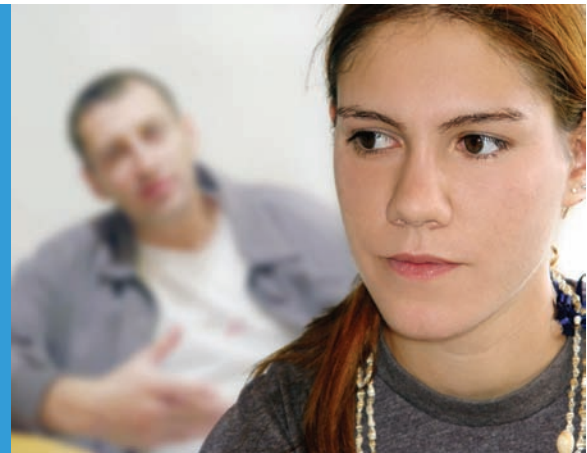


B3870

# Understanding **CONFLICT**







## Understanding **CONFLICT**

# Conflict Education Modules

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### Introduction

**I**n today's communities, people frequently have different ideas regarding how to solve various issues. These differences can make for creative solutions or can spiral into conflict with others. Developing comfort with conflict and skill in managing it is a key competency for University of Wisconsin-Extension educators who have received training from the UW-Extension Conflict Education Team.

The team developed modules to make subject matter content accessible for UW-Extension educators in their communities. The modules are designed to stand alone, or they can be combined for a more substantive program. The following list provides an effective sequence to teach the modules.

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# Understanding **CONFLICT**

# Non-verbal communication

## Objective

- Understand how non-verbal communication can be interpreted differently and how that can affect a conflict situation.

## Audience

High school and above

## Time

20 minutes

## Supplies needed

- Copies of the non-verbal cues, cut into strips (on next page)

## Source

Ruth Perlstein, and Gloria Thrall. 1996.  
*Ready-to-use conflict resolution activities for secondary students.*  
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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## Background

**C**ommunication plays a key role in life, and the same can be said for conflict situations.

But how much of communication is actually said, and how much of it is unspoken? It's been said that 90% of communication is non-verbal. Therefore, non-verbal communication can play a major role in a conflict.

It's important to consider non-verbal communication when dealing with a conflict situation because it is true that what you don't say can speak louder than what you are trying to say out loud.

We will explore the basics of non-verbal communication and raise awareness of what mixed messages your non-verbal signals might be sending and how that can contribute to a conflict situation.

## What to do

### Activity 1: Reading non-verbal cues

1. Break the group into small groups (3-4 people maximum per group).
2. Give each group slips of paper with the following actions printed on each (on next page):
  - Drumming fingers on a desk
  - Leaning forward in a chair
  - Crossing arms tightly
  - Pointing a finger at you
  - Shrugging shoulders
  - Lowering eyes when spoken to
  - Pulling at ears or hair
  - Slapping one's forehead with the heel of your hand
3. Have participants in each group take turns acting out the actions (actor should not speak). While the actor is portraying the action on the card, the others in the group should be trying to interpret the feeling behind the body language.
4. Processing: (discuss in the large group)
  - What was it like trying to identify the specific emotion the actors were trying to portray?
  - Was it difficult at times to figure out what they were portraying?
  - Did people come up with different feelings/ emotions than the actor was trying to display?
  - Actors: After you read the non-verbal cue, was there a particular feeling you were trying to portray? Did the non-actors correctly identify the same feeling as you? Did they guess something different?
  - Were any of their guesses off by a long shot? Or were their interpretations fairly close? Any examples of large discrepancies?



## Reading non-verbal cues

### Activity 2:

#### Reading non-verbal expressions

1. Select a few minutes of your favorite T.V. show, movie, or a few photographs to share with the group.
2. If it is a video clip, show the clip on mute to the group. If photographs, just share them with the groups, not providing any background of what is happening in the photos.
3. Processing (in large group):
  - What emotions were they trying to show?
  - What non-verbals did you pick up from their expressions?
  - Was it difficult at times to figure out what they were trying to portray?
  - Was there a lot of variation within the larger group of what emotions were being displayed?
  - How can the varying perceptions of emotions contribute to a conflict situation?

### Summary

**N**ot everything that contributes to a conflict is from verbal communication. A lot of what could cause the conflict is non-verbal communication. Many people perceive non-verbals differently, which can add to the discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. It's important to be aware of non-verbal communication, because what you aren't saying is just as important as what you are.

**Drumming fingers on a desk**

**Leaning forward in a chair**

**Crossing arms tightly**

**Pointing a finger at you**

**Shrugging shoulders**

**Lowering eyes when spoken to**

**Pulling at ears or hair**

**Slapping one's forehead with the heel of one's hand**

## Understanding **CONFLICT**

### Objectives

- Develop awareness of the importance of effective and accurate self-expression.
- Understand the components of an “I” statement.
- Formulate an “I” statement that expresses one’s self.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

45 minutes

### Supplies needed

- The Angry Statement
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Paper, pens

### Source

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. 2000. *Difficult Conversations: How to discuss what matters most*. New York: Penguin Books.

### Written by:

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# Communication — Using “I” statements

## Background

**W**e learn to communicate as young children, and it becomes a natural part of everyday living. Yet, we may find ourselves in situations where we feel misunderstood. Communication involves not only speaking but also listening. Expressing ourselves clearly means that what we say most closely resembles what we feel. This can be challenging because our emotions can get us off track, so that our words and our feelings don’t match. Constructing an “I” statement is a strategy to accurately express oneself.

## What to do

**A**sk for a volunteer to read Chris’ attached statement. Then ask the audience what their response would be if the statement was directed at them (angry, defensive, hurt, upset).

Think back to a time when you were very angry. What feelings did we hear in Chris’ words (anger, upset)? What other feelings might he have?

What was Chris’ behavior that contributed to negative feelings (loud voice, emotion, gestures)? Let’s explore some other ways that Chris could have expressed himself that would more accurately match his feelings with his words.

Using an “I” statement helps us take responsibility for how we feel. An example is, “I’m happy that you came to the program today because I enjoy teaching about communication.” We start out by saying “I”. An “I” statement has three parts: the feeling, what happened, and why it matters.

Write on a flip chart: I \_\_\_\_\_

What was Chris feeling? Anger is often the presenting emotion, a mask for other feelings. Probe for feelings beyond anger, such as hurt, overwhelmed, tired, or frustrated. Ask the group for an answer and add to the sentence. **I am tired and overwhelmed.**

What was Chris upset about? (e.g. not enough help, working so hard, feeling like nobody cared)

Ask the group for an answer and add to the sentence.

**I am tired and overwhelmed because I was working alone on the project from 4-8 pm, and it seemed like nobody cared.**

Write the “I” statement parts above each part of the sentence.

feeling
what happened

↙
↘

**I am (tired and overwhelmed) (because I was working alone on the project from 4-8 pm), and (it seemed like nobody cared).**

↑

why it matters





## Chris' angry statement



If Chris made this statement to you, how would you react?

"I" statements can be a very helpful way to put our feelings into words so others can better understand what we may be experiencing. One important point to remember is we must be sincere and speak from the heart. We choose to use "I" messages when the relationship and the issues are important.

Let's practice forming an "I" statement from something that happened to you over the last few days. Does anyone have an example? Let's work through the same process we just used by writing the three parts onto the flip chart to help us get started.

Now, let's take a quiet moment to think about a situation where an "I" message would be helpful to you. Write down your "I" statement. Share as a group if participants are willing.

Even though it takes awhile to form an "I" statement in the beginning, it gets easier once we practice.

### Summary

**A**n "I" statement is one strategy to improve communication with others. By using the word "I," we take responsibility for what we are going to say. We try to match our words with our feelings, digging deeper beyond anger. Three parts make the "I" statement effective. What are the three parts of an "I" message (state the feeling, what happened, why it matters)? Using "I" statements can help us to have clearer communication with others, but keep in mind we still may not get what we want.

### Read with an angry expression.

*"I'm the only one who works around here!"*

*You didn't do anything to help out!*

*It's always that way!*

*You're out having fun, and you always*

*show up when the work is done!*

*Thanks a lot, you jerk!"*



## Understanding **CONFLICT**

# Listening skills and conflict

### Objective

- Understand and be able to identify positive listening skills.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

50 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Support materials

### Do ahead

Prepare flip charts with questions.

