

Activity

Activity 1:

Teacher will ask, for discussion purposes:

- *How do you blow off steam, or vent? Make a list of healthy ways to get rid of anger.*
- *Anger seems overwhelming at times, hard to control. Why is it so important to express your anger about a situation? What can happen if you do not? If you ignore or bag your feelings?*
- *What about watching violent TV shows or movies or video games? Many believe that how people handle watching these can heavily influence their problems. Is this true, do you think? Do you think the media has a role in how we deal with our problems?*

Project as described by teacher:

You as students are to develop a campaign that encourages teens and older children to use nonviolent ways to solve their problems. With articles from KidsHealth.org, create a video and/or some posters that raise awareness and understanding of this issue, and teach young people to use nonviolent ways to deal with conflict. Here are the questions to build your video/posters on:

- ✓ **What do teens need to know about anger and how to manage it?**
- ✓ **What are some positive or constructive ways to deal with problems and communicate negative emotions?**
- ✓ **Why is it important to solve problems in a nonviolent manner?**

Create a title for your project that really grabs the attention of your peers. An appropriate amount of time is given during class for work on projects, and students are encouraged to complete the project outside of class. Establish a firm deadline for presenting each of the projects to the class. Additional ideas for a **project**:

- **Personal Inventory:** Think about how you handle your anger and how you communicate your feelings now. What works well for you? How could you deal with your anger and problems in a more constructive way? Make a list of ways to improve yourself in this area. Make this into a small book with illustrations, drawings or magazine clippings showing positive anger management, or good communication skills.
- **Design a billboard:** It advertises non-violent ways to resolve conflicts. People see billboards for only a few seconds, so the pictures and the message has to be powerful: short and good!
- **An Editorial:** Pretend you are a famous pacifist, like Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, or John Lennon. Write an editorial (opinion article) using their perspective, the “I” point-of-view, describing his/her thoughts about how best to handle conflict, and the way that we handle conflict that is not right. To do this, you will need to first read and research some on-line articles about the pacifist that you choose.
- **Art:** Create a collage or a series of drawings or magazine photos which express the design and intent of your theme, nonviolent ways identified, which can reduce conflict.

Objectives

- Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media and other factors on personal behaviors.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal and/or family well-being.
- Learn ways to manage personal anger.
- Identify ways to communicate negative feelings.
- Handle problems in a constructive manner.
- Identify the 3 ways to respond to conflict.
- Identify own personal style of responding to conflict.

Materials

There are 3 activities that could take one full class period each.

The lesson has been developed using ideas and materials found at KidsHealth.org/teen

Useful teacher resource: Perlstein, Ruth & Thrall, Gloria (2001). *Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Secondary Students*.

Prepare student copies of:

SW H – Conflict Style Inventory
SW H – Mixed Messages from Media – 3 questions

Vocabulary

- Nonviolent resolution
- Pacifist
- Constructive ways
- Negative emotions
- Conflict style
- Aggressive
- Passive
- Assertive
- Fight-or-flight
- Passive-Aggressive
- Venting

Activity 2:

- Getting back to TV and the movies, think again about how some of the actors/actresses resolve conflicts. Think about the negative images, and how these may influence all young people, and maybe even adults. Write a one-page essay with full sentences under each of the questions on the worksheet, “Mixed Messages”, pdf., or found below. (Student Handout under lesson on Conflict Resolution.) Teacher may choose to show examples of poor conflict resolution in several selected titles, and student writer may also give specific film or TV titles and poor examples in the essay activity.
- **How is conflict resolution portrayed on TV and in movies? Give 2 specific examples.**
- **How are characters handling their problems? Give 2 specific examples.**
- **What is the overall message you are getting about how to solve your problems?**

Activity 3:

- Teacher will state: *Close your eyes or put your heads down, and think for 1-2 minutes of your last conflict with someone. Think about how you acted in the situation. Think about the consequences, the results. Were you happy with the outcome? Think about what you could have done differently. Now open your eyes. Keep your conflict in mind as we explore the 3 conflict styles. We want to know more about:*
 - ✓ *What influences how we deal with conflict?*
 - ✓ *What is the most effective conflict style?*

Students can now take a 10-item conflict style inventory to help them identify their dominant conflict style. Teacher may state: *Conflict style means the general way we respond to conflict. Try to be honest with your responses. No names or sharing of the info will be done. Your responses to each question are confidential. This is a 10-question response form, with responses made by choosing 1 of 3 multiple choices.*

As the conflict styles inventories are reviewed and discussed in class, teacher also inserts a conflict style highlight.

TEACHER RESOURCE: There are three general ways of responding to conflict: **fighting**, either physically or verbally; **fleeing** from or ignoring the problem; or **working things out** with those involved. Most people are either confrontational or choose not to address the problem. This is called the “**fight or flight**” issue. The fight response is expressed as verbal and/or physical aggression. The flight response is **passive or passive-aggressive** in nature and includes walking away, avoiding talking about the conflict with those involved, complaining about it to people who are not involved, or just accepting the situation as unchangeable. A third response to conflict is to **work it out**. This means working to resolve the problem with those involved, and is an **assertive** response. Response to conflict can vary depending on the person(s) involved, our emotions at the time, whether we feel optimistic or pessimistic about the situation, and whether we feel we have any power in the situation. Though our responses can vary, most people really stay with *one particular style* of the three described.

It is helpful for teachers to reflect on their own style of conflict resolution. For teachers to be able to describe their experiences with conflict and how they learned to deal with it are among the best methods teachers have for promoting personal growth in the students. Keep the following points in mind as you work with your students:

- **Work to resolve conflicts with students and colleagues, rather than ignoring conflicts, gossiping or arguing**
- **Model effective conflict resolution with students**
- **Share how you have dealt with your own conflicts when appropriate**
- **Help students evaluate the consequences of their responses to conflict**
- **Be honest about your own learning and growth in this area**

Ask students to describe the 3 basic conflict styles that they noticed in the inventory. Ask about the fight response first:

- *What do aggressive and confrontational mean? Give an example.*
- *What is the body language for being aggressive or confrontational? (Students can demonstrate.)*
- *Which tones of voice do people use when being aggressive or confrontational?*
- *Why might people choose an aggressive conflict style?*
- *What choice on the inventory shows a fight response?*

Have students find and read aloud some of the inventory’s aggressive responses w/ voice and tone and appropriate body language too.

Summary

Teacher may ask:

- *What were the main ideas in this lesson?*
- *What did you learn today that you will remember for the next conflict?*
- *What did you learn about yourself from this lesson?*
- *What did you learn about someone else today?*
- *How do you think you will use what you have learned today for the future?*

Notes for Teachers

Use the following helpful websites for teacher resources and/or for student use:

[KidsHealth.org/teen/your_mind](https://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind) (students)

[KidsHealth.org/classroom](https://kidshealth.org/classroom) (teachers)

Reflection

An assignment for students is to remember an incident of great conflict, describe it verbally or in writing and tell what was good and bad about this conflict according to what they have learned today.

Home Connection

Interview a parent, relative or neighbor about a conflict and how it was resolved. Describe the problem and the solution. Report back to the class the following day, verbally or in writing, according to your teacher's instructions.