

Lesson 7

The Resolution Solution - Conflict Resolution

Rationale

Conflict is an everyday part of pro-social development and peer bonding. Adolescents who can recognize the precursors to conflict and are skilled in employing strategies to resolve conflict can build stronger, healthier relationships. Adolescents who respect differing opinions and the needs of others seek peaceful solutions to conflict.

Leadership and Character Development

This lesson promotes these character traits:

Cooperation Fairness Respect Responsibility Integrity

Objectives

Following this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Differentiate between conflict and violence
- Determine behaviors that escalate a conflict
- Identify healthy approaches to conflict resolution
- Demonstrate effective conflict resolution skills

Activities

1. Work It Out 15 minutes
2. The Party's Over 25 minutes
3. What Goes Up, Can Come Down 10 minutes

Materials

In this lesson, you will need:

- Student Workbook pages 16-18
- The Party's Over, Media Disc Segment 7 (in your kit)
- Bring It Home Newsletter Issue 7, Teacher's Manual Appendix

Before You Start

- Distribute the Student Workbooks at the beginning of the lesson.
- Prepare the Media Disc, segment 7: The Party's Over for display in Section 2: The Party's Over.
- Prepare the Bring it Home 7 newsletter. Distribute at the end of lesson.

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - *Conflict Resolution*

1. Work It Out

In our last lesson, we talked about how the respect we have for ourselves and for others affects the decisions we make in challenging situations. Having respect for others is critical when disagreements arise, and we need to be mindful of the best outcome for everyone involved.

What is a conflict? 🗨️ *A difference of opinion; a fight; an argument; a disagreement.* **Conflict occurs** when two or more people have opposing needs, principles, or interests. Conflict is a normal part of life and a part of healthy relationships. Because people have different thoughts, ideas, and opinions, we often disagree. By taking a respectful approach to conflict, we can prevent a confrontation from escalating into violence.

How we approach a disagreement determines its outcome. Approaching a conflict with a win-lose mentality can escalate it and damage relationships. Open your workbooks to page 16 to the section titled “Approaches to Conflict.” Determine if each approach is healthy or unhealthy and mark the appropriate box. ✂️ *Allow time for students to complete the activity.*

What are the healthy approaches to resolving a conflict? 🗨️ *Win-Win, Steer Clear, Compromise, and Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff.*

Excellent! The Win-Win and Compromise approaches apply respect, cooperation, and effective communication skills to resolve a conflict in a way that satisfies everyone involved. **What is the difference between these two approaches?** 🗨️ *In a Win-Win, we find an alternative we both agree on. In a compromise, we each give up some of what we want to resolve the problem. That’s right; to reach a Win-Win, we work together to find an alternative solution we can agree on. In a compromise, we each give up some of what we want in order to resolve the conflict.*

If getting your way isn’t worth the risk of escalating the conflict, Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff could be the best approach. Use Steer Clear to stay away from a potentially dangerous conflict or a conflict in which you are not directly involved.

What are the unhealthy approaches to resolving a conflict? 🗨️ *Avoid It and Compete.* **Competition** is healthy when you’re playing sports or playing a board game. However, a competitive attitude and the motivation to win can quickly escalate a conflict and intensify the feelings of anger and frustration.

Avoiding a conflict builds resentment and can damage or even end a friendship. **What is the difference between Steer Clear and Avoid it?** 🗨️ *Steer Clear is a healthy way of staying out of a dangerous conflict. Avoid It leaves conflicts unresolved. Excellent!*

Look at the next section in your workbook. We’re going to play a quick game called Resolution Solution to practice identifying healthy and unhealthy approaches to conflict. To start the game, randomly write the six approaches to conflict in the spaces marked Round 1 and Round 2. ✂️ *Allow time for students to write the six approaches to conflict in the spaces marked Round 1 and Round 2.*

Starting with Round 1, I will read several scenarios aloud. Identify the approach used in the scenario, but don’t call out the answer. If you wrote that approach in Round 1, check the box to the right of the approach. Call out “Resolution” when you have checked all three approaches. If there is an unhealthy approach, we will discuss a better way to resolve the conflict. In each round of the game, the first person to call out “Resolution” and correctly identify the approaches to conflict wins!

