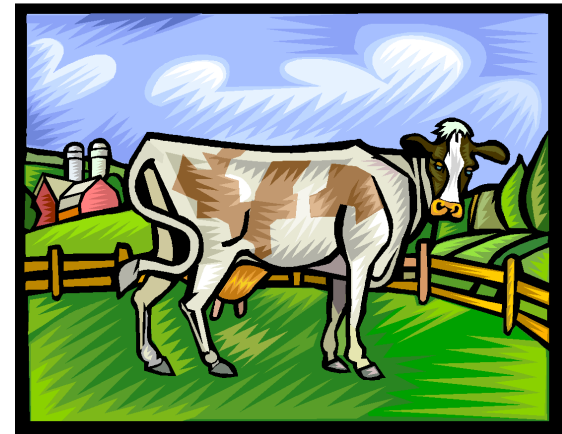
Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Eventually they both run out of money to be able to continue bidding on the cow.



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- They both have different needs for the cow, or different perspectives.
- What might happen if they knew each other's need for the cow?



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Instead of assuming that the businesses were working against each other and competing for the cow... they could actually work together and meet each other's needs!



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- When you are open to hearing another person's needs or finding out their perspective... you may be surprised how you might be able to help each other!



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- Think of this as being open to *learning* something new!
- Ask yourself, what can I learn about this situation from the other person?



Being Open to Other Perspectives

- After you are willing to learn from another person... it is more likely they will be willing to listen and learn from you about your perspective.



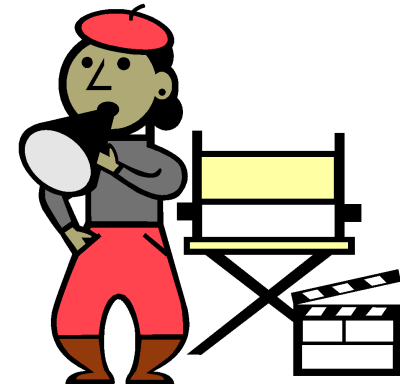
KEY SKILL B: Defining the conflict as a personal need and not as a solution.

- People in conflict often think of their conflict in terms of their *solutions...* which are often stated as “you should do this” or “you should do that.”



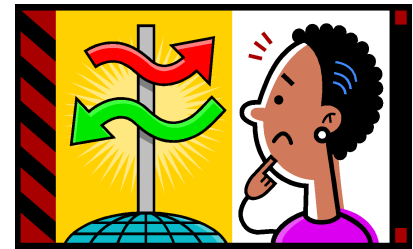
Defining the conflict as a personal need not a solution

- *Solutions* direct others on what you want them to be doing and can actually make things worse.
- *Expressing your needs* tells others what you are concerned about or what you want to accomplish for yourself.



Defining the conflict as a personal need not as a solution

- Sometimes we know a solution and we don't know what we need.
- Take a little time to consider what it is that is really concerning you.
- What is it you need?



Defining the conflict as a personal need not a solution

- When everyone involved in the conflict can express their personal needs, amazing new possibilities emerge that are much more satisfying to everyone.





Defining the conflict as a personal need not a solution

- Solution Statement:

Brenda says to her housemates:

“I MUST have peace and quiet! You have to turn off your music!”

Her housemates say:

“Well, we like our music, you can go somewhere else!”

- Need statement:

Brenda says instead:

“I need a quiet place to work because I have homework to do.”

Her housemates say:

“We will be leaving shortly and you will be able to have peace and quiet soon.”



Defining the conflict as a personal need not as a solution

- Solution Statement:

Brian says to his classmates:

“You people must do your work!”

His classmates reply:

“Oh do your own work!”

- Need Statement:

Brian says to his classmates:

“I am concerned that we may not make our goal.”

His classmates reply: “We appreciate your concern, and we will see to it that we all will be finished on time.”



Defining the conflict as a personal need and not a solution

- Instead of turning a conflict into a struggle over who gets to do what they want by directing others what to do (giving a solution)...
- Define a conflict by expressing what you need and focus on how these needs can be met (personal need).

Defining the conflict as a personal need not a solution

- Insisting on your solution instead of expressing your needs will only bring out defenses in the other person, not helpful ideas.





What have we learned so far?

- In order to identify and clearly define the real problem you need to:
 - A) Be open to other perspectives
 - B) Define the problem expressing your personal needs rather than insisting on your solutions.



The Seven Steps to Resolving a Conflict

- Using the skills you have learned so far you can now begin to successfully use the Seven Steps to Resolving Conflict.

