

Conflict Resolution

Career Education Focus:

1. Identifying appropriate workplace behavior
2. Understand mature techniques to resolve conflict

Related Standards: English/language arts

Lesson Objectives:

1. Appraise techniques to resolve workplace conflict
2. Resolve conflict scenarios
3. Evaluate what they have learned about conflict resolution

Materials: Conflict Scenarios worksheet, Conflict Resolution Journaling worksheet, pens and pencils

Procedures:

Conduct a class discussion about conflict in the workplace. Begin by asking students if any of them have experienced conflict that was difficult to resolve. Ask the students if they have any ideas about how to properly resolve conflict.

Discuss the following types of positive and negative conflict resolution:

- Accommodate (neutral)—One person gives in to another, whether they want to or not. They do this because they believe ending the conflict is more important than winning. This is a positive technique because the conflict is resolved, but the accommodator may eventually become frustrated with “giving in” to every conflict, thus leading to negative outcomes.
- Avoidance (negative)—This is most often a negative solution. Both sides avoid the conflict, which can be helpful in minor conflicts. But for an important conflict, this is a negative solution because people try to avoid the issue, even though it won’t go away and will eventually grow into a larger problem.
- Collaborative (positive)—This strategy involves a group of people working together to reach a solution that meets the needs of everyone involved. It is most useful when there is a group of people involved in the conflict, when previous attempts to resolve the conflict have failed, or when the conflict is important and must be resolved.
- Competitive (negative)—This strategy is most often used by a boss or supervisor. They use their power to make a decision when there is an emergency and the conflict must be resolved immediately. This style may be used after other styles have failed. This leads to a negative outcome in conflicts that are not emergencies, because people affected by this decision can have their feelings hurt and become resentful.
- Compromise (positive)—This strategy attempts to partially satisfy everyone involved in the conflict. It requires everyone involved to give up something in order for everyone involved to get something they want. This strategy is useful when a deadline is approaching and there is not a clear decision of what is best for everyone.

Activity 1: Pass out the Conflict Scenarios worksheet. Explain to students they are to read each scenario and use the techniques they have learned to resolve the conflict. Tell the students to list which technique they would use and then explain how they would use that technique to resolve the conflict. Explain to students there may be more than one method to resolve the conflict. After students have had enough time to complete the worksheet, conduct a class discussion about how they resolved the conflicts.

Activity 2: Pass out the Conflict Resolution Journaling worksheet. Explain to students they are to answer each question using information they have learned from this lesson. Tell the students that since the answers should be based on their own thoughts and experiences, there are no right answers. After students have had enough time to complete the worksheet, conduct a class discussion about each of the questions. Since the students' answers may be personal, they may not want to share their answers.

Assessment: Make sure all students have completed both worksheets thoroughly and accurately.

Reflection: Lead a class discussion on lessons learned. Why is conflict resolution important in the workplace?