



4.2 POWER & CONFLICT



Time required	50 minutes
Adapted from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The Win-Win Approach</i>, Conflict Resolution Network (Handshake exercise) ■ <i>Cultural Comprehension</i>, O'Shaughnessy, J. (Conflict exercise)
Grade level	6 - 7 - 8
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whiteboard and markers ■ Conflict management activity worksheet. (See below)
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To explore the issues of power and conflict management styles and skills. ■ To practise using the “problem-solving” conflict management steps.
Procedure	<p>Handshake activity</p> <p>Students forms pairs, with partners being of a similar size/strength. Explain the activity as follows, while demonstrating with a volunteer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners are to stand facing each other and take a handshake hold. ■ The aim of this exercise is to win as many points as you can. ■ You score a point every time you get the other person's hand to your hip. ■ Keep a count of your points. <p>Give no background concepts before completing this activity. The teacher and volunteer demonstrate what "getting the other person's hand to your hip" means but do not engage in a struggle in front of the group. The exercise is set up in a neutral way, so that students will project onto the instructions their natural inclination. In response to questions, simply repeat the instructions and encourage students to keep count of their points.</p> <p>Allow between thirty seconds and one minute for the activity and then discuss with the group the differences in the number of points people achieved, and how they did it.</p>

Class discussion

- Who scored more than 50? Less than 10? How did you do it?
- How did you interpret "you" in the instructions – as an individual or a pair?
- Did the idea of "winning" imply "losing" as well? For someone to win, did another have to lose?
- Who discussed it with their partner? What was discussed? Who changed strategy during the exercise? Why?
- In conflict, are there times when we use the same approach as we did in the exercise? Are there other occasions when we use a different approach?

Look at the **Conflict Management Styles** (see below)

Ask students to read the different styles and discuss:

- Which style did they use in the handshake activity?
- How would each of the different types have behaved in the handshake activity?
- Which style achieved the highest score in this activity?
- Can they think of situations in which the different styles would be more useful?

Emphasise the positives of each type and how it might be appropriate in different situations; none is correct for all situations.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

When conflict happens there are two things most of us worry about:

- **Keeping good relationships** with the other person/people involved; and
- **Achieving our own personal goals** - that means getting what we want.

These are some of the different styles that people use to solve conflict depending on whether they most value good relationships or getting their own way.

	THE TEDDY BEAR accommodates or keeps the peace	THE OWL collaborates or problem solves
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS		THE FOX compromises or manipulates
	THE TURTLE withdraws or avoids	
		THE SHARK forces or competes
		
	ACHIEVING GOALS	

Conflict activity

With students in groups of 4 handout the three scenarios conflict activity worksheet (see below).

Ask students to select one scenario as a group and discuss the questions on the worksheet as a group then write their answers on their own worksheet.

- How would you have responded to the situation?
- Who might have “won” and who might have “lost”?
- Which conflict management style might have achieved a better result? How?
- After 3 minutes show the *Problem Solving When Relationships Go Wrong* slide and ask students:
 - How many of these steps did you use in your scenario?
 - Can they role-play using these steps for a better outcome?

Class discussion

How would your choice of conflict management style or problem-solving differ if the conflict is:

- Child-parent?
 - Peer-to-peer?
 - Teacher-student?
 - How is power a factor in each scenario?
 - Where does power come from?
 - How does power affect male-female relationships?
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Conflict management activity

Select one of the scenarios and answer the questions below.

Scenario 1 (child-parent)

It's Friday night. All of your friends are attending a party at the local park and you ask your parent/guardian if you can attend the party. Your parent/guardian asks who will be there and you reply, "My whole year level." Your parent/guardian then asks if there will be any adults at the party. There won't, but before you can reply, your parent/guardian states, "No, you can't go... you must stay home and study or clean your room."

Scenario 2 (peer-to-peer)

You finally convince your parents to let you attend the big, year level party in the local park. At this party a group of your classmates begun to taunt and tease one of your friends with some hurtful and racist remarks. You can see your friend becoming rather upset.

Scenario 3 (teacher-student)

The teacher has asked you to do quiet reading while she is writing and activity on the whiteboard. Someone in the class talks and laughs. The teacher turns around, points at you and tells you to go to the Assistant Principal's office. You try to explain that it wasn't you, but the teacher gets more cross and yells at you to leave the room.

Scenario (circle the one you have selected) 1 2 3

How would you have responded to the situation?

Who might have "won" and who might have "lost"?

Which conflict management style might have achieved a better result? Explain how?