Step #1 Identify and Define the Problem



- Remaining open to another person's perspective... *"I can understand how you could see it that way."*
- And expressing your personal needs...
"My real issue is that I am concerned for my safety" ...
you can now identify and define the real conflict.

Step #2 Brainstorm solutions.

- Once we have taken the time to hear each other's perspectives and personal needs then we can begin to look at possible mutually satisfying solutions that will meet everyone's needs.



Brainstorm solutions

- When we brainstorm solutions we need to have fun and come up with as many wild and crazy ideas as we can.
- How many different solutions can we possibly come up with?



Brainstorm solutions

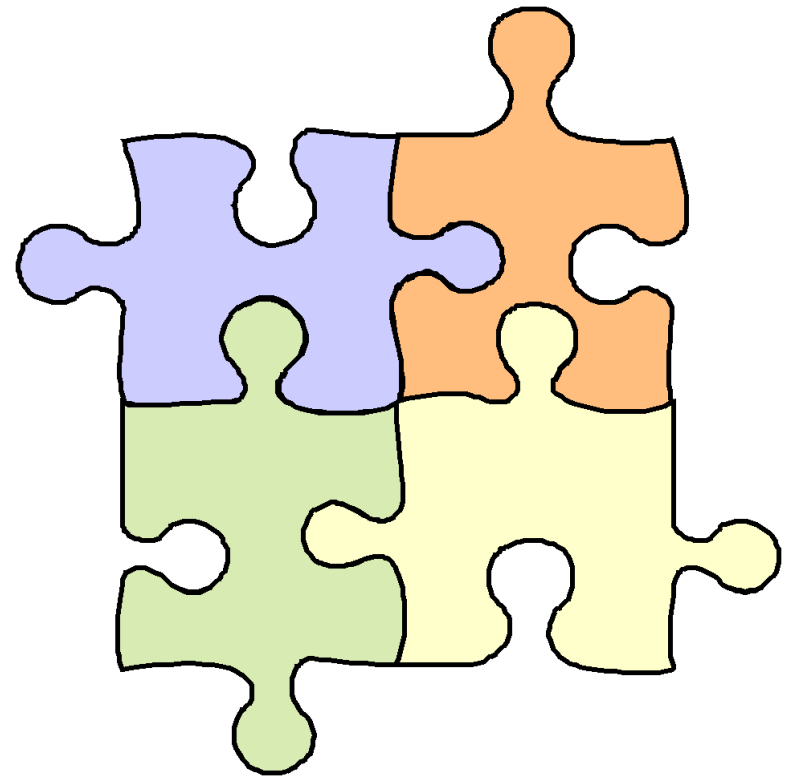
- When we brainstorm, *any idea* is a good idea. Don't judge or criticize.
- Build off of each other's ideas.
- A really good solution can come from a wild and crazy idea.





Brainstorm solutions

- When you brainstorm ideas you can help each other and work toward the same goal...making sure everyone's needs are met.



Step #3 Evaluate the solutions.

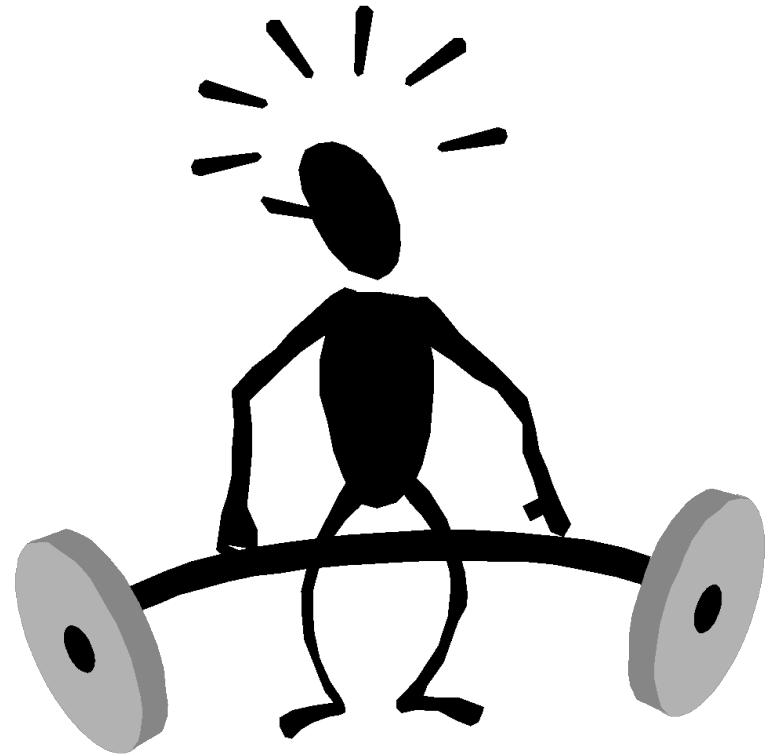
- When you have come up with at least a dozen wild and crazy ideas – now is the time to constructively evaluate each one.