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## Background

“Did you hear what I said?” and “Are you listening to me?” are two phrases that are commonly used interchangeably. However, there is a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is a physiological process that our body innately does unless an individual has an auditory medical condition. Listening on the other hand is an active process that we have to try to accomplish. We may hear that the person is saying something, but are we really listening to their message?

When a conflict occurs, it is easy to forget to use good listening skills. Often, people are concentrating on ways to respond to the conflict and not what the other person is saying. Additionally, each person responds to conflict differently. Therefore, listening may become difficult because the individual's primary concern may not be concentrating on what the other person is trying to say.

## What to do

### Activity 1: Great listeners (20 minutes)

**Ask the group:** Think about the person in your life that you consider the best listener. This is the “go-to” person that you talk to when something is important. Some individuals have many people that they feel are good listeners and others may struggle to think of even one person.

### Support material— Your best listener

Give each person about five minutes to answer and think about the questions.

**Break into groups:** Have the participants break up into groups of three to four people and talk about their answers to the questions. Have each group select someone to be the recorder (record what the group is saying) and another person who will be the reporter (report to the whole group at the end). Give them about five minutes to discuss their answers as a group.

### Post the following questions on flip chart paper with room for answers under each question:

1. Why do you go to this person first when you want someone who is really going to listen to you?
2. What types of things do they do that others do not?
3. Why do you find it easier to talk with them?
4. Is there someone in your life that is not a good listener? What does he/she do that leads you to believe that he/she is not really listening to you?

**Group report:** Have the groups report their answers to the questions in a round robin fashion.

# Understanding CONFLICT

## Processing

Discuss the following questions as a large group:

1. What similarities did you find between your group's answers and other group's? Any differences?
2. If you were in a conflict with the person who is your best listener, would he/she use the same listening skills that you identified? Why or why not?
3. What are some things that would keep that person from using his/her good listening skills?

## Support material—How to improve your listening skills

## Activity 2: Conflict and active listening scenario (30 minutes)

### Scenario 1

## Support material—Listening scenario 1

Now that all the groups have identified good listening skills and things that distract them from listening, let's look at some scenarios where we can apply this information.

1. Ask for three volunteers. (It is always a good idea to tell participants that they will be part of a role-playing scenario.)
2. Give the "characters" a few minutes to look over the script.
3. Ask the rest of the group to keep track of some of the barriers to good listening and where good listening practices are not being used.

4. After the scenario has been performed, ask the group to identify some of the barriers to good listening and where good listening practices are not being used.
5. Record the group's answers on a sheet of flip chart paper.

### Scenario 2

## Support material—Listening scenario 2

1. Have the larger group break up into groups of three.
2. Pass out scenario two and instruct them to fill in the rest of the scenario using good listening skills.
3. As a group, discuss what you think would be the best way for both Bailey and his/her parents to use their skills in this situation. Tell them that the first phrase is given to you as a starting point and to add action directions as needed. Give them about 10 minutes to complete this task.
4. After the groups have finished their "good" scenarios, ask if anyone would be willing to give their role-play.

## Processing

Discuss the following questions as a large group:

1. Was it easy to pick out the bad listening skills and listening barriers? Why or why not?
2. Was it difficult to think of a good listening scenario? Why or why not?
3. How could good listening skills help you when you are involved in a conflict?
4. If you do not use good listening skills in a conflict, what could happen?

## Summary

It is important to note that using good listening skills is one of the most effective tools to employ when dealing with a conflict. For many people, listening is not an easy process. This may be especially true in a conflict situation. Individuals need to make an active effort to use their listening skills, and it may take a great deal of practice to truly listen to what someone is saying.

When individuals listen to each other, even conflict can be a constructive experience. When you listen to a person, you give him/her time to voice his/her opinions and perceptions. Also, this will give you the opportunity to ask for more information. Consequently, by remaining calm and truly listening to the other person, you will have the opportunity to process the information he/she is telling you and work through the situation in the best way possible.



# Skills to help you become a better listener

## **Activity 1: Your personal best listener**

Think about the person in your life that you consider the best listener. This is the “go-to” person that you talk to when something is important.

- 1. Why do you go to this person first when you want someone who is really going to listen to you?**
- 2. What types of things does he/she do that others do not?**
- 3. Why do you find it easier to talk with him/her?**
- 4. Is there someone in your life that is not a good listener?  
What does he/she do that leads you to believe that he/she is not really listening to you?**



## Skills to help you become a better listener

### Recognize the difference between hearing and listening

**Hearing:** Hearing is a physiological process that our body innately does unless an individual has an auditory medical condition.

**Listening:** An active process that we have to try to accomplish. Many people have grown up listening, know how to listen, or at least know how to pretend that they are listening.

### Strategies to become a better listener

1. Remove as many distractions as possible.
2. Concentrate on what the other person is saying.
3. Make eye contact.
4. Wait until the person is done speaking to respond.
5. Do not interrupt the speaker.
6. Clarify information that you do not understand.
7. Use encouraging nonverbal cues (e.g. nodding, leaning forward, smiling).
8. Use verbal utterances (such as yes, umm-hmm, okay) to encourage the speaker to continue.
9. Be genuinely interested.
10. Have an open mind about what the speaker is discussing.

### Strategies to help you listen better in a conflict situation

1. Know yourself, how you react, and how you listen with conflict situations.
2. This is not a time to think of retaliations; you should be concentrating on listening to the other person.
3. If you are formulating or giving your opinion, you are not listening anymore.
4. Decide if you can listen at that moment or if you are too preoccupied with other emotions or thoughts.
5. Tell the other person directly if you need a minute to compose yourself.
6. If you need more than a couple minutes, assure the other person that you really want to listen to what he/she is saying and you can't concentrate on the situation at the moment. Then schedule a future time to discuss the situation.





## Listening scenarios 1 and 2

### Listening scenario 1 — Not good listening skills

**Bailey:** Hey mom, hey dad, I have something important to tell you. You know how I was really worried about taking that test because my grade in English isn't so great and I was worried about failing and getting suspended from the basketball team and I thought for sure that I was going to...

**Dad:** (Interrupts and looks past Bailey.) Hey Bailey, you know that you make a better door than a window, the game is tied at 60-63 and there are only 10 seconds left. Can you move for a minute?

**Bailey:** (Looks annoyed.) Okay. I'll move, but are you listening to me? Mom, are you listening to me?

**Mom:** (Looks surprised to see Bailey standing there.) Oh hey, Bailey, when did you get home?

**Bailey:** Just a few minutes ago. Don't you remember me coming into the room and saying, 'Hey mom, hey dad, I have something important to tell you'?

**Mom:** I was so into the book I was reading that I hadn't noticed; now what were you saying?

**Bailey:** (Getting irritated.) What I said is that I had something important to tell you about my English grade. I thought that I was going to fail that test last week, that my grade was going to drop, and that I was going to be suspended from the basketball team but...

**Dad:** (Yells out.) They won! I can't believe it. What a game.

**Dad:** (Interrupts again.) Wait. What? You were kicked off of the basketball team? How did you let that happen?

**Mom:** (Puts hands on head and frowns.) Bailey, how did you let this happen?

**Bailey:** (Speaks angrily.) If you would listen to what I am saying...no I didn't get kicked off the team or fail. As a matter of fact, if you had listened to what I was saying and let me finish you would know that I studied hard and it paid off because I got a B.

**Dad:** Then why were you saying you got kicked off of the team?

**Bailey:** (Rolls eyes and walks away.) Never mind.

### Listening scenario 2 — Good listening skills

**N**ow, it is your turn to come up with ways that this conversation could have gone differently. How could Bailey have made sure that his parents understood what he was saying? And how could have Bailey's parents used good listening skills?

**Directions:** Break up into groups of three and fill in the rest of the scenario below using good listening skills. Discuss what you think would be the best way for both Bailey and the parents to use their skills in this situation. The first section is given to you as a starting point. Add action directions as needed.

**Bailey:** Hey mom, hey dad, I have something important to tell you. You know how I was really worried about taking that test because my grade in English isn't so great and I was worried about failing and getting suspended from the basketball team and I thought for sure that I was going to...



## Listening scenario 3

### Example of a good communication scenario

**Bailey:** Hey mom, hey dad, I have something important to tell you. You know how I was really worried about taking that test because of my grade in English isn't so great and I was worried about failing and getting suspended from the basketball team and I thought for sure that I was going to fail?