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - *Conflict Resolution*

Round One:

1. The boss just announced a staff meeting starting in fifteen minutes. Theo and Violet have to present their report, and they are nervous because there's not much time to prepare. Theo wants Violet to do most of the speaking and vice versa. They agree to share the speaking roles equally. Theo will present the first half of the report and Violet will present the second half. 🗨️ *Compromise.*
2. Ted politely asks his roommate, Chuck, to lower the volume of his music. Chuck refuses. The situation escalates, and each roommate turns his music louder and louder until a neighbor calls the police. 🗨️ *Compete. Possible resolutions: Compromise and take turns playing music; use headphones; go for a win-win and find music they both like.*
3. Maxwell overhears Royce and his girlfriend arguing in the hallway about Valentine's Day. Maxwell normally doesn't mind getting involved, but he hears Royce say, "I didn't get you a present because you said you didn't want anything!" Maxwell decides to keep walking to class so he doesn't get involved in the conflict. 🗨️ *Steer Clear.*
4. Vivienne and Jade are roommates. Jade ate the last of Vivienne's thin mint cookies. Even though those are her favorite cookies, Vivienne reminds herself that Jade always shares her food. Vivienne decides to let it go. 🗨️ *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff.*
5. Marcus and Shawna's mom put them in charge of setting the table for the holiday dinner. Marcus wants to use red napkins and Shawna wants to use blue napkins. They agree to use white napkins instead and make a center piece with red and blue candles. 🗨️ *Win-Win.*
6. Cooper and Nicole have been dating for almost a year. Cooper wants to apply to the same colleges together. Nicole wants to experience her first year of college on her own and decides to take a break from the relationship. Cooper wants to talk about it over dinner, but Nicole keeps saying, "I can't. I'm busy." 🗨️ *Avoid it. Possible resolutions: They apply to some of the same colleges and some different colleges.*

Round Two:

1. Mya initially felt slighted by a coworker who didn't support her idea to revamp customer service. After thinking about the situation, Mya decides it's not a big deal and asks her coworker to help brainstorm some new ideas. 🗨️ *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff.*
2. You and a classmate are studying for exams. You need a coffee break, but your classmate wants to keep studying. Your classmate agrees to bring her notes to the coffee shop so she can study while you take a break. 🗨️ *Compromise.*
3. Fredrick and Sarah are going to prom together. Fredrick wants to rent a sports car, but Sarah insists they borrow her dad's vintage convertible. They talk it out and agree it would be more fun to rent a limo with their friends. 🗨️ *Win-Win.*
4. You and your teammate always get a smoothie after practice. One day your teammate forgot his money. You covered for him because he said he would pay you back, but he hasn't paid you back yet. Whenever you remind him, he says, "I'll get back to you later." 🗨️ *Avoid it. Possible resolutions: Don't Sweat the Small Stuff.*

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - *Conflict Resolution*

5. Ramon and Alex are best friends, and they both have a crush on the new girl. Instead of working together to figure out who should ask her out, they both fight for the new girl's attention. Unfortunately, their behavior annoys her so much that she turns both of them down. 🗨️ *Compete. Possible resolutions: They could go for a win-win and agree to not ask out the new girl and look for other girls they like.*
6. Blake and his dad are at the high school football game. During half-time, they go to the concession stand and see some fans from opposing teams arguing. The conflict is quickly escalating, so Blake and his dad decide to watch the half-time show and get snacks later. 🗨️ *Steer Clear.*