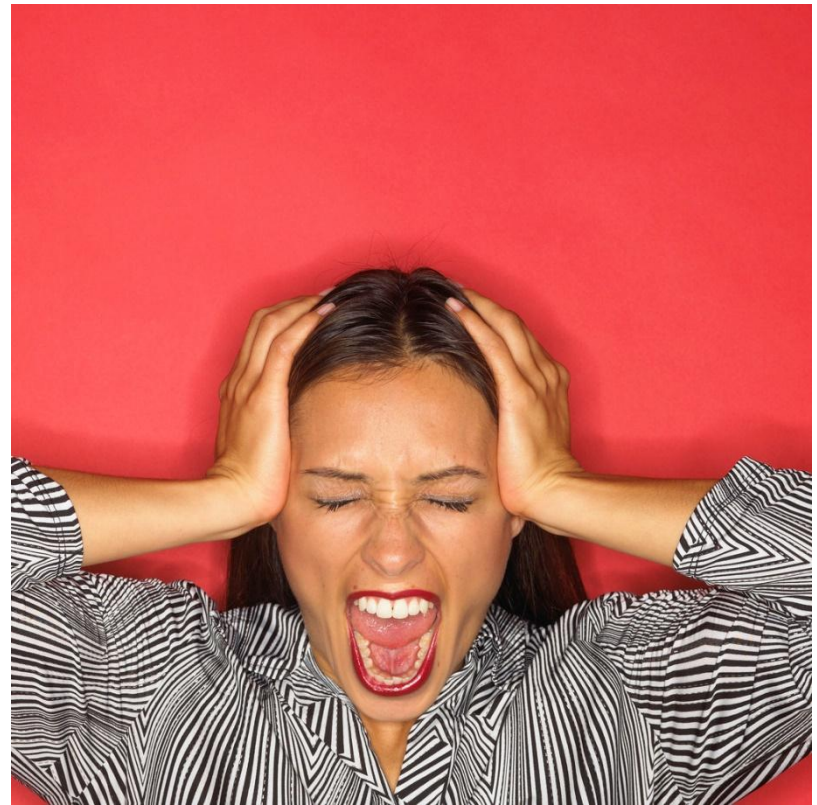
Evaluate the solutions

- This is not the time to start putting down the other person's ideas.
- This is the time to suggest *both* the strengths and the weaknesses of each idea.



Evaluate the solutions

- When you are in a discussion how would it feel if the other person didn't take you seriously?



Evaluating solutions

- Don't use this step as a time to become a bully, like taking control or pushing your solution.
- Be sincere, listen and take every idea seriously.



Step #4 Choose the best win/win solution.

- Once you have evaluated each idea from your brainstorming session, together you will be able to pick a possible win/win solution



Step #5 Implement this solution.

- Including everyone put together an action plan of *who* will do *what, when*, and be sure to clarify *how* things will be done.



Step #6 Choose a Follow Up Date to Evaluate

- This is very important! To make sure the chosen solution has solved the conflict to everyone's satisfaction, set a date to evaluate how the solution is working.



Choose a Follow Up Date to Evaluate

- Let's say the solution isn't working, now is not the time to blame. Now is the time to go back and modify your solution or return to Step #2 and choose another solution to try.



Choose a Follow Up Date to Evaluate

- Now that you have selected another solution be sure to set another new follow up date to evaluate your progress.



Step #7 Celebrate your success!

- Resolving conflict can be a meaningful and satisfying experience.
- Resolving conflict can bring all of us closer together and strengthen our relationships.





Celebrate your success

- One way to celebrate your success for resolving a conflict is to acknowledge each other's effort.
- “Thank you for trying so hard. This is really paying off.”



- THANK YOU for taking this on-line class.
- For more information about other classes on anger and conflict management for youth that can be brought to your school or agency please contact The Conflict Center at 303-433-4983.