# edumed

## Mediation in Education

**IO4: Training Programme for peer mediation Peer ProEM**

Sofia city
REGIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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# INTRODUCTION

**EduMed** – "Bridging the gap between educational stakeholders through mediation" is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in School Education project, co-financed by the European Commission with a duration of 24 months (01-11-2020 - 31-10-2022).

The project aims to consolidate, in a multilingual framework, legal requirements, knowledge, skills, qualities and personal traits of educational mediators and elaborate training programmes for **mediation** and **peer mediation**, as well as a collection of working practices in educational mediation.

The training programme for peer mediation (Peer ProEM) will educate students to be in position of educational mediators; students will learn the following topics: how to apply constructive methods in conflict resolution; how to apply nonviolent communication; and how to reach acceptable solutions and agreements in conflict situations. The theoretical and practical knowledge that the students will gain will help them develop critical thinking, leadership qualities, self-esteem and to deal efficiently with different life situations that require self-control, emotional intelligence, cooperation, tolerance, good language skills and taking an active position.

After acquiring this specific knowledge and skills, learners will be able to actively participate in peer mediation procedures. The training programme consists of five modules, following the same structure including learning objectives and outcomes, key elements, methods used, theoretical part followed by practical activities.

All modules are available in English and translated into partners' languages: Bulgarian, Greek, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. All materials are accessible for free usage at the project's website:

https://www.edumed-initiative.eu/

# 1. MEANING AND SIGNIFICATE OF CONFLICTS

## Learning Objective

The aim of this module is to educate students on the meaning of conflict in the sphere of education. Conflicts between different parties are explained and students will learn several solutions and ways to approach and manage conflict.

## Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Define the conflict in the sphere of education
- Distinguish conflicts involving different actors
- Show knowledge about different techniques to resolve conflict

## Key elements

1. Conflict in the sphere of education
2. Types of conflicts. Causes and solutions
   - Conflict between students
   - The student-teacher conflict
   - Conflict between the teacher and parents of the student
   - Conflict between groups
3. Conflict prevention methods

## Methods used

- Student orientated learning, team-play, group activities

## SHORT THEORETICAL PRESENTATION

### Conflict in the sphere of education

In a world of interdependencies, the universality of conflicts also includes the sphere of school education. One cannot imagine a society or a school that works perfectly without conflict. Conflicts are a natural component, inseparable

from human life. Nonetheless, they bring new challenges to teachers, open new horizons for investigation, innovation, and professionalization.

In the classical definition, conflict is an open opposition, a struggle between individuals, groups, social classes, parties, communities or states with economic, political, religious, ethnic, or racial interests, divergent or incompatible, with destructive effects on social interaction.

Conflict can also be viewed through the lens of the chances for growth and development provided by education. On the one hand, the capacity to resolve disagreements constructively benefits students' individual health; on the other hand, when used over time and on a global scale, it benefits human health as a whole.

In the contemporary meaning, conflicts arise when two interdependent parties (individuals or organizations) appear to be incompatible owing to differing perspectives of objectives, values, resources, or requirements. The demand for control over the sort of psychosocial contact between the parties is shown by this perspective based on the parties' dependency.

## Types of school conflicts. Causes and solutions

### 1. CONFLICT BETWEEN STUDENTS

The desires for leadership in microgroups cause the majority of confrontations amongst pupils/students. An established leader and a leader who obtains influence in a microgroup may have interpersonal difficulties. When the leaders of the microgroups engage, conflict might emerge since each of them can claim that the group as a whole recognizes their authority. Leaders can incite conflict among their followers, broadening the scope of interpersonal conflict. Conflicts between pupils are managed by the group leader (class), who must identify each leader's specialized area of leadership (often in collaboration with the parents). Due to the show of personal superiority and a lack of concern for others, random interpersonal disputes arise between males and females.

### Causes of conflicts between students

- The struggle for authority.
- Rivalry.
- Deception, gossip.
- Insults.
- Resentment.
- Hostility towards the teacher's favourite students.
- Personal dislike for a person.
- Affection without reciprocity.
- Fight for a person two students like.

## Solutions for conflicts between students

Children can frequently resolve conflicts without the assistance of an adult. If the instructor must intervene, it is critical that he or she do it calmly.

It is preferable to do so without putting any pressure on the youngster, without making a public apology, and by restricting yourself to a clue.

