

RESOURCE

Sample in-service training module on “Managing and Resolving Conflict”

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Our educators participate in this two-hour workshop as part of their in-service capacity building. We find that covering this theme in-service – versus pre-service – is more relevant and effective as by then, educators have experiences that they can reflect on.



About Projet Jeune Leader

PJL is a youth-founded, youth-led, and youth-centered nonprofit organization established in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. Since 2013, Projet Jeune Leader has delivered comprehensive sexuality education to young and very young adolescents (ages 10-16) in Madagascar's public middle schools, partnering closely with schools and school districts. To do this, we recruit dynamic young adults (aged 18-25) for their positive gender attitudes and potential as role models, train them rigorously over two months, and hire them under a full-time, paid contract if they pass an end-of-training assessment. We then integrate each of them into a partner public school where they teach a year-long, time-tabled CSE course to multiple grades using our age-segmented, gender-transformative, 27-module curricula. When they are not teaching, educators provide a package of other essential services (enrichment activities, counseling, medical referrals, and programs for parents and teachers).

About the Guidance Tool: *CSE We Can Count On*

Projet Jeune Leader has developed “CSE We Can Count On,” a publication sharing strategies, actionable guidance, and tools that we use in our work with tens of thousands of students, parents, teachers, and school officials in Madagascar to build and harness community support for in-school comprehensive sexuality education. This document, which accompanies the guidance tool, shares one of the resources that we use regularly.



Read “CSE We Can Count On” and accompanying resources at www.projetjeuneleader.org/resources/community-support.

The uses and success of this resource are undeniably dependent on the context in which CSE is being delivered. Even so, we hope that it serves as a source of inspiration and creativity for others – civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations, and even governments – committed to delivering in-school comprehensive sexuality education in their own contexts.

Training Preparation

Materials required for the training

- A dozen markers
- Flipchart paper
- A4 paper (1 piece for each participant)
- Pen (1 for each participant)

To prepare before the training

For Activity 1

On 3 full-size flipchart papers, write down the following information (each bullet point should fill one flipchart paper).

- Relationship conflict: disagreements that come from differences in personality, communication styles, tastes, conflict styles
- Value conflict: disagreements that come from differences in identity or values
- Task conflict: disagreements about how to use resources (like physical space or objects, money), disagreements about how to divide up tasks and responsibilities, disagreements over facts

For Activity 2

On 4 full-size flipchart papers, write down the following information (each step should fill one flipchart paper)

1. Find the facts: Collect and understand the facts of what happened
2. Find problems: Look at the problem (or problems) from multiple points of view and reframe the problem in a solvable form
3. Find ideas: Generate many ideas and possible solutions
4. Find solutions: Find a solution that everyone accepts

The training

Activity 1: Understanding different types of conflicts

(20 minutes)

Explain to the participants: “The purpose of today’s training is to learn more about conflicts and different ways to manage and resolve them. We will start by brainstorming the types of conflicts you frequently encounter in your work. These could be conflicts you are directly involved in, or conflicts that your students bring up during counseling sessions. As you share ideas, we will categorize these into different types of conflicts.”

Put up the 3 flipchart papers that you wrote in advance:

- Relationship conflict: disagreements that come from differences in personality, communication styles, tastes, conflict styles
- Value conflict: disagreements that come from differences in identity or values
- Task conflict: disagreements about how to use resources (like physical space or objects, money), disagreements about how to divide up tasks and responsibilities, disagreements over facts

Explain to the participants: “Not all conflicts are the same. To find the best approach to managing a conflict, it’s important to understand the **root** (initial cause) of the conflict. Generally, conflicts can be grouped into these three categories. Sometimes, conflicts fit in more than one category”. Ask a volunteer to read out loud the 3 flipchart papers that you put up.

Ask participants to share examples of conflicts that they have encountered recently in their work as an Educator. After each example, ask the person who shared (or others in the group) how they would categorize the conflict (Relationship/Value/Task), knowing that a conflict can fall into more than one category.

Activity 2: Conflict tree

(20 minutes)

Give each participant a piece of A4 paper and a pen.

Explain: “As we just talked about, conflicts have different root causes. It’s important to understand all the causes of the conflict to be able to move on to solutions. There may be

many layers that caused the conflict; sometimes the immediate disagreement isn't the real root of the conflict. It's also important to understand the consequence of the conflict, because that can help you understand why people are upset and why they care a lot about this conflict. Let's visualize this together."