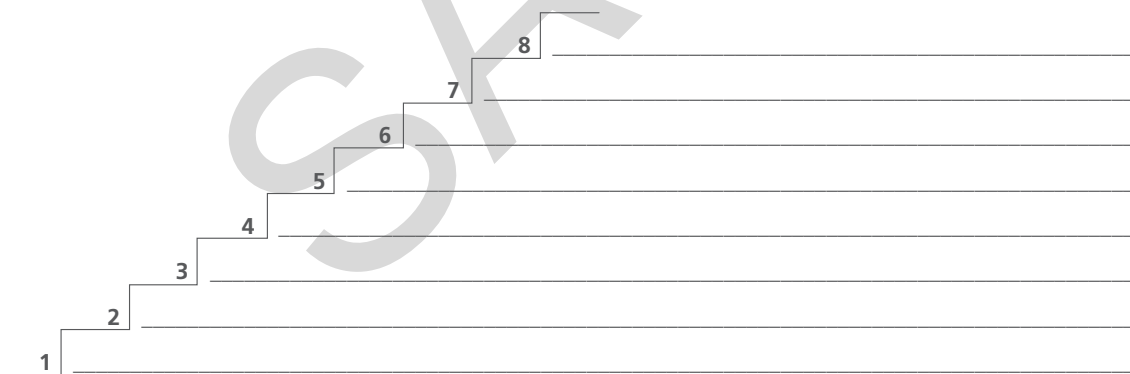
Excellent! Approaching conflicts in healthy, respectful ways requires effective communication skills and cooperation. Sometimes reaching a Win-Win is more challenging, but it can be more rewarding in the end.

2. The Party's Over

In the emotions lesson, we learned how our emotions influence our decision making. Reaching a peaceful and productive resolution requires us to manage our emotions as they intensify.

What do you feel when you're in a conflict? 🗨️ *Frustrated.* At the onset of a confrontation, a rush of adrenaline prepares our bodies for fight or flight. How many of you have experienced intense emotions in a conflict? ✂️ *Encourage student response.* Small conflicts can escalate to violence if the people involved don't control their anger.

To illustrate this point, we're going to watch part of a documentary that reports the events and eyewitness accounts of a conflict that escalated to violence. This is a report of a true story produced by Dateline NBC in 2001 so it might look a bit dated, but it is a relevant example of how a conflict can quickly turn into a tragedy. As you watch the video, consider the progression of the conflict from a disagreement to violence. Consider what started the conflict and the actions that escalated it. ✂️ *Play "The Party's Over," Media Disc Segment 7. While the documentary is playing, draw the escalating diagram below on the board.*



The conflict between the two girls started small but ended in violence. I'm sure no one attending this party could have imagined someone would die as a result of the evening's events. Even more tragically, two teenagers lost their lives. Katrina was so upset by what happened that she took over 40 anti-anxiety pills prior to her and her sister's arrest. Katrina died of an overdose while in police custody.

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - Conflict Resolution

Look at the next section in your workbook titled “Escalation.” We are going to examine the events that escalated the conflict. What was the initial point of conflict between Deanna and the girl at the party? 🗨️ *Who should clean up the broken pot; The girls had different points of view about respecting property.* The girls had different points of view about respecting other people’s property. The girl broke a flower pot and Deanna thought she should clean it up. What started to escalate the conflict? 🗨️ *A comment.* That’s right; Deanna suggested the girl clean up the broken flowerpot. Write “Comment” on the first step of the escalator. ✂️ Write “Comment” on the first step of the diagram on the board.

What happened after Deanna’s comment? 🗨️ *The girls started to argue.* Write “Argument” on the second step of the escalator. ✂️ Write “Argument” on the second step on the diagram. That’s right; the girls started yelling at each other.

What happened next? 🗨️ *They started pushing and shoving each other.* Write “Pushing and Shoving” on the third step of the escalator. ✂️ Write “Pushing and Shoving” on the third step of the diagram on the board.

Then what happened? 🗨️ *The 15 year old girl called her sister Katrina.* Write “Called Sister” on the fourth step of the escalator. ✂️ Write “Called Sister” on the fourth step of the diagram on the board.

What happened when Katrina arrived? 🗨️ *Katrina said, “Who hurt my sister? Point them out to me.”* ✂️ Write “Demanding” on the fifth step on the diagram on the board. Katrina wanted to know who hurt her sister and Deanna said, “It was me.”

What happened next? 🗨️ *There was a fight.* Deanna and Katrina fought. Who encouraged the fight? 🗨️ *The crowd of kids at the party.* Write “Crowd Encouraged Fight” on the sixth step. ✂️ Write “Crowd Encouraged Fight” on the sixth step on the diagram on the board. There were about forty kids standing around encouraging the fight.