**Dad:** (looks up at Bailey) Hi Bailey, I'm sorry I didn't hear you. Can you give me 10 seconds until the game is over and then I will turn off the TV. I don't want to miss the rest of the game.

**Bailey:** Yah, that's fine. I'll just go and sit next to mom until it's over. It looks like it is in the final seconds of the game anyway.

**Mom:** (looks up at Bailey and closes book) Hi Bailey, I was reading my book and I don't think I heard all of what you said earlier. Can you repeat what you were saying?

**Bailey:** How about we wait until the game is off and then I can tell you both?

**Mom:** Sounds good.

**Dad:** That was a great game; let me turn off the TV so that you can tell us what is going on. You sounded serious when you came in. Actually, let's go and sit at the kitchen table, I don't want to be tempted to turn on the game highlights, and I know I will if I am sitting here.

**Mom:** So, Bailey, what's going on?

**Bailey:** Do you remember how I was really worried about taking that test because my grade in English isn't so great and I was worried about failing and getting suspended from the basketball team and I thought for sure that I was going to fail?

**Mom:** (nods head) I remember you were really worried and had studied every night for two weeks. How did it go?

**Dad:** I was wondering how it went. I know how important being on the basketball team is to you. But you know our deal: If you get bad grades, you can't play basketball.

**Bailey:** (looks at both parents and smiles) Well, I guess all that studying paid off because I got a B+.

**Dad:** Good job, Bailey. I knew if you studied that you would do well.

**Mom:** Bailey, I'm really proud of you.

# Understanding **CONFLICT**

## Conflict styles

### Objective

- Develop awareness of people's behavior while in conflict.
- Learn about the five conflict styles.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

30 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Role-play scenario (see attached support materials)
- Name tags for role players
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Paper, pens

### Source

Kenneth Thomas. 2002. *Introduction to Conflict Management*. CPP, Inc. Mountain view, CA.

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*University of Wisconsin-Extension is an EEO/Affirmative Action employer and provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.*

### Background

**C**onflict is part of our daily lives. Conflict with others occurs when the things we care about differ from what others care about, or we may disagree on how to do something. Figuring out ways to manage conflict constructively can help us realize what is happening and keep us from getting caught up in the conflict. In general, people prefer dealing with conflict in a certain manner. This, then, is their conflict style. While we may prefer a certain style because we are comfortable with it, we can choose a style that best fits a particular situation. Using different conflict styles, depending on the situation, can contribute toward a positive outcome in the conflict situation. Choosing how we "act" rather than "react" in a conflict can give us a sense of well-being.

### What to do

1. Introduce the word "conflict." Ask the group what conflict means to them. Conflict with others occurs when the things we care about are different from what others may care about.
2. Request that four volunteers read the role-playing scenario. Ask that they quietly read through their role while you give directions to the observers. Remind volunteers to take on the behaviors of their character so everyone can more easily recognize that particular style.
3. Ask observers to jot down the names of the characters and then single words that describe the behaviors they observe, include words and body language of each character. We will use these words for discussion of the styles.
4. Volunteers read the scenario.
5. Ask observers to take a moment to think about what they observed and continue jotting down words.
6. At this point, you could ask the observers if they want to see the role-play and observe the behaviors again.



# Understanding CONFLICT

## Processing

Write the name of the first character on a flip chart. Ask observers to name a behavior they observed, going around the room until ideas are exhausted. Continue with each character. Say that the next step is to think about a word that collectively describes each character.

Finally, write the name of the conflict style beside each character:

- Competing
- Avoiding
- Compromising
- Accommodating
- Collaborating

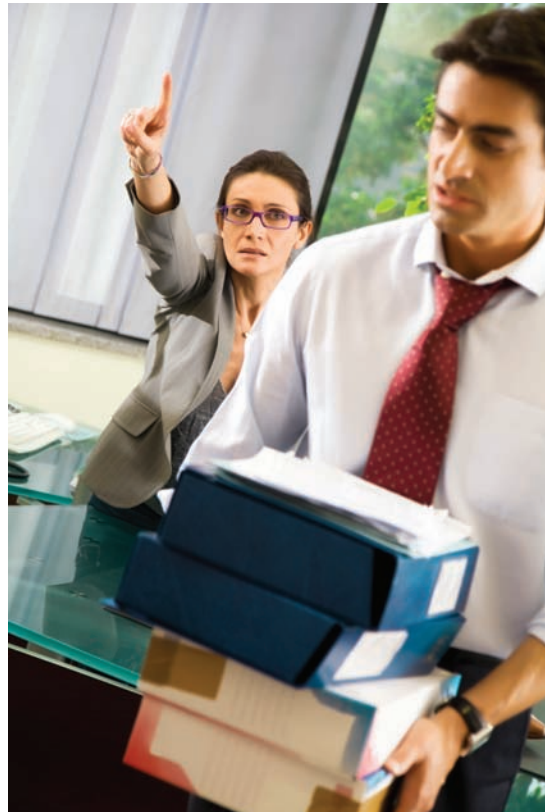
These are the conflict styles that researchers have identified. You observed and identified them in our scenario. People usually prefer a style, but they often use a combination of styles. Choosing to react to a conflict in a collaborative manner offers a chance for consensus or decision that meets a common goal.

Let's talk more about the styles and the behaviors that we saw.

- Ask probing questions about the interaction of the characters. Try to elicit examples from the group.
- Have you seen these actions in groups to which you belong? Can you talk more about that?
- Did any of you see yourself in these characters?
- Let's ask our players. How did you feel playing your character?
- Can you think of some situations where you could have behaved in a way that was more constructive in the conflict?

## Summary

A conflict style is how we prefer to deal with or react in a conflict. There is not a right or wrong way to be in a conflict. Being aware of the different styles can help us to avoid getting caught up in our usual way of reacting. Being aware of the styles can also help us to make more effective choices about how we want to "act" rather than "react" in a conflict.





## Participant role-play scenario—The project

### Scene: The group is meeting to plan a project.

**Chris:** “Let’s get going with this project. It’s a lot of work! The last time I did most of it, and I sure don’t look forward to doing that again!”

**Bailey:** “What do you mean?”

**Chris:** (Louder voice) “I did most of the work. That’s what I mean! You people sit on your hands talking, but that doesn’t get the job done!”

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and defensively) “I thought we pitched into the project the last time.”

**Kelly:** “Do we have to talk about this now? I think I forgot my notebook in the car.” (Get up to leave, but return shortly)

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and kindly) “Would it be ok if we just talk about the project?” (Shrug shoulders) “Nobody wants to talk about the past.”

**Chris:** “No, I want somebody else to take charge of this! How about you, Riley? I think you could do it!”

**Riley:** (Speak softly and kindly) “Oh, Chris... I think it’ll all work out fine if we just start planning...”

**Chris:** “How about you, Bailey?”

**Bailey:** “I’m working on three other things right now. I don’t see how I could do it.”

**Chris:** “You could do it! It’s about time you took a turn!”

**Bailey:** “How about if... I would be a co-chair with you? That way we’d each be doing half.”

**Chris:** “No! I want somebody to take it over. How about you, Kelly?”

**Kelly:** (Make a reluctant face. Get up and start walking away.) “Does anybody want a soda? I’m thirsty.”

**Chris:** “Kelly, come back here!”

**Kelly:** (Return to the group) “Do you want a soda?” (Pause, then leave) “I’m getting a soda.”

**Chris:** “Riley, how about you?”

**Riley:** (Start to cave in) “I have two other events that I’m working on. I really don’t think I could do it.”

**Chris:** “Come on... What’s one more thing? Just watch a little less TV.”

**Riley:** “Well, I suppose I could...” (Look worried and stressed) “I really don’t want to...”

**Bailey:** (Look at Chris) “It seems like you feel like you have always carried the load for the project, and nobody else pulled their weight.”

**Chris:** “That’s exactly right!”

**Bailey:** “We all want the project to be a success. Would it help if we looked at all the things that needed to get done last time, but didn’t?”

**Chris:** “The last project was one big mess!”

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and kindly) “Calm down a little.” (Speak kindly and reluctantly) “Chris, you did work hard on it. I suppose I could take it over to help out.”

**Bailey:** “Maybe we could just look at the project from the last time. We could talk about what happened each step of the way and then go from there.”





