



Curious about conflict

Lesson 1

Learning objective: To ascertain different views on what conflict is, identify its positive and negative impacts, and discuss how it arises and affects people.

Learning outcomes:

1. Define conflict and explain your views on its negative and positive impacts.
2. Describe a simple model of how the brain functions during conflict.
3. Describe at least 3 strategies that have the effect of calming down the brain's fight or flight responses thereby reducing feelings of anger and fear.

Lesson plan

Time	Activity	Resources / Organisation
0.00 - 0.10	 1. Curious about conflict? 15 mins Four-word build game and group discussion of the meaning and impact of conflict <i>A group activity starting in pairs and building into bigger groups, to create and refine a definition of the meaning and impact of conflict.</i> Differentiation: Thinking about the impact can be harder, you may want to split the class accordingly. Outcome addressed: 1. Define conflict and explain your views on its negative and positive impacts Guidelines: Split class into two halves. Explain that they are only working with people in their half. Give half the room the word conflict and the other half the impact of conflict. - Each person writes down any 4 words that they associate with their word/phrase. - When they have 4 words they pair up and then, from the 8 words, each pair eliminates 4 words and keeps 4, meaning they have to discuss and agree on the 4 they'd like to keep. This pair then has 4 words. - Each pair then finds another pair and from the 8 words they now have, reduce them down to 4 again in the same way. Continue the process until each half of the class has agreed on 4 words for conflict, and 4 words for its impact. Get feedback – write words on board Discuss: What was easy / hard about this? What helped to reach agreement? Happy with the outcome? Discussion points: - Were there any positives in the impact of conflict? If not, can they think of any? - The impact of conflict can be frequent, far-reaching and vary hugely in severity. Conflict is inevitable. - Was there ever conflict about which words to keep? How did you respond to this? Elicit: People have different reactions to issues and how to resolve them.	Prior to lesson, set chairs up to encourage movement and discussion. A circle of chairs can be effective for creating a different learning environment where this is feasible but is not essential (see Introduction Document). Write Four words for conflict on half the board, and Four words for the impact of conflict on the other half. Sticky notes

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	7. Ask for a definition of conflict: what ties all these examples together? Hear a couple. 8. Show definition slide: <i>Conflict is a disagreement where there is tension.</i> Explain that disagreements happen all the time, but don't lead to conflict, e.g. over taste in music, food, or in political or religious views. It becomes a conflict when the two people get tense and take a position: i.e. start to argue over who is right and who is wrong. 9. Summarise: In these lessons we'll be exploring responses to conflict, getting to know more about the way conflict arises, learning tools and techniques to help people <i>do conflict well</i>, and learning about how small changes in responses can make a big difference. Learning: Conflict is an inevitable part of all our lives. It can vary from harmful to devastating if handled badly. If handled well, it can lead to better understanding and increased tolerance. These sessions are aimed at helping you to respond to conflict well.	
0.10 – 0.25	2. Creating a safe space to explore conflict 15 mins <i>Think-pair-share activity to co-create ground rules or agreements for talking about issues and conflict in a safe way.</i> Differentiation: students who need support with writing can pair up with someone to who doesn't, or can do this part verbally Guidelines: Remind students that in the previous activity it probably wasn't always easy to discuss and decide on ideas. We all handle conflict differently. This activity is intended to ensure that for all the lessons on conflict and conflict resolution, people feel safe to explore the ideas and practise the skills together. 	

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0:25 – 0:35	1. Give students 1 minute to think silently: • What things helped your group to decide on their words? • What would have made it harder? 2. Discuss for 2 minutes in pairs: • Write a list of ground rules or an agreement that would help to make these discussions easy and safe for all 3. For 3 minutes get ideas from the whole group. Write these up and explain that you will make a typed list which will be on the wall for the duration of this scheme of work. 4. Ask them to refer back to it if they notice the agreements are being forgotten. NB. Ensure you write this up, linking their ideas to the checklist in the Safe Space Guidelines in the Introduction Document. At the start of every lesson draw attention to them. They can also be used as a reference point if any of the conflict or skills-based scenarios are used inappropriately by individuals. 3. Conflict in school questionnaire  10 mins <i>Individually and anonymously filled in questionnaire on types of conflict in school, and students' perception of how frequently they occur and how harmful they can be.</i> <i>Can be used to collate the year group's experience of conflict in school; and to provide a benchmark of their experience that can be compared to future years, and if required, other schools (via CRESST).</i> Note: For students who need extra support with writing an adult will be needed to help them fill it in. Outcome addressed: 1) Define conflict and explain your views on its negative and positive impacts Guidelines:	1.1 Conflict in School Questionnaire

