



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

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Parent's Guide

Week #10

Conflict Management

This week's lesson provides a process the students can use to help them solve disagreements. The **goal of resolving a disagreement** is to find a solution everyone is comfortable with. That doesn't mean we will always agree or be totally comfortable. The sooner a disagreement can be resolved the less likely it will result in violence. One thing we must be able to recognize are the feelings generated by conflicts.

Most of the time talking and being willing to listen to the other person's point of view will settle the problem or at least keep the problem from becoming violent. That's one of the reasons why lesson # 7 on "communication skills" is so important. But, if listening and talking doesn't resolve things, then it is important to seek help from an adult you trust like parents or a teacher. There is an assumption made with regard to resolving disagreements by talking. That assumption is: both parties are sober, not under the influence of a drug, and/or are mentally stable.

The six *Appropriate Steps* we review are:

1. Time yourself out (Cool down, take a step back).
2. Identify the problem (as each of you see it).
3. Tell your side of the story, and when the other person is talking *listen, listen, and listen some more* (be willing to listen).
4. Tell the other persons story as you heard it (repeat what you heard).
5. Brainstorm some solutions (find a solution that all parties are comfortable with). This might mean to *Agree, Compromise, change your Position, or Agree to Disagree.*
6. Ask an Adult for Help (to be a Referee)

Step 1: Time Yourself Out

Sometimes we are just too upset to be able to listen or talk about the issue in a reasonable way. The adrenaline is pumping, our feelings are intense, and we are ready for a fight. Our brain is not functioning as well as it should be. This is normal. We need to do something that will allow us to regain control.

1. Walk away for a minute, turn around and count to 10, take a few deep breaths, do some thing to help lower your adrenalin.
2. You may have to take a long time out, like to the end of the day or maybe the next day.
3. In some cases it might help to tell the other person that you are too upset to deal with it right now *before* you walk away.
4. Don't forget to come back and discuss the issue. If you let it go there is a good chance that it will fester and come back as a bigger issue the next time.

Step 2: Identify the Problem

It is important that each person has the opportunity to state what they see is the problem. We try to have the students understand that as each person states the problem *they are going to disagree.* If we don't disagree at this point then there is no problem. Just because the other person states the problem differently than you see it doesn't mean the problem can't be solved.

1. Each person (one at a time) gets the opportunity to state what they see is the problem.
2. Understand that the other person will not usually agree while the problem is being stated (because if they did there wouldn't be a problem).

Step 3: Tell your side of the story, and Listen, Listen, and Listen Some More

Listening can be the hardest step. Remember, it is hard to listen when we have our mind on something else.

Listening doesn't just happen by being quiet. Our body language says a lot about whether we are listening. Folded

arms, blank stare, looking away, turning away, mumbling under your breath, looking at your watch, watching the T.V. or looking out the window are all ways we say with our body language that we aren't listening.

Step 4: Tell the other persons story as you heard it.

Repeating what the other person just said does two things:

1. It lets the other person know that we were listening.
2. It will help clarify any misunderstandings we have due to our own *perceptions*. This will help avoid conflicts later.

Step 5: Brainstorm some solutions

This sounds a lot easier than it is. It is hard to reach an agreement with someone when you disagree. So what are some things you can do to reach an agreement?

1. Compromise (when possible).
2. Change your opinion (if sensible).
3. Acknowledge a misunderstanding.
4. Agree to disagree

How do you reach an agreement with someone when no matter what; you *do not* agree! That's when is okay to *agree to disagree*. Respecting your rights while still respecting the rights of others. We both have the right to our own opinion.

1. Each person says to the other: "You are entitled to your opinion and I am entitled to mine. I just don't agree with you."
2. Both parties shake hands before they walk away.
 - A. By doing this, the argument is over. That doesn't mean you will always become great friends (maybe you will), but at least you won't be continuing the fight.

Step 6: Ask an Adult for Help

Parents, when you are asked to help you need to be the Referee. How many times have you stopped your children from arguing or fighting and sent them both in different directions, only to find that the problem starts all over again later? As the referee you make sure the rules of resolving a conflict are being followed. The referee does not **solve the problem** for the players.

1. Kids need to ask the adult to help them follow the rules. "While I'm talking please have xxxxx listen. Then when xxxxx is talking help me stay quite and listen."
2. The adult's role is helping both parties follow the first 5 steps.
3. It's okay for the adult to offer advise and possible solutions, BUT let the kids solve the problem.

Student/Parent Homework (Week 10):

"A Conflict I Have Had" worksheet is designed to help the students work through the steps with a real situation. The students are to choose a conflict they have had recently with a *friend or sibling*. In this way your child will be working on the steps of conflict resolution while at the same time figuring out some solutions that could have helped solve his/her problem. As you work through the homework with your child help them look at ways he/she can apply what they have learned about resolving conflicts.

Parent' Night: Parent's Night is open to any adult, parent, grandparent, relative or any person wishing to gain more information regarding the P.L.U.S. Program and/or timely drug information. If you must bring your child we will have free babysitting available overseen by one of our P.L.U.S. Officers (no children under 18 months). We certainly hope you can take the time to attend.

Riverside (Buckeye, Hadden, Hale Rd., LaMuth Middle School - Tuesday, November 22 7:00-9:00pm
Leroy, Madison Ave., Melridge)

Here are some Internet SITES worth looking at!

Stop Bullying Now! Information, Prevention, Tips, and Games. – www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

This site is sponsored by the US Department of Health and Human Services and offers flash movies, games, and information about bullying and how to prevent it. Great site for kids.

Dealing With Bullying - www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies

Every day thousands of teens wake up afraid to go to school. Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students of all races and classes. Bullying has everyone worried, not just the kids on its receiving end. Yet because parents, teachers, and other adults don't always see it, they may not understand how extreme bullying can get.

SafeYouth.org - Violence Prevention Topics - Bullying - www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/bullying.asp

This site has many links to sites with youth related safety tips. Fact sheets describing how to Bully Proof Your School, a school-wide intervention designed to reduce bullying behaviors in schools and to increase students' awareness of bullying issues.