## Facilitator role-play scenario—The project

### Scene: The group is meeting to plan a project.

**Chris:** “Let’s get going with this project. It’s a lot of work! The last time I did most of it, and I sure don’t look forward to doing that again!” (Competing)

**Bailey:** “What do you mean?”

**Chris:** (Louder voice) “I did most of the work. That’s what I mean! You people sit on your hands talking, but that doesn’t get the job done!” (Competing)

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and defensively) “I thought we pitched into the project the last time.” (Accommodating)

**Kelly:** “Do we have to talk about this now? I think I forgot my notebook in the car.” (Get up to leave, but return shortly) (Avoiding)

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and kindly) “Would it be ok if we just talk about the project?” (Shrug shoulders) “Nobody wants to talk about the past.” (Accommodating)

**Chris:** “No, I want somebody else to take charge of this! How about you, Riley? I think you could do it!” (Competing)

**Riley:** (Speak softly and kindly) “Oh, Chris... I think it’ll all work out fine if we just start planning...” (Accommodating)

**Chris:** “How about you, Bailey?” (Competing)

**Bailey:** “I’m working on three other things right now. I don’t see how I could do it.”

**Chris:** “You could do it! It’s about time you took a turn!” (Competing)

**Bailey:** “How about if... I would be a co-chair with you? That way we’d each be doing half.” (Compromising)

**Chris:** “No! I want somebody to take it over. How about you, Kelly?” (Competing)

**Kelly:** (Make a reluctant face. Get up and start walking away) “Does anybody want a soda? I’m thirsty.” (Avoiding)

**Chris:** “Kelly, come back here!” (Competing)

**Kelly:** (Return to the group) “Do you want a soda?” (Pause, then leave) “I’m getting a soda.” (Avoiding)

**Chris:** “Riley, how about you?” (Competing)

**Riley:** (Start to cave in) “I have two other events that I’m working on. I really don’t think I could do it.” (Accommodating)

**Chris:** “Come on... What’s one more thing? Just watch a little less TV.” (Competing)

**Riley:** “Well, I suppose I could...” (Look worried and stressed) “I really don’t want to...” (Accommodating)

**Bailey:** (Look at Chris) “It seems like you feel like you have always carried the load for the project, and nobody else pulled their weight.” (Collaborating)

**Chris:** “That’s exactly right!” (Competing)

**Bailey:** “We all want the project to be a success. Would it help if we looked at all the things that needed to get done last time, but didn’t?” (Collaborating)

**Chris:** “The last project was one big mess!” (Competing)

**Riley:** (Speak quietly and kindly) “Calm down a little.” (Speak kindly and reluctantly) “Chris, you did work hard on it. I suppose I could take it over to help out.” (Accommodating)

**Bailey:** “Maybe we could just look at the project from the last time. We could talk about what happened each step of the way and then go from there.” (Collaborating)



### Descriptions of conflict styles

**Competing**—Assertive and uncooperative. Trying to satisfy your own concerns. Dictating a decision. Arguing. Bargaining. Making every effort to “win”.

**Avoiding**—Unassertive and uncooperative. Avoiding people and issues that are troublesome. Postponing until later. Wishing the problem away.

**Compromising**—In the middle between assertive and unassertive and cooperative and uncooperative. Measuring gain. Keeping track. Exchanging concessions. Taking turns.

**Accommodating**—Unassertive and cooperative. Appeasing. Deferring to others. Doing favors. Sacrificing your own needs for others.

**Collaborating**—Assertive and cooperative. Aiming for a win-win solution. Reaching for new insights to gain a deeper understanding.

# Understanding **CONFLICT**

## A model for improvement —Assumptions and beliefs

### Objective

- Understand and apply the concept that assumptions about success can have an impact on the results in a conflict situation.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

15-20 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Flip chart
- Markers (for recording scores)

### Source

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Rob Ricigliano and Nancy Burrell,

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*University of Wisconsin-Extension is an EEO/Affirmative Action employer and provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.*

### Background

**T**he resolution of conflict doesn't have to be that one person "wins" while the other "loses."

For many of us, our assumption in conflict is that someone wins and someone loses. Most of us have had that assumption reinforced often enough in our lives that it has become part of how we think. So when we are put in a situation that implies conflict, we approach it in the only way that we know—with the assumption that one party will win while the other will lose.

But what if we want different results in conflict? Perhaps we'd like to have a situation of mutual gain, where everybody "wins"? If we change our assumptions (someone wins, someone loses), we can then change our thoughts. Changing the way we think leads to changes in the way we act, and yes, we can get a different result!

### What to do

**B**egin the session with the Arm Activity. Give no explanation about why you are doing the activity, except to say that it is an icebreaker to get the group thinking about conflict.

### The arm exercise (directions)

1. First rule in this activity is **no talking**.
2. Next you need to find a partner.
3. Each of you will assume the position that I am now demonstrating...right arms up, elbows on table, grasp hands...
4. The object of this game is to **get as many points for yourself** as you can. You get a point each time your partner's hand touches the table. You have 15 seconds. GO!

**Facilitator:** Monitor the room. Observe those pairs that are struggling with each other (e.g.

muscles clenched and trying to win). Note any groups that are cooperating by letting their arms be put down to the table. Re-group after 15 seconds or so, and process.





## Processing

Your goal in processing is to identify the assumptions that participants made about the exercise.

- Have participants share their scores. You might want to start by asking if anyone had a 0-0 tie.
- Talk to a team that struggled (0-0 or 0-1). Ask them, "What was this like for you?" or "What did you do first?"
- Pick a team that cooperated (high score-high score). Ask them the same questions.
- Ask if any pair had someone who accommodated while the other did not.
- Summarize the activity, focusing on the assumptions made by individuals. For example, one group may have seen the activity as a competition or a struggle, while another may have seen it as an opportunity to cooperate.

**Facilitator note:** Cooperation in this activity can lead to both parties getting a high score (example: 20-20). If this happens you may want to focus on the non-verbal clues that were given to change the game from one of struggle to one of cooperation.

## Main teaching point

(delivered AFTER processing the exercises):

A simple model which explains the results we got in the activity (and also in the real world):

**Assumptions or beliefs** ➡ **How we think** ➡ **How we act** ➡ **Results**

Discuss the model in terms of the arm exercise:

<b>Competition</b>	➡	<b>Strike first</b>	➡	<b>struggle</b>	➡	<b>Score: 0-0</b>
<b>Accommodate</b>	➡	<b>Let others win</b>	➡	<b>give in</b>	➡	<b>Score: 0-8</b>
<b>Cooperate</b>	➡	<b>Cooperate</b>	➡	<b>give in first</b>	➡	<b>Score: 9-9</b>

Our assumptions influence how we think, then act, and the results that we get. If you want a different result, *try changing your assumption.*

## Applying the assumptions model

- Ask someone who struggled during the Arm Activity, what s/he might have done differently in the activity if his/her assumption had been that the pair would cooperate to get a good result for both parties.
- Extend the model to negotiation and conflict resolution and point out that if we want a different result in negotiation or conflict, we may want to change our assumptions before we approach the situation.
- Ask participants to share an everyday conflict situation. How might you approach that conflict if your belief or assumption was that someone needed to "win"? How might you approach that conflict if your assumption was that both parties could "win"?

## Summary

We can achieve a different result in conflict if we change our assumption that if someone wins, someone else must lose.

## Understanding **CONFLICT**

# The ladder of inference

### Objective

- Recognize how perceptions are explained and defended in conflict.
- Use the “ladder of inference” to explore data and reasoning used in reaching a conclusion.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

30 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

### Do ahead

Prepare shoe store visual

### Source

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Rob Ricigliano and Nancy Burrell, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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### Background

**C**onflict is very difficult for most people even though it is something that we all experience on a fairly regular basis. For many, part of the difficulty lies in experiencing the unpleasantness that may accompany conflict. The unpleasantness often comes into play when parties approach a problem or situation with different conclusions, and then argue over those conclusions.

In this lesson, we look at ways in which we can inquire to sincerely understand another’s conclusions, as well as ways in which we can share our own information.

### What to do

#### Shoe store problem

Introduce the shoe store problem (see attached support materials) by asking the group to work individually, with no talking. Tell them that when they have the problem solved, you’d like them to write their answer on a piece of paper. When everyone at their table has finished, they are to come to consensus as to the answer.

As facilitator, monitor the tables to get an idea of the direction your processing may take. Listen for how people are defending their positions, sharing data, or asking good questions.

Ask the groups to share their answers. If possible, wait until you are done processing to share generally accepted answer (see attached). You may want to write the answer on a flip chart. Review the activity by focusing on how people shared and defended their perceptions.