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0.35 – 0.50	1. Ask: So why is it important to be curious about conflict? Explain: As the previous activity showed, conflict is part of our everyday life, everyone is affected by it. 2. Distribute 1.1 Conflict in School Questionnaire and explain: • 'Frequency' = how often they think it happens within school (not just to them as individuals). How often do they see it or are they aware of it? • 'Harm' = how damaging it is when it does happen. Do they feel its impact is mild or more serious for the students involved? NB. If a student raises an issue that concerns you about someone's safety during or following this activity inform the student straight away that this will need to be talked about with the staff member in charge of safeguarding. Explain that you will do this and that the student is welcome to come. If they don't want to, the safeguarding lead may contact them to find out more and discuss ways forward. Learning: Students gain an overview of conflict in their school lives. Teachers gain insight into the young people's experience that can be used to guide future lessons and as a benchmark 4. The brain chemistry of conflict  15 mins Hand-Brain: A simple model of how the brain functions during conflict; and when calm 1. Group activity exploring responses to conflict - coke bottle story 2. Teacher-led neuroscience explanation 3. Individual / group activity to explore strategies for regulating fight or flight responses Differentiation: 1.2 Brain infographic handout available for those students who would like to further explore this area (see resources pack) Outcomes addressed: 2. Describe a simple model of how the brain functions during conflict; 4. Describe at least 3 strategies that have the effect of calming down the brain's fight or flight responses	Cola bottle Dan Siegel MP4 clip in PowerPoint presentation Sticky notes 1.2 Brain infographic

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	thereby reducing feelings of anger and fear Guidelines: 1. Coke bottle activity: To introduce the concept of getting 'fired up' or 'wound up' or agitated and explore responses. • If we're going to do conflict well we need to understand why it arises • This means looking at the feelings people have in the lead up to, or during, a conflict • Different people have specific things that wind them up and these are not the same for everyone Cokey story: • Explain that 'Cokey' is a Y7, 8 or 9 student in an average secondary school. • Give 1 minute to think of some of the things that might wind up someone of this age in a normal school day, from when they wake up. It could be at their home, their school, with their friends, anything! • Ask someone to start with an example from as early as possible in Cokey's day. They say it, shake the bottle, and pass to the next person. Keep passing around and shaking bottle until lots of frustrations have occurred in Cokey's day. • Ask: 'How might Cokey react if they get into an argument now?' Pretend to open bottle so you get a mild fizz noise. Elicit: 'explosion' What does it feel like when someone is that wound up? Ask students to imagine what are the physical symptoms might Cokey notice if they were getting wound up? Create a list of physical symptoms of being wound up, e.g.: <i>heart pounding, shortness of breath, seeing red, wanting to hit / lash out, wanting to run away / hide / disappear, sweaty palms, can't think straight, fuzzy head, welling up</i> – fight, flight or freeze responses. Write on board. 2. Explain handy model of brain: using Dan Siegel MP4 clip in PowerPoint for lesson or modelling with own hand / getting students to model. Students follow with their own arm / fist and open hand as you explain the model. Arm=spinal cord, fist (thumb inside)=brain, fingers=pre-frontal cortex, palm=brain stem controls the fight or flight response we share with all animals, thumb=regulator. When wound up we 'flip our lids' (fingers go up) and brain is flooded with adrenalin that make us want to fight or run away. As	

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	humans we can re-train our pre-frontal cortex to stay in communication with the rest of the brain so as to reduce this response. This is called the flight, fight, and freeze response – link to physical signs elicited. The hormones released produce the fear or anger needed to keep animals safe when they're under threat. Emphasise these are temporary feelings – lasting 10-15 minutes. They are part of our 'hard-wiring': primal/reptilian systems for survival that have been part of creatures' brains for tens of thousands of years. What makes humans different from other animals is that we have the pre-frontal cortex, the bit at the front of the brain (represented by fingers), that regulates our initial emotional responses. This can be trained to come back down, or to stay down, when we get wound up, if there is no immediate threat. Humans can control their responses if they learn how to. 3. Brainswarm: everyone writes as many strategies to calm down as they can think of that might be useful for someone like Cokey who is 'flooded' or has noticed this tension in their body. Snowball: quick-fire go round getting one example from each person until ideas have run out. Ask everyone silently to think of one new thing they might try themselves if they were 'flipping'. 4. Give out 1.2 Brain Infographic for further reading Learning: We can't deal well with conflict well when we're wound up/flooded, but we can learn to notice what's going on and pause things to allow the anger and fear reduce. This stops things from 'exploding' and gives space for more subtle feelings to be experienced e.g. initial anger and fear might be followed by frustration, disappointment, shame etc.	

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0.50 – 0.55	5. Consolidation activity & further thinking mins <i>Individual reflection</i> 1. A definition of conflict is... 2. One fact about conflict that I will remember... 3. Two ideas for calming the brain down that I think could be helpful... Differentiation: Individual reflection is encouraged through students thinking about their own learning and responses. Outcomes addressed: A check of all learning outcomes. Guidelines: Don't discuss answers, but you can take them in to check progress	 5
0.55 – 1.00	<i>Further thinking</i> Notice when someone (in real life or on TV) is fired up/flooded – do you know what made them flip their lid? Did they show physical signs? 6. Signposting and questions 5 mins NB. Please ensure you read signposting information slide out to students and allow time for questions. <i>**Ensure the slide has the correct names for the safeguarding lead staff members in your school**</i>	

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