Ask participants to draw a simple tree on a piece of paper that has roots, a trunk, and branches.

Then, ask participants to think about one of the conflicts that was brought up during activity 1 (their own or one of their peers) and to answer these questions:

1. What is the main problem (the main conflict)? Write this main conflict on the trunk of the tree.
2. What may be the root causes of the conflict? Write these causes on the roots of the tree.
3. What are the effects/consequences of the conflict? For instance, what impact may the conflict have on the people directly involved in it, on their immediate friends and family, or on their community? Write these effects on the branches of the tree.

Give participants about five minutes to answer these questions on their tree.

Then, ask 2-3 volunteers to share their answers with the group.

As the facilitator, focus on the root causes (what participants wrote on the roots), and if necessary, push the participants to think more critically about the deep and multiple root causes of a problem. You can note brief summaries or recurring themes that come out of this discussion on the white board or another flipchart paper.

Then, explain to participants:

"This conflict tree activity can be used for many different types of conflicts, even major conflict like war or disputes over land. The tree can also be helpful to make sure that you really understand the conflict: sometimes, by digging down to the root causes you can better understand the problem – or you realize what you thought was the problem actually goes much deeper.

For example, perhaps a student and her mother are fighting a lot because her mother does not let her spend time with her friends after school. That seems like the core conflict. However, as you dig down deeper, that may actually be an effect or consequence of the conflict. The real problem is that the mother is worried her daughter will take part in risky activities with her friend. By addressing this problem, you can fix many of the consequences at the same time.

How could you apply what we just discussed when you do counseling with students in your school?"

Let the Educators share their ideas, then conclude by saying:

"We are going to move on to the next activity, which focuses on **resolving** conflicts. But, keep in mind the image of the tree when we do this next activity. Because remember: a conflict cannot be resolved without understanding the root causes and consequences of the conflict."

Activity 3: Conflict tree

(20 minutes)

Explain to participants: "I am going to share with you four big steps that you can use to resolve a conflict. You can use these steps if *you* are the one directly involved in a conflict, or if you are the one helping other people resolve a conflict. I will explain broadly what is involved in these four steps, and then we will have a chance to discuss and practice them together."

Before applying these steps there are a few important things to keep in mind, however.

First, you want to make sure it's the right time to resolve the conflict. Often, conflict resolution needs to happen when everyone is calm, when people are focused, and in a neutral space where everyone feels comfortable.

If you are helping two people resolve a conflict, you want to start with some ground rules that everyone agrees to follow. For example, you may agree that there will be no name calling or insults, that no one will interrupt, that everyone will listen to other people's points of view."

Put up the first flipchart paper where you wrote in advance:

1. Find the facts: Collect and understand the facts of what happened

Explain: "Step 1 is to understand the facts of the situation, without any judgement. Try to separate what is a fact, and what is a feeling or judgement. You could ask questions like: "What actually happened?" "Could you give a specific example?" "After xxx happened, what happened next?"

Put up the second flipchart paper where you wrote in advance:

2. Find problems: Look at the problem (or problems) from multiple points of view and reframe the problem in such a way that it is something that can be solved

Explain: “Step 2 aims to dig deeper. Here is when we think back to the conflict tree and discuss the roots and consequences of the problem. This step also helps make everyone understand the other side’s viewpoint.”

The person who is leading the conversation between the two people in conflict should ask questions like,

“How did that make you feel?”

“Why do you think the conflict got worse?”

“Why do you think he/she said that, or made that decision?”

By the end of this step, you and the people involved hopefully understand the problem better and its root causes. You are able to reframe the problem as one that can be solved. For example, instead of “He stole my basketball,” a solvable problem would be explained like “We need to find a better way to share the basketball.” Or, instead of “My daughter doesn’t respect me,” the solvable problem statement might be “Communication between father and daughter needs to be improved.”

Put up the third flipchart paper where you wrote in advance:

3. Find ideas: Generate many ideas and possible solutions

Explain: “Step 3 is about coming up with ideas to solve the problem. You don’t want to move too fast to decide on solutions, because you want everyone to be invested in the solution and feel like they have been heard. You also want to identify the maximum number of solutions possible. You could ask questions like: “What could you have done differently to avoid this problem?” “What could you do to solve the problem or avoid it in the future?” “What are some ways you have solved similar problems in the past?”