Then what happened? 🗨️ *Katrina stabbed Deanna.* Write “Violence” on the seventh step on the escalator. ✂️ Write “Violence” on the seventh step on the diagram on the board.

How did this conflict end? 🗨️ *Deanna died.* Write “Death” on the eighth step of the escalator. ✂️ Write “Death” on the eighth step on the diagram on the board.

Recall the conflict approaches we’ve discussed in this lesson. Which approach might have prevented the conflict about the broken flowerpot? 🗨️ *Steer Clear or Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff.* Deanna could have considered that the other girl might react negatively to a comment about the broken pot. Deanna could have used Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff and cleaned up the mess herself. She also could have left the party as soon as she realized the other girl was not interested in a peaceful resolution.

Did Deanna and the other girl know each other before the party? 🗨️ *No.* Are people who don’t know each other more likely or less likely to respect each other? 🗨️ *Less Likely.* Our respect for others affects how we approach a conflict.

Turn in your workbooks to page 17 to the section titled “Risk Factors for Violence.” These conditions can increase the likelihood a conflict will intensify. Mark the risk factors that were in the documentary.

✂️ Allow time for students to complete the activity.

Which risk factors did you mark? 🗨️ *All of them.*

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - *Conflict Resolution*

3. What Goes Up, Can Come Down

A number of circumstances at the party conspired to escalate the conflict. Taking a moment to think about what is happening and what could happen as a result of our actions gives us an opportunity to de-escalate a conflict.

There are eight de-escalation strategies you can use if you need to get out of a conflict situation or cool it down. Let's see if you can identify all eight strategies using rebus puzzles. Look at the next section in your workbook titled "Simmer Down."

What is a rebus? 🗨️ *Pictures that make up a word or a saying.* A rebus is a puzzle of pictures, letters, numbers, and words that together represent a word, phrase, or saying.

I'm going to put you into groups to solve eight rebus puzzles. When solving your rebus puzzles, consider what the depicted images sound like when said aloud. The sound of the words will give you a clue to the answer. After you solve each puzzle, write its meaning under the corresponding clue in your workbook.

✂️ *Divide the class into groups. Allow time for students to complete the activity.*

Let's see how you did. Instead of calling the other person names, what should you do to show them respect? 🗨️ *Call the other person by name.*

Instead of yelling or screaming at someone, what should you do? 🗨️ *Use a calm voice.* Excellent! When you use a calm voice, the other person is more likely to lower their voice too.

Clenching your fists or tightening your body shows you are ready to fight. What should you do instead? 🗨️ *Relax your body.* Excellent! When you are relaxed, you prove to yourself and to the other person that you are ready to listen and cooperate.

What is the strategy in puzzle 4? 🗨️ *Use words like, "Let's," "We," "Our," and "Together."* Exactly; instead of demanding your own way, talk about the conflict as a shared problem that can be worked out.

Instead of refusing to listen to the other person, what should you do? 🗨️ *Ask to hear the other point of view.* That's right; first offer to listen to the other person, and then explain your own point of view.

What does the sixth puzzle say? 🗨️ *Attack the problem, not the person.* Very good! Identify the problem without attacking or blaming the other person. Once you isolate the problem, you can work together to reach a peaceful solution.

What is the strategy in the seventh puzzle? 🗨️ *Brainstorm together.* Excellent! Suggest working together to find a solution instead of telling the other person what to do.

What is the strategy in the last puzzle? 🗨️ *Treat the other person the way you want to be treated.* Exactly; avoid put downs or insults. Show the other person respect and treat them the way you would want to be treated.

Lesson 7: The Resolution Solution - *Conflict Resolution*

Applying these de-escalation strategies can calm down the situation so you can think through the outcomes of your actions and find a resolution to the conflict.

There may be times when these strategies aren't enough to keep the peace. In that case, the best way to handle a potentially violent conflict is to walk away and talk to a responsible adult. In our next lesson, we will discuss how unresolved conflicts and other social pressures can cause increased stress and anxiety.

✕ *Collect Student Workbooks.*

SAMPLE