Ask processing questions that lead participants to understand when they are defending their answers (conclusions) rather than sharing data.

Ask a table that got the wrong answer:

- How did you deal with differing perceptions in your group?
- How did you reach consensus? (You may hear that they voted, or that someone finally gave in.)

If one table answers \$40 (the “correct” answer), ask them:

- Could you describe the process you used to come up with your shared answer?
- How was consensus reached in your group?

Make the point that some groups or individuals may have been arguing at the level of conclusion, while some groups shared their data and then their reasoning.

## Ladder of inference

1. Introduce the ladder of inference (see attached), and explain the different levels on the ladder, emphasizing how different the reasoning and conclusions can be when we select different data.

### Main teaching points

- We select different data.
- We interpret data differently.
- We come to different conclusions.
- Conclusions may differ not because one person is right and the other wrong, but because we select different data and interpret it differently, thereby giving different perspectives in the same situation.
- For mutual understanding in conflict, all parties need to share their data and reasoning.

2. **Guided practice:** It's hard to strip away all inferences and conclusions and get to data. Using the Ladder of Inference as a model, ask the group to describe an object in the room (table, pen, etc.) using DATA. If you are given an answer that doesn't seem to be data, ask the group where they think that falls on the ladder (i.e. "It's a pen" is at the level of conclusion.).

*Optional:* Provide common household objects and have participants work in groups to describe the objects as data.

### 3. Applying the ladder to conflict

**situation:** When you are in a situation where you are in conflict with another party, use the ladder of inference to get at the other party's reasoning and data, instead of their conclusions. Don't forget to use the ladder to share your own data and reasoning, also!

**Teaching point:** To get below the level of conclusion—push down the ladder of inference with good questions. For example, "Can you tell me what led you to think that?" or "What did you see that made you think that?"

To share your own thoughts, start at the bottom and work your way up the ladder. (i.e. "Let me tell you what I saw.")

### 4. Group activity "We select different data..."

Inform the group that you have a riddle for them that will help them think about data. Here it is:

*You are driving an empty bus, going away from town toward the east for 12 miles. You turn to the right (south) and go for 6 more miles where you stop to pick up 7 passengers. Now you turn west and go for 3 miles where you pick up 4 passengers. Two passengers get off at this stop. You continue on for 9 miles where you turn to the north for 4 miles, let off 1 passenger, pick up two. You continue straight ahead for 2 more miles where you reach your destination.*

Raise your hand if...

- you can tell me how many people are left on the bus?
- you know how many total miles the bus traveled?
- you can describe the bus route to me?
- you can draw me a map of where the bus went or where will it end up?

Now for the real question—Raise your hand if you know the age of the bus driver. How many of you listened for something else?

**Teaching point:** We select different data based on many different things, including our interests, what we understand, and what we are looking for.

### Enhance

- Set up a ladder with a data pool beneath. In the data pool, place lots of cards on which are printed bits of data.
- Provide ample opportunity for less experienced groups to practice asking questions that draw out reasoning and data from conclusions.

## Summary

**W**e often see and hear things differently than others—and how we see and hear things may lead us to different conclusions. The Ladder Of Inference provides a model for inquiry into the data, reasoning, and conclusions of others, while providing a means for us to share our own data, reasoning, and conclusions with others.





## The shoe store problem

A customer walks into a shoe shop early one morning. The customer finds a pair of shoes. The price of the shoes is \$60 and the customer gives the clerk a \$100 bill. The clerk does not have change for the \$100 bill, so he goes next door to the restaurant and asks for change. The restaurant gives the clerk 10 \$10 bills in exchange for the \$100 bill. The clerk returns to the shoe shop, gives the customer the shoes and \$40 change. Later in the day, the owner of the restaurant comes to the shoe shop and tells the clerk that the \$100 is counterfeit and demands \$100 back. The clerk gives the owner of the restaurant \$100. Not counting the price of the shoes (\$60), how much cash has the shoe shop lost?

### The shoe store solution

Customer	Shoe store	Restaurant
\$100	\$100	\$100 (gives change back to shoe store)
	\$40 to customer, keeps \$60	
\$40	Gives the restaurant his original \$60 (from the \$100 in change) PLUS \$40 from till	
	Total cash lost = \$40	



## How perceptions work



# Understanding **CONFLICT**

## How perceptions affect a conflict situation

### Objective

- Understand how people can view things differently and how the differences impact their interactions.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

25-30 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Copies of the 2 pictures (see attached support materials)
- Flip chart and markers
- Copies of logos from FedEx and Goodwill (found on public websites)

### Source

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Rob Ricigliano and Nancy Burrell, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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### Background

**B**ased on our life experiences, we all have a different outlook on life. And those differences contribute to variations in our perceptions of situations. Perception is the personal version of reality that we each experience. While a group of people may be looking at the same, simple object, every person looking at it has his/her own perception or reality of what the object is.

In this lesson, we will look at what perception is and how it can affect a conflict situation.

### What to do

Break the group of participants into small groups (3-6 participants per group is a good size).

#### Activity 1: Old woman or young woman?

1. Show the participants the picture of the old woman/young woman (Activity 1 at the end of the lesson plan).
2. In their small groups, ask them to discuss what they see. Don't immediately offer up the options; the discussion will be more beneficial if the groups discuss it first. Ask the groups to come to a consensus about what they see.
3. Survey the groups to see if they have come to consensus on the picture or if they still have group members who are unable to see both figures.

#### 4. Processing:

- Were there individuals who were able to see both figures?
- Were they helpful in guiding others to see the two figures?
- What were some of the feelings toward those who didn't see both figures and couldn't see it even after further instruction?
- How did people's different perspectives on the picture lead to conflict within the group?

#### Activity 2: Looking at the logos

1. Show participants pictures of the logos for FedEx and Goodwill.
2. Ask them to look carefully at the logo and describe what they see. Give them a couple of minutes to think about the logos.
3. Once the individuals have started deciding what they see, ask the group for volunteers to share what they see. When looking at the Goodwill logo, people will look at it and see either half of a smiling face or a lower-case G. When looking at the FedEx logo, ask participants if they notice anything standing out. (This one is a bit more difficult at first. There is an arrow between the E and the X in the logo.)
4. Processing:
  - Use the processing questions from Activity 1.

## Activity 3: What's happening in this picture?

1. Show participants a large picture of three women in a kitchen (Activity 3 at the end of lesson).
  2. Ask them to write down what they think is happening in the picture. Allow them 5-10 minutes to formulate a story of what is going on in the picture.
  3. Have volunteers share their story of the picture.
  4. On a flip chart, take notes of the major themes identified by group participants.
  5. Processing:
    - Were you surprised at the differences or similarities in others' perspectives and stories?
    - How did your background/previous life experiences shape your perception of what was happening in the picture?
    - Did listening to others' perspectives help you see a different point of view?
3. Once they all seem like they have an initial count, survey the group to see what the most common answer is. Don't give out the correct answer at this time; wait until everyone has given their idea.
  4. Circle all the F's that are written in the sentence.
  5. Processing:
    - What were some reasons that you didn't get the same number of F's? Were there things that confused you or made you interpret things differently?
    - What does this activity prove about data interpretation, even in a situation where the data is simple to interpret?
    - The point of the exercise is that if it is difficult to be certain about the number of F's in this sentence, when the data is clear, easily understood, and something we can all do (e.g. read, count to 11), how hard is it to be certain about much more complex things like human relationships, big projects, or even what happened in a meeting, etc.? Being completely certain is an impossibility, yet we are trained to do so, and this sense of certainty keeps us from asking good questions, understanding their ladder of inference, or listening well.

## Activity 4: How many F's?


1. On a large flip chart or an overhead projector, write the following sentence: "Two of the most powerful and effective of all human fears are the fear of failure and the fear of success."
2. Give the participants a few seconds to count the number of F's that they see in the sentence.

## Processing

In the large group, the facilitator could use the following questions, if desired, to help generalize the activities:

- How can seeing something in a different light be useful?
- How might looking at the way others view a situation increase our own skills in dealing with others or resolving conflict?

## Summary

 ur perceptions come from our own personal experiences and background in life.

Those perceptions can cause conflict in a group, because we use our perceptions to formulate a conclusion.

When presented with the logos or old woman/young woman activities, many people are only able to see one of the two pictures, and some aren't able to see any at first. In order to see the opposing picture, they must acknowledge their own perception first and then gather opposing views of the picture.

