



## AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE ACTIVITY

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### FINDING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS

#### PREPARATION

##### **Grade Levels:** 5-7

This activity would be most effective if delivered in four (4) separate 45-50 minute periods.

##### **Prerequisites**

- Before beginning this activity, prepare three (3) pieces of large chart paper. Title one “Vocabulary,” another “How to Resolve a Conflict without Violence” and the third “Ways That a Friend or Peer Can Help Prevent a Fight.” On the fourth piece copy the handout “Steps For Mediation” on a larger scale.
- Watch the video [KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY](#) “School Violence” or preview the clips on the Web (see below).

##### **Materials Needed**

Students will need:

- Index cards
- Pen or pencil

Group Leader will need:

- Copy of the video [KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY](#) “School Violence” or the ability to project the digitized clips on a TV or a projector
- Four (4) pieces of large chart paper
- An easel to display the paper or tape to hang on walls
- Marker
- A copy of the handout “Steps For Mediation” for each student

##### **Academic Goals**

Children will:

- understand the basic definitions of active listening, conflict, resolution, mediate, and empathy
- learn how to resolve conflicts without violence using role-play scenarios
- become familiar with the method of peer mediation

##### **Social Goals**

Children will:

- develop their active listening skills, allowing peers to speak and share their opinions and experiences

- develop their group speaking skills as they provide suggestions for improving role-plays
- work in small groups and present in front of their peers

## STEPS

### Activity 1

#### Warm-Up (15 minutes)

1. Ask the students to explain or define the term “active listening.”
2. After discussion, write the following definition on the piece of chart paper titled “Vocabulary.”
  1. Active listening – paying attention and being able to repeat what someone else has said
3. Divide students into groups of approximately eight. Give them a hypothetical question such as: Someone is donating \$1,000 to the kids’ after-school center. How should the money be spent? On more books, a party, television sets for the classrooms, computers, food for the homeless, etc? Each student in the circle is to state his opinion on how the money should be spent. The person sitting next to him/her must then restate the first person’s answer and add his own. Each person in the circle is responsible for restating the previous student’s answer, then offering his/her own opinion.
4. Regroup and ask questions such as: Was it hard to be an active listener? Why or why not? Do you think it would have been harder if you had to remember everyone’s answer in your group? Do you think you are *always* an active listener? Why is active listening important? Explain that active listening can help solve problems and that they will be using their active listening skills during the next few activities.

#### Introduction (30 minutes)

1. Ask the students to explain or define the word “conflict.”
2. After discussion, write the following definition on the piece of chart paper titled “Vocabulary.”
  2. Conflict – a fight or disagreement
3. Ask the students to think about and give examples of conflicts from their own lives, or from books they have read or movies they’ve seen, etc.
4. Now, ask them to explain or define the word “resolution.”

5. After discussion, write the definition for “resolution” on the “Vocabulary” chart paper (under the definition for conflict).
  3. Resolution – a solution or settlement
6. Ask the students to think about and give examples of resolutions from their own lives, books they have read, etc.
7. Next, ask the students to *silently* answer the question: Have you ever gotten into a physical fight? Have you ever avoided a fight?
8. As a group, brainstorm possible ways to resolve conflicts without fighting. List their ideas on the chart paper titled “How to Resolve a Conflict without Violence.”
9. Explain that now they will watch a short clip from the KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY episode “School Violence.” If you can’t show the clip from the Web, cue the video about 1 minute 45 seconds into the episode, to the scene that begins with the words “Life was good in the beginning.” End the clip at about 4 minutes 23 seconds with the words “because I already understand the process.”
10. Discuss the clip. What is Tajae’s story? Why did he fight when he was younger? (For respect) How does he teach his students to avoid violent situations now? (By talking) Do you think talking is a good way to avoid a fight? Why or why not? If it’s not already there, add the method of talking to your “How to Resolve a Conflict without Violence” list.

