

Student Conflict: How to Identify & Respond in the School Setting

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What is Conflict?

- A natural part of human relationships as people grow and change
- Happens between two people where there is no imbalance of power, but there are two different points of view occurring (i.e. both parties are friends, classmates)
- Typically, both parties don't want the conflict to continue; they want the situation to improve



Examples of Student Conflict

- Misunderstood comments
- Spilled secret(s)
- A friendship that has ended negatively
- Specific Examples:



- One friend wants to play video games; the other friend wants to go outside, and an argument ensues
- A classmate wants to pick a certain topic for a group project, but the other student prefers a different topic, and an argument occurs
- Common environments where student conflict can occur includes:
 - The classroom, lunchroom, school bus, standing in line, and really any place where large amounts of students might gather

Conflict vs. HIB

Conflict vs. Bullying - What's the difference?

Conflict

- Disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views
- Equal power between those involved
- Generally stop and change behavior when they realize it is hurting someone

Bullying

- Goal is to hurt, harm, or humiliate
- Person bullying has more power*
- Continue behavior when they realize it is hurting someone.

* "Power" can mean the person bullying is older, bigger, stronger, or more popular.



**PACER's
National Bullying Prevention Center®**
Create a World Without Bullying | PACER.org/Bullying

Conflict =
Equal Power

Bullying =
Imbalance of
power

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Effects of Student Conflict

Negative:

Social/Emotional: Discord within a social circle, Stress, Anxiety, Anger, Frustration.

Discipline: consequences could be imposed when a conflict turns physical, or if a conflict spills over into a classroom(s) and disrupts the educational process.

Positive:

Sometimes, a bit of conflict can be helpful for both parties to realize that there are items that need to be worked on. Also, students learn how to develop their social, problem-solving, and self-advocacy skills when learning how to manage conflict.

Managing Conflict in the Classroom

- 1. Cool Off
 - Have students take a few breaths before approaching the situation
- 2. Share, Listen, Check
 - Students need to listen to each other to share their concerns and check that they understand each other's concerns
- 3. Take responsibility
 - Can ask students open ended questions such as, "What could you have done differently to change what happened?"
- 4. Brainstorm solutions
 - Students can work together to find a solution that works for both parties
- 5. Choose a solution
 - Students can go over their brainstormed list of solutions to get rid of solutions that won't work for both of them and ones that won't address future problems
- 6. Affirm, Forgive, or Thank
 - Students can end their session by acknowledging what happened and forgiving the other student

How Students Can Manage Their Own Conflicts

- Have them learn how to estimate how big their problem is (I.e. is this something they need to address, and if it is, do they have the capability to manage it on their own, or do they need to get an adult involved)
- Students should ask themselves some key questions to determine if what they're experiencing is conflict or not:
 - 1) Are we equals in this situation? 2) Do I feel victimized or targeted by an individual or a group? 3) Do I feel safe? Do I feel that the person or group has intentionally hurt or humiliated me?
- Pursue conflict mediation (i.e. through a school counselor)
- Notify a trusted adult(s) about the conflict (i.e. parent, teacher, school counselor, etc.)

How Students Can Manage Their Own Conflicts

Strategies for resolving conflict

#5 Listen to everyone's point of view



Conflict Resolution

- A common practice utilized in the K-12 setting, which works to problem solve the concerns at hand between the parties in conflict
- In this process, both parties get to share their side to the story, express what they would like to see out of the mediation, and set ground rules for interactions with each other moving forward
- This can be led by a trained professional such as a school counselor



Conflict Resolution Games & Activities for Children

- Read-alouds: prompt class discussions regarding empathy, different perspectives, and the benefits of patience
- Role-playing: helps students understand different perspectives which could help them learn empathy
- Writing or drawing a picture of what occurred: creates a cool-off period which encourages a student to think about what happened and how it made them feel
- Utilizing these strategies can help empower students to grow, and also enable them to help learn how to problem-solve on their own

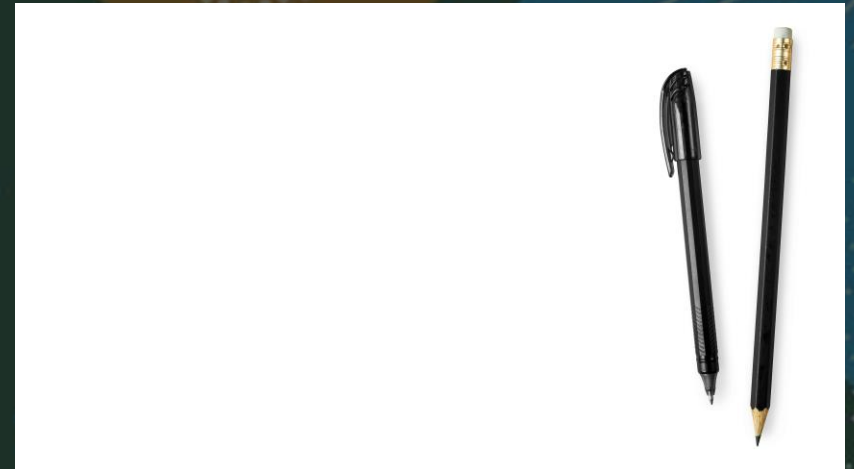
How Empathy Impacts Student Conflict

- When students apply empathy in their interactions with other students, this can reduce incidence of student conflict
- Since empathy allows students to foster social connections with others via understanding what people are thinking and feeling, students are then able to respond appropriately in social situations
- Signs that a student demonstrates empathy include the following:
 - Student often thinks about how others feel
 - People come to the student for advice
 - Student is good at listening to what others have to say



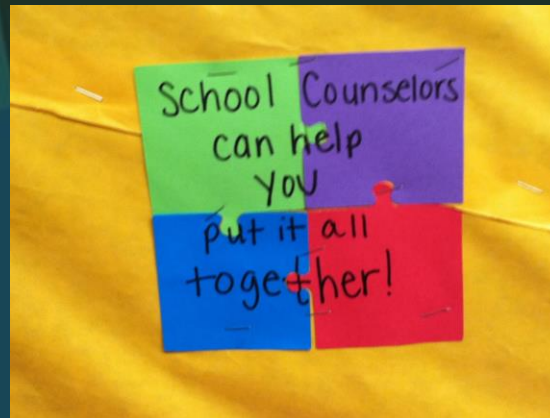
Sources Used in this Presentation

- [Edutopia](#)
- [EducationWeek](#)
- [MMI Preparatory School](#)
- [Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center](#)
- [Waterford.org](#)



Additional Resources in School

- School counselors are available in each middle school building to assist students with academic and social/emotional struggles they may be having, and this would include the topic of conflict that we discussed tonight



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HIB Resources

[HIB District Resource Page](#)



Community Resources

WTPS School Counseling Department Community Resources



Thank you for attending my webinar this evening!

Now, we will open up the webinar to any questions you may have.