Our brains are only able to see one picture at a time. The same goes for our perceptions of a conflict situation. We tend to only see our perspective at first. But until we suspend our conclusions and perceptions, and listen to others' perspectives (listening for understanding, not just listening in order to dispute their idea), we are not able to truly understand others' views and move toward a mutual understanding.

## Activity 1



## Activity 3



# Understanding CONFLICT

## Objective

- Identify the Third Story in conflict.
- Utilize the Third Story as a basis for discussion with another party in conflict.

## Audience

High school and above

## Time

20-30 minutes

## Do ahead

Prepare envelopes and cards

## Source

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. 2000. *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most*. New York: Penguin Books.

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*University of Wisconsin-Extension is an EEO/Affirmative Action employer and provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.*

# Telling the third story

## Background

**Y**ou know your side of the conflict. You may even know the other side of the conflict—or at least parts of it. But how would an impartial observer describe the conflict? Some refer to the story an observer would tell as the “third story.” (See Douglas Stone et al. in Sources.)

The third story is extremely useful in resolving an interpersonal conflict because it can create equal ground for the parties in conflict to discuss the situation. In this lesson, we will use the third story to approach the other party in conflict and move toward resolution of the situation.

## What to do

### Identifying the stories in conflict

#### The sides in conflict

Have two volunteers perform the attached Conflict Script. As a group, discuss the following:

- The scenario’s conflict
- How might Serafina tell her story about the conflict?
- How might the mother tell her story?

#### Finding the third story

There’s another story. That story is the one that an impartial observer might tell. It is known as the third story and it would be told without assigning blame—just relating the story.

What is the third story in the conflict script? How would an impartial observer tell the story?

#### Using the third story

Once you have identified your side of the story and the third story, it’s time to think about approaching the other party in conflict.

This is a time to use all your communication skills. One way to do this is to use the third story to describe the problem as a difference between yourself and the other party.

#### For example:

*I want to talk to you about the meeting yesterday, and the discussion about decision-making in the club. My guess is that you and I are seeing this situation differently. I wonder if we could talk about that? I’d like to share more about how I see the situation, and I’d like to hear what you are seeing.*



## Guided practice in finding the third story

Have the group divide into threes. Give each group three copies of one of the conflict scenarios and have them choose roles (see Facilitator notes, Triad scenarios).

The small group will spend 10 minutes discussing their individual conflict scenarios, in preparation for telling their stories to the large group.

## Processing questions

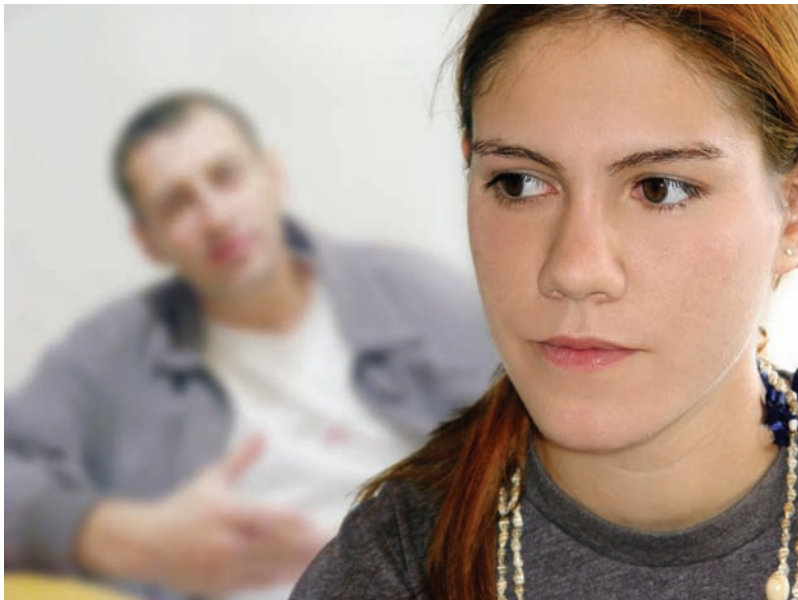
- How difficult is it for you to hear or identify the third story?
- What might get in the way of finding the third story when you are in conflict?
- What might you do to lessen or eliminate those distractions?
- What are the advantages of approaching someone with the third story, instead of your own “side” of the story?
- How would you go about choosing the right time to share the third story?
- What factors might influence successful sharing of the third story?

## Enhance/simplify

- Find an appropriate video clip to use in place of the Conflict Script.

## Summary

Using the third story—the one an impartial observer would tell—to describe a situation can open the door to communication in conflict.





## Conflict Script—facilitator copy

### Facilitator notes

#### Discuss the conflict that occurred in the scenario.

The conflict is over who is in charge of the 4-H meeting.

#### How might Serafina tell her story about the conflict?

Serafina would likely say that she and the other 4-H members are capable of making decisions and planning what the club does, but they don't get a chance to do so because the grown-ups are always interfering.

#### How might Serafina's mother tell the story?

Serafina's mother would probably say that while she and the other parents would like to just let the kids make decisions, they have seen too many instances where they just weren't capable of doing so, and as a result, things didn't happen as they should have.

#### What is the third story?

Serafina and her mother have different views of what youth are capable of doing in a 4-H club. In addition, they likely have different views of success and failure.

### Conflict script

**Serafina:** I hope you don't take this wrong, Mom, but we kids have decided that we don't want you or any of the other parents in the room during our 4-H business meeting.

**Mother:** Don't want us in the room? Why on earth not?

**Serafina:** Well, we're tired of you telling us what to do all the time.

**Mother:** We don't tell you what to do all the time. We only jump in when you need us to, like when you are going to make mistakes but that's what we're supposed to do: prevent you from making mistakes.

**Serafina:** We wouldn't make mistakes. You don't give us credit for being able to do anything.

**Mother:** I hate to bring up the last fundraiser. We let you do what you wanted to do and look what happened.

**Serafina:** Okay, okay. Well, what's so bad about making mistakes? Didn't you ever make mistakes when you were young? We learned a lot about how not to do a fundraiser last month, and we're ready to try again—without constantly being reminded about things that went wrong in the past.

**Mother:** We just want to be there to make sure you don't fail.

**Serafina:** And we just want the chance to make decisions on our own.



## Conflict Script

### Participant copy

Serafina: I hope you don't take this wrong, Mom, but we kids have decided that we don't want you or any of the other parents in the room during our 4-H business meeting.

Mother: Don't want us in the room? Why on earth not?

Serafina Well, we're tired of you telling us what to do all the time.

Mother: We don't tell you what to do all the time. We only jump in when you need us to, like when you are going to make mistakes but that's what we're supposed to do: prevent you from making mistakes.

Serafina We wouldn't make mistakes. You don't give us credit for being able to do anything.

Mother: I hate to bring up the last fundraiser. We let you do what you wanted to do and look what happened.

Serafina Okay, okay. Well, what's so bad about making mistakes? Didn't you ever make mistakes when you were young? We learned a lot about how not to do a fundraiser last month, and we're ready to try again—without constantly being reminded about things that went wrong in the past.

Mother: We just want to be there to make sure you don't fail.

Serafina And we just want the chance to make decisions on our own.



## Conflict scenarios

### Facilitator notes

Each group will need three copies of one of the scenarios. Two members of the group will role-play the characters in the scenario; the third will observe and listen for the third story. Participants will then share their stories with the large group.

#### Scenario 1

**A**s an adult who is committed to a healthy life style, Madeline was appalled when her daughter started high school. The easy availability of soda and other sugary snacks was surely contributing to poor nutrition among her daughter and many other high school students. Madeline decides to discuss this with the high school principal, and demand that the soda machines be removed from the school.

High school principal, Mr. Turner, is deep in thought when Madeline arrives for her appointment. He has been up all night working with the superintendent of schools on the budget. They will likely be over budget this year, even with eliminating two teaching positions. The only reason that the school district didn't go in the red last year was the soda machines. The amount of money that those machines produced for the school was amazing.

#### Scenario 2

**A**ll the years that Jerry worked in the city, he dreamed of someday owning a place in the country where he could enjoy his retirement. Jerry was an avid gardener and enjoyed growing organic vegetables for himself, his friends, and his family.

Jerry was very concerned about fertilizers and pesticide use, and used only natural products on his extensive gardens. He was looking forward to harvesting his first crop of early sweet peas. He got up bright and early (not a usual occurrence for Jerry) and made his way out to the gardens. It was a windy day, and Jerry caught drift of an unpleasant odor. He squinted to the east to see where it was coming from. Sure enough, Old Man Abramson was spraying his cornfield, and it was drifting onto Jerry's garden!