Put up the fourth flipchart paper where you wrote in advance:

4. Find solutions: Find a solution that everyone accepts

Explain: “This is the last step. In this step, the goal is for everyone to agree on one or more solutions that they can commit to. Depending on the type of conflict involved (values, relationship, task, other), you might spend more time on one of these steps. For example, in some conflicts the problem is very obvious so you can spend more time on solutions. In other situations, you might need to spend more time on open communication at the beginning. In a values-based conflict, perhaps you cannot really solve the root problem; instead, you’ll focus on solutions that both can agree on.”

You can use these steps to help students, or your colleagues, or teachers in your school resolve conflicts between each other. Even though it can be easier when there is an

independent “mediator” to help solve a conflict, you can still try to apply these steps to resolve conflicts yourselves, without a mediator.”

Invite participants to ask questions about these four steps or share their reactions or reflections.

BREAK

(10 minutes)

Activity 4: Practicing conflict resolution (part I)

(20 minutes)

Read out loud the following script:

Franky and Christian are middle school students and good friends. Franky broke up with his girlfriend Mary and told Christian the story including all the events that led to the breakup. Later Franky found out the story had got around and blamed Christian for the gossip, telling him never to speak to him again.

Explain to participants: “Let’s imagine that Franky and Christian are students in the school where you work. Franky comes to you, the Educator, for counseling about this problem because he doesn’t know what to do about it. You decide to bring Franky and Christian together to discuss the problem and you will be the mediator and apply the conflict resolution steps that we discussed today.”

Ask for three volunteers to act out a skit: two will play the people in the conflict (Rado & Christian), and one will play the mediator (you, the Educator). After the skit, ask the actors to reflect on the activity. Ask observers to give feedback. You can ask these questions:

- Did the steps work?
- Did they have to be adapted?
- What were the challenges?
- Did Franky and Christian come to a solution? How did the mediator help to find this solution?

Explain: “It is not the mediator’s job to come up with the solution to the conflict. The role of the mediator is to be a facilitator and help the people in the conflict resolve the conflict themselves. Therefore, the mediator must stay neutral and be a good listener.”

Ask participants to discuss in small groups these questions:

- What are ways that an Educator can show that he/she is a neutral facilitator when helping students resolve a conflict during a counseling session?
- What are ways that an Educator show that he/she is an active listener during a counseling session?

Ask 1-2 volunteer groups to present back to the full group.

You can bring up these ideas if they are not brought up during the discussion:

What are ways that an Educator can show that he/she is a neutral facilitator when helping students resolve a conflict during a counseling session?

- Before the mediation starts, explain that you are neutral, and that your role is just to help resolve the conflict.
- Do not take sides during the conflict. Avoid saying things like “I agree with you,” accusing anyone, or saying judgmental things.

What are ways that an Educator show that he/she is an active listener during a counseling session?

- As an active listener, you play a big role in helping move the conversation forward. Regularly use phrases like: “If I understand correctly...”; “You seem upset about...”; “Let me repeat what you just said...”; “What I’m hearing from both of you is...”; “Let’s see if I understand this correctly...”; “Is there anything you would like to add about...?”; “I want to make sure we hear from xxxxx.” “I will summarize what you both said.”

Activity 4: Practicing conflict resolution (part 2)

(20 minutes)

Ask for two volunteers. Bring the volunteers outside the room (so that the other participants cannot hear) and explain to them that they have 5 minutes to come up with a conflict – real or imaginary – that could take place between an Educator and another teacher or school administrator.

After the 5 minutes are up, have the two volunteers come back into the room and ask for a third volunteer to play the role of a mediator (the mediator won’t know the conflict in advance, so he/she will have to act “on the spot”).

Have the three volunteers act out the scenario.

After the skit, invite the group to reflect, give feedback, and discuss with a focus on whether the mediator used ACTIVE LISTENING and the tips discussed previously. You can ask questions such as:

- Did the mediator apply some of the mediation steps discussed earlier? Which ones?
- What was most challenging for the mediator?
- Were there other ways that the actors could have resolved the conflict?
- What about their verbal and non-verbal communication: Did it help reduce tension and conflict? Did it aggravate the situation?

Activity 4: Closing Reflections

(10 minutes)

To wrap up the training, ask the Educators share what they learned today, standing in a circle together.

- What are the most important approaches or techniques for conflict mediation?
- Do they feel better equipped to handle conflicts?
- What questions do they still have?
- If they are in a conflict themselves, who could they turn to for help or mediation?



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