## Activity 2

### Role-Plays (40-50 minutes)

1. Give students an index card and on it ask them to describe a conflict between two children their own age. Ask them not to use the name of anyone in their after-school program. Explain that the conflict can end with hurt feelings or anger but cannot involve a physical fight. Give an example, such as: “Johnny is playing with a ball and Billy comes up and takes the ball. Johnny is angry.” Collect index cards and choose two to use as role-play scenarios in the following activity.
2. Explain that they now will be acting out (role-playing) some of the conflicts they described on the index cards. Ask two volunteers to come to the front of the room. Read one of the conflicts to the whole class. Assign roles to the participating students. The first student’s goal is to start a fight. The second student’s goal is to resolve it peacefully, or at least prevent a fight. Quickly review the list “How to Resolve a Conflict without Violence.” Remind all students to use their active listening skills.

*Role-Playing Guide:* If necessary, freeze the actors and interrupt, to make sure everyone knows what is happening. When the role-play situation has

developed, you can also freeze the actors and ask the audience questions like: What did you see? How did it make you feel? How do you think it made the character feel? Who said what to whom? What tone did he/she use?

3. When the role-play has finished, begin a discussion by asking the audience questions such as: How did this go? What was actor #1's perspective of the conflict? What was actor #2's perspective of the conflict? Were their perspectives the same? Ask for suggestions on how the actors could have played the scene differently. Discussion questions for the actors include: How did you feel as that character? What would you have done differently yourself? How would you advise these characters? What was most difficult about your role? How do you think the other character felt?
4. Repeat role-play one more time, using a different conflict (and different participants).
5. After each role-play, look back at the list you created earlier, "How to Resolve a Conflict without Violence." Did the actors use any of these methods to resolve the conflict? Add any new methods to the list.

\*\*Note to group leader: The list you come up with should be similar to the one below. Ask questions and facilitate discussion to help students come up with the methods listed. (Hypothetical example: When the characters Joey and Jane decided to take turns playing with the ball, what did they do? Answer: Compromise.)

#### HOW TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT WITHOUT VIOLENCE

- Tell the other person what's bothering you - but do it nicely
- Listen to the other person's point of view
- Try to understand how the other person is feeling
- Look for a compromise
- Walk away
- Stay calm - take deep breaths
- No name-calling or insults
- Don't yell or raise your voice
- Agree to disagree
- Ask someone else to help (a parent, relative, teacher, etc)

### Activity 3

#### Peer Mediation (50 minutes)

1. Ask the students to explain or define the word "mediate."
2. After discussion, write the definition for mediate on the piece of chart paper titled "Vocabulary."
  4. Mediate – to resolve or settle the disagreement of others

3. Ask students to think about and share examples of people who have mediated conflicts.
4. Ask them to *silently* answer the question: Do you know anyone who has gotten into a physical fight? Have you ever tried to stop a friend from fighting?
5. As a class, brainstorm possible ways that a friend can help stop a fight. List their ideas on the chart paper titled “Ways That a Peer Can Help Prevent a Fight.”
6. Explain that now they will watch another short clip from KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY: SCHOOL VIOLENCE. Tell students to pay particular attention to the part about peer mediation. If you can’t show the clip from the Web, cue the video about 22 minutes 37 seconds into the episode, to the scene that begins with the words “with your conflict-resolution training.” End the clip at about 23 minutes 14 seconds, after you hear “the person who is the victim or the perpetrator.”
7. Review the clip. This woman discussed how peer mediation is a way to resolve conflict. Ask students what they think “peer mediation” is. (In peer mediation, young people are taught to mediate with their peers.) The woman also mentioned that there’s an opportunity to empathize with the person who is in a conflict—with the person who is the victim or with the perpetrator. Ask the students to explain or define the word “empathy.”
8. After discussion, write the following definition on the piece of chart paper titled “Vocabulary.”
  - 5: Empathy – being aware of and sensitive to the feelings and experiences of others, even though you don’t experience them yourself

Explain to students that empathy does not mean agreeing with someone else. It means that you can understand a different point of view or perspective.