Jerry set out immediately to have it out with Abramson.

#### Scenario 3

**M**artha's lawn is her pride and joy. She tends it lovingly—watering it several hours each day. Martha is a charter member of the local Lawn and Garden Club and has been the recipient of the Lawn of the Year Award three years in a row. Martha is a good, although distant, neighbor to others in the sub-division. It is clear to those around her that her yard is far more important to her than her neighbors.

Martha's neighbor, Mr. Smith, is involved in a local group also. He is president of the Save Our Earth Club. He and others have noticed in the last few years that water pressure in their neighborhood has been fluctuating. Each house in the sub-division has its own shallow well, and the water table seems to have been stressed during the last few droughts. Mr. Smith's neighbor to the north had to drill a new well last month, and Mr. Smith fears he is next.

Mr. Smith decides to talk to Martha about what he sees as excessive watering of her lawn.



# Understanding **CONFLICT**

## Position versus interests

### Objective

- Understand the important role that “position” and “interest” play in negotiation.
- Analyze how negotiation progresses and/or changes when interests are identified.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

20 minutes

### Supplies needed

One lemon for each pair of participants (plus a few extras)

### Do ahead

Prepare envelopes with position cards

### Source

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Rob Ricigliano and Nancy Burrell, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

### Recommended reading

Fisher, Roger, and W. Ury. 1991. *Getting to yes*. New York: Penguin Books.

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### Background

**U**nderstanding the differences between positions and interests can lead to a successful resolution in conflict. Let's look at the definitions:

**Position:** A stand a party takes that he or she feels will satisfy his/her interests.

**Interests:** The needs, concerns, goals, hopes, and fears that motivate parties to negotiate.

In conflict, we often protect our interests and don't let the “other side” know what we want. As a result, we end up arguing positions rather than sharing the interests behind our positions.

But what would happen in conflict if we were able to mutually share our interests? It is likely that the more information that is shared, the higher the quality of the agreement for both parties.

### What to do

#### Trial 1

- Instruct each person to find a partner.
- Give each pair one lemon, and give each individual of the pair a sealed envelope that contains a card. On each card is written:

#### My position:

#### I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.

- Instruct the teams that they are to negotiate over the lemon, based on the information contained in their individual envelopes.
- After a couple of minutes, bring the group back together and compare the results. What types of deals were made? What were your positions?
- Share with the group that this is a simplified, but quite typical situation in conflict: We argue positions but rarely deal with the underlying interests.
- Relate the example of the man who tells his potential landlord that he needs a fourth-floor apartment. His position is that he wants an apartment on the fourth floor, but what are his interests? If you were the landlord, trying hard to rent that apartment, it would be to your advantage to figure out why the man wants a fourth-floor apartment. Why might he? (e.g. safety, can't reach the fifth-floor button, wants to spy on someone on the third floor, afraid of heights) These would be his possible interests. His position is that he wants a fourth-floor apartment. How might knowing his interests affect your efforts to rent him an apartment?

## Stalemate?

**If the other party is unwilling to share, use good inquiry methods to get at interests.**

### Trial 2

- Now try the Lemon Negotiation again with different cards.
- Each pair should still have their lemon. If they don't, give them a new one. Give the pair new envelopes with cards. One individual will have a card that states:

**My position:  
I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests:  
I NEED THE LEMON RIND TO  
MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**  
The other individual has a card that states:

**My position:  
I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests:  
I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

Instruct the pairs to negotiate over the lemon. Give them a little longer for this round. When you notice that most groups have worked through the exercise, discuss the negotiation process as a large group.

- Was anyone in a partnership where both parties openly shared their interests up front? What did that do to your negotiation?
- For those of you who didn't share your interests right away, did you eventually do so? How did that happen?

- What made you feel as if you could share your interests?
  - In conflict, how might it help you to identify potential interests that the other party has prior to your negotiation?
- How might you be able to help the other party feel comfortable in sharing his/her interests?

## Extending the activity

- Run a third trial with a new variable: relationship. Explore how the relationship with the other party might affect negotiations and explore ways to improve the relationship.
- Work with the group to develop a list of good inquiry questions. Examples include:
  - Can you tell me more about that?
  - Can you share your thinking with me?
  - Help me understand what you see.

## Summary

Moving from guarding positions to sharing interests can lead to a higher quality agreement for both parties in conflict.





# Position versus interests—Trial 1

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

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**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**



## Individual 1

# Position versus interests: Trial 2

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE LEMON RIND  
TO MAKE LEMON POUND CAKE.**



## Individual 2

# Position versus interests: Trial 2

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**

**My position: I MUST HAVE THE LEMON.**

**My interests: I NEED THE PULP OF THE LEMON  
TO MAKE LEMONADE.**



## Understanding **CONFLICT**

# A framework for negotiation

### Objective

- Develop an understanding of a seven-element framework for negotiation.
- Increase knowledge of one element to affect approach to negotiation.

### Audience

High school and above

### Time

45-70 minutes

### Supplies needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

### Do ahead

- Prepare handout on seven-element framework and the Coyotes' Dilemma
- Review definitions of elements

### Recommended reading

Fisher, Roger and W. Ury. 1991. *Getting to Yes*. New York: Penguin Books.

### Source

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Rob Ricigliano and Nancy Burrell, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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## Background

A framework lends a foundation to a way of thinking about how we approach negotiation and conflict. A framework can provide a structure which allows us to move beyond reaction to a thoughtful response. The seven-element framework presented here was developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project at Harvard Law School. This lesson plan introduces the framework.

## What to do

Introduce the lesson material below, and then allow participants to explore the elements with an activity.

## Lesson material

### Introduction

We negotiate all the time, whether or not we are aware of it. Some negotiations may go unnoticed, such as the negotiation over where a couple goes out to eat supper or which movie to see at the theater.

When a person is emotionally, physically, or financially invested in the outcome of a negotiation, that person is likely to be more aware of the potential for conflict.

Ask the group for examples of situations where they knew they were negotiating.

### Some examples

- Can I buy this property for less?
- Why won't coach let me play forward?
- Should I take a new job and move my family?

Conflict Management, sometimes referred to as conflict resolution, is a strategy to consciously engage people to address the tensions that arise between parties. These tensions are created when people perceive that their interests are being ignored, discounted or are incompatible with what another is doing or promoting during a negotiation.

## Building a negotiation model

Many factors are at play in any negotiation, and we are going to explore some of them with a trip to Friendly Fred's used car lot, which you are visiting with the hope of buying a good used car.

What is going to affect your success in negotiating with Fred?

(Facilitator: Write all responses on a flip chart, pre-sorting them into the elements without identifying them as such.)

# Understanding CONFLICT

If all of the elements aren't supplied by the participants, ask targeted questions to get at the missing element. For instance,

if **relationship** hasn't been mentioned, ask: "How might the negotiation be affected if Fred is your sister's husband, or if Fred is an annoying, loud guy who does commercials?"

- **Communication**—How does it affect the negotiation if Fred finds words you commonly use offensive?
- **Options**—How does the negotiation go if you have your heart set on one particular car? What if Fred will consider only one way to finance your purchase?
- **Interests**—Why do you want a car? Why does Fred sell cars?
- **Criteria**—How do you judge whether or not to make a purchase?
- **Commitments**—How will you know that Fred will deliver? Does Fred know if you can come up with the money?
- **Alternatives**—Do you have anywhere else you can buy a car? Does Fred have other people interested in the same car?

## Teaching points

A seven-element Framework for Negotiation was developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project at Harvard Law School. The framework came out of the team working on a wide range of negotiations and conflicts and interviewing many experienced negotiators. The idea was to develop a relatively simple model to help organize the complexity of negotiation into a manageable number of critical factors.

(Hand out the page showing the framework.)

The diagram is very purposefully set up. **Relationship** and **communication** are the first elements because they are the first to play a part in a negotiation. People are always in a relationship, even if that relationship is that they have no relationship. People instantly communicate with each other, even if it is all non-verbal.

Based on the relationship and communication, people then start to problem-solve and engage the substance of the negotiation, the elements within the circle: interests, options, and criteria of fairness.

**Interests** are the needs, hopes, fears, and concerns that underlie the requests or demands that people put on the table. Interests motivate people to take a particular position; they are betting that the position they have taken will fulfill their interests.