9. Divide students in pairs. Using the following list of relationships, assign a different relationship to each pair. Give each group an index card and ask them to think of a conflict involving the two people. The conflict should be based on an experience from their own lives.

- A. Parent-child
- B. Teacher-student
- C. Boy-Girl
- D. Older sibling-younger sibling
- E. Two friends (both girls)
- F. Two friends (both boys)

(Example for Parent-Child relationship: All of Sam's friends are outside playing. After finishing her homework, Sam asks her mother to go outside. Her mom won't let her until she cleans her room. Sam gets angry with her mom.)

10. Tell children that they are now going to role-play some of the scenarios they described. Each role-play will be done twice, reversing the students' role the second time, in order that each student acquires an understanding of what it's like to be on the other side. After each role-play (and before role-reversal), ask each actor how he/she thinks the other character felt. Then, use the following questions to guide a group discussion.

Can empathy help solve problems? How? When you've been in a real-life conflict were you able to empathize with the other person and understand his/her side?

#### Activity 4

##### Peer Mediation Role-Plays (40 minutes)

1. Give each student a copy of the handout Steps For Peer Mediation. [link to handout] Explain that peer mediation is an excellent way to resolve conflict among peers and prevent a fight. Explain that they will be using the handout as a guide for the role-play in the next activity. Read the handout out loud as a group, making sure to give examples or explanations as necessary.
2. Choose three new role-playing scenarios from the ones that the students wrote in Activity 3. Ask three volunteers to come to the front of the room. Read the scenario aloud. Assign roles to the participating students. Two of the students are involved in the conflict and want to fight. The third person's goal is to help the others resolve it peacefully, or at least prevent a fight. For the first round, the group leader can act as the mediator as an example. Remind all students to use their active listening skills.
3. Repeat this activity two more times, using the different scenarios. Then, use the *Role-Playing Guide* from Activity 3 to facilitate discussion. Further questions after role-play include:
  - How do you think empathy plays a role in peer mediation? Do you think these steps could effectively resolve a real-life conflict? Did both people involved in the conflict view the conflict in the same way? For mediator: Was it hard not to take sides and be fair?

**Wrap-Up** (5 minutes)

What did we learn? What are some ways to resolve a conflict without using violence? Ask students how they can use what they've learned outside of the classroom. Do you think you will practice any of the new methods we've learned (such as active listening, empathy, peer mediation) in real-life?

**CREDITS**

This AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE activity is based on the [KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY](#) episode "School Violence." It was developed by Marissa Munn, Instructor for the Early Education, Urban Design, and Urban Ecology Departments at Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment. She was formerly the Literacy Specialist at The Point CDC.

## STEPS FOR PEER MEDIATION

### I. Introduction

1. Introduce yourself as the mediator.
2. Ask *both* people in the conflict if they would like your help in solving the problem.
3. Find a quiet area to hold the mediation.
4. Ask for agreement to the following:
  - \_\_\_ try to solve the problem
  - \_\_\_ no name calling
  - \_\_\_ don't interrupt
  - \_\_\_ confidentiality
  - \_\_\_ tell the truth

### II. Active Listening

1. Ask the first person "What happened?" Mediator repeats in his/her own words.
2. Ask the first person how she or he feels. Mediator repeats in own words.
3. Ask the second person "What happened?" Mediator repeats in own words.
4. Ask the second person how she or he feels. Mediator repeats in own words.

### III. Looking for Solutions

1. Ask the first person what she or he could have done differently. Mediator repeats in own words.
2. Ask the second person what she or he could have done differently. Mediator repeats in own words.
3. Ask the first person what she or he can do here and now to help solve the problem. Mediator repeats in own words.
4. Ask the second person what she or he can do here and now to help solve the problem. Mediator repeats in own words.

### IV. Finding Solutions

1. Help both disputants find a solution they feel good about.
2. Repeat the solution and all of its parts to both people and ask if each agrees.

Congratulate both people on a successful mediation.