**Options** are possible ways to satisfy interests through agreement with the other parties. The position each party takes may be only one of the options. Inventive brainstorming can help uncover options that satisfy people's interests.

**Criteria** are the means we use to ensure we are treated fairly and that we treat others fairly. Criteria measure if the agreement is wise and sensible; each party may have different ideas about how that gets measured.

Depending upon how the problem-solving goes, the parties will either reach an agreement (commitment) or, without agreement, pursue an alternative to a negotiated agreement, without the other party.

We can learn more about each of these elements with another example of a negotiation.

(Hand out the Coyotes' Dilemma scenario to each participant. Ask the participants to divide up into groups of 3-5 to discuss the scenario and answer the questions at the bottom of the page together. After about 20 minutes, lead a discussion of each element as a large group.)

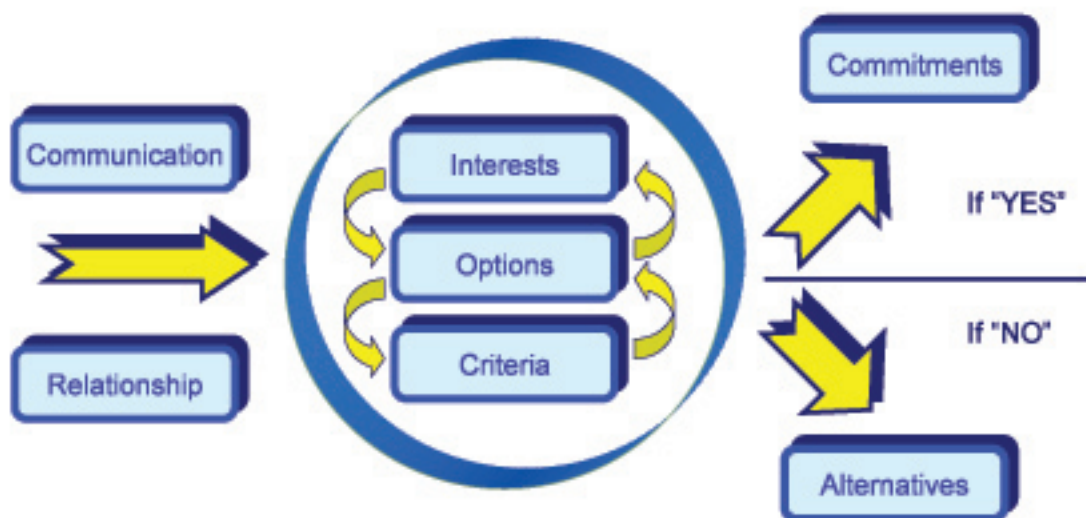
## Summary

Using a framework can help us structure our assumptions about what success means in a negotiation, which affects the way we strategize (how we think) and affects the skills we develop and use (how we act).





## A seven-element framework



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## Coyotes' dilemma

**E**very year for the past 11 years, Dale Coyote has made a point to spend the third weekend of October with his former college roommates, and the group spends months planning each year's special event. They choose an activity and an appropriate destination, working out details of travel times, budgets, and responsibilities. This year's rendezvous is planned to be an entire weekend of dual tournaments of card games and pingpong at a backwoods resort. They got off-season rates for this trip.

Carrie Coyote is Dale's wife. As long as they've been married, Carrie has encouraged Dale to maintain these important friendships. Carrie also encourages many others in their community; this year she is volunteering on two non-profit boards, coaching the U8 Boys' Soccer Team, and mentoring two high school girls.

Three weeks before the scheduled dual tournament, Carrie receives an auspicious envelope in the mail. Carrie opens the decorated packet to discover that she has been nominated for the esteemed Community Conviviality Cup. Only three community members are nominated; the winner will be revealed at the banquet to be held the third weekend of October. The nomination alone is an honor. Carrie informs Dale that she would prefer that he accompany her to the banquet.

**Carrie:** I would really like to share this honor with you, Dale. I'm going to the banquet and you should attend with me, including the reception before the meal. I think we've been doing less and less as a couple.

**Dale:** It took us so long to plan this guys' weekend away with friends! It gets harder every year. And we work hard to keep the expense down. I

really still want to go away with the guys. The guys gave Mick such a hard time when he missed it two years ago.

**Carrie:** I don't care to sit there alone when all the other nominees' spouses are sure to attend.

Discuss the Coyotes' dilemma in terms of the seven-element framework for negotiation.

1. How are Dale and Carrie communicating with each other? How might that affect the progress in this negotiation? How might each want to change their communication?
2. What kind of relationship do you picture for this married couple? How do they want to maintain their relationship? What relationship do they want for the future?
3. Can you consider what Carrie's interests might be around the weekend conflict? What might Dale's interests be?
4. Do they have many options to consider? What can they do to meet the interests of both Carrie and Dale?
5. How would each of them decide whether or not they came up with a fair and livable resolution for this dilemma? What criteria will they use together to judge how reasonable it is?
6. For whom can each one make a commitment? To whom are they responsible for a commitment? How will they know they are committed?
7. Do they have alternatives, apart from coming to an agreement together? What are Dale's alternatives? What are Carrie's alternatives?





## Facilitator's notes

Discuss the Coyotes' dilemma in terms of the seven-element framework for negotiation.

**1. How are Dale and Carrie communicating with each other? How might that affect the progress in this negotiation? How might each want to change their communication?**

More probing questions: How would you imagine that Carrie "informs Dale" of her preference? Did she "put her foot down"? Did she ask him sweetly? What are her choices about how to communicate the event's importance to her? How do you imagine Dale reacted to Carrie's request? Did he blow up? Did he whine? Did he express empathy? How might each of their choices or reactions affect further communication?

**2. What kind of relationship do you picture for this married couple? How do they want to maintain their relationship? What relationship do they want for the future?**

Each person in the discussion group can share how they picture the couple, created completely from their imaginations. Explore some alternatives: What if Dale is selfish within the marriage and Carrie is always giving in? What if Dale is always changing his schedule to suit Carrie's hectic volunteer schedule? Does it matter if Dale is a stay-at-home dad and Carrie the major breadwinner? What if the volunteer work is Carrie's only opportunity to engage with the community? What if they both feel generally well-supported by the other?

**3. Can you consider what Carrie's interests might be around the weekend conflict? Why does Carrie want Dale to attend? What might Dale's interests be? Why is it important for him to get away with his friends?**

- Dale's possible interests: maintaining the relationship with his friends, keeping costs low for the getaway, the hassle of re-scheduling with friends.
- Carrie's possible interests: wanting to feel supported by her spouse and share the honor and her image in the community.

**4. Do they have many options to consider? What are they?**

Possible options:

- Each attending their own function, making a point to celebrate together later.
- Dale attending via videoconference.
- Dale making a video to play at the banquet.
- Re-scheduling Dale's getaway (since it's off-season anyway). Dale leaving the getaway to attend the banquet (depending upon location).

**5. How would each of them decide whether or not they came up with a fair and livable resolution for this dilemma? What criteria will they use together to judge how reasonable it is?**

Our criteria are based on our expectations and experiences. Carrie may decide if she feels supported, depending upon if other nominees are accompanied by spouses/significant others. It may depend upon what her family and friends think, or upon

the kind of support she saw in her parents' marriage. Dale might judge based on Carrie's previous accommodation, on whether or not he is able to re-schedule his getaway, on other opportunities he has to maintain his friendships, and on what reaction his friends have to the news.

**6. For whom can each one make a commitment? To whom are they responsible for a commitment? How will they know they are committed?**

The key negotiation here is between Dale and Carrie, and each makes his/her own commitment to the other individual. In a healthy marriage, one would expect their word would be adequate to "know" that the other is committed. There may be a side negotiation, of Dale with his friends, and Dale is responsible for that commitment to their plans.

**7. Do they have alternatives, apart from coming to an agreement together? What might they be?**

In this case, several of the options may also be an alternative. For instance, they could each attend their own event or Carrie could not attend the banquet. How they arrive at the outcome defines it as either an option (they both agree that this is the solution) or an alternative (they follow through this way without agreeing).

- Possible Dale alternative: go away with the guys with possible repercussions within the relationship.
- Possible Carrie alternative: attend the banquet with other friend(s), not Dale.

Facilitator's notes developed by Mary Kluz, Marathon County UW-Extension







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**Understanding Conflict B3870**

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