It is also preferable if the learner develops his or her own algorithm to tackle the problem. Constructive conflict will enhance the child's social abilities, allowing them to communicate with classmates and teach them problem-solving skills that will serve them well in maturity.

The teacher-child interaction is critical once the conflict scenario has been resolved. It is crucial to have a constructive conversation with the student because he must have a sense of trust and goodwill.

*Example: "Alex, this conflict should not cause negative feelings" you may say. "There will be many more similar conflicts in your life, which is not always a bad thing. The most essential thing is to solve it appropriately, without recriminations or insults, to draw conclusions, and to fix certain errors." A dispute like this would be helpful.*

If the youngster lacks companions and activities, they are prone to quarrels and aggression. In this circumstance, the instructor can try to resolve the matter by

speaking with the student's parents and suggesting that the youngster be enrolled in a circle or sports section based on their interests. A new activity will not leave time for intrigue or gossip; instead, it will provide them with exciting and helpful entertainment as well as fresh information.

## 2. THE STUDENT-TEACHER CONFLICT

Due to various issues, interpersonal confrontations between students and teachers can arise in school. Society, parents, and instructors place a significant burden on the young person to attain professional self-determination, not only inwardly in the shape of a dream, the desire to become someone in the future, but also externally in the form of a genuine decision. Conflicts may emerge if the teacher's and student's viewpoints are diametrically opposed.

There are not so many interpersonal problems in the lower grades since the teacher has for the student the same indisputable authority as for their parents.

There is a shift in personality throughout adolescence, and the position "I am an adult" is affirmed, which aids in the creation of disputes with the teacher.

 Students in high school strive for autonomy, maintaining the right to be themselves, solve issues on their own, have their own attachments, and have their own ideas about what is going on around them. At this age, the reaction to insensitive remarks becomes considerably more severe, which can lead to a variety of confrontations.

Due to unjust assessments, conflicts between teachers and students may emerge. In such circumstances, the entire class may become engaged in the disagreement and speak on the student's behalf. When it comes to measuring pupils' knowledge, some teachers use two competing methodologies. One manifests itself in undervalued criteria for building positive relationships with students, while the other manifests itself in inflated needs for preparing pupils for university entrance. Both tactics have the potential to be incompatible. Low grades are viewed by the class as arbitrary by the teacher, whereas high grades indicate good students in active learning. It's crucial to assess pupils' knowledge correctly.

**Causes of conflict between teacher and students**

- Lack of unity in teachers' demands
- Excessive demands on the student
- Inconsistency of the teacher's requirements
- Non-compliance by the teacher
- The student feels underestimated
- The teacher cannot accept the student's shortcomings
- Personal qualities of the teacher or student (irritability, helplessness, rudeness)

**Resolving student-teacher conflicts**

It is preferable to diffuse a difficult situation rather than provoking confrontation. You may achieve this by employing some psychological tactics.

Raising your voice during a conflict is not an ideal solution. The result of a loud conversation tends to be the intensification of said disagreement. As a result, the teacher should respond with a calm, polite, and confident tone in response to the student's aggressive reaction. The teacher's serenity will eventually "infect" the youngster.

A positive and right attitude toward students will help to create a positive learning environment and will make it easier to execute the offered guidelines.

It should be highlighted that some considerations must be made in the interaction between the instructor and the student. It's important to plan ahead of time so you know what to say to your youngster. To put it another way, it's a crucial component. To acquire a decent outcome, you'll need a calm tone and the lack of negative emotions. Teachers' strong tone, which includes reproaches and threats, is best forgotten. You must be able to hear and listen to your child. If a punishment is essential, it should be considered in such a way as to avoid the student's humiliation and a shift in attitude toward him.

**3. CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENT'S PARENTS**

A conflict of this nature can be provoked by both the teacher and the parent. Dissatisfaction can be mutual.

## Causes of conflict between teacher and parents

- Different ideas of the parties about the means of education
- The parent's dissatisfaction with the teacher's teaching methods
- Personal animosity
- The parent's opinion about the unreasonable underestimation of the child's grades

## Resolving conflicts between teacher and student's parents

How may such issues be constructively resolved and such obstacles be overcome? It is simpler for the educator to uncover the underlying reason, examine the appropriateness of both parties' behaviour, and pave a path for the constructive solution to an uncomfortable situation when the situation is soberly appraised and the problem is stated.

The next step on the road to agreement will be an open, equal-opportunity discourse between the instructor and the parent. The scenario analysis will assist the professor in expressing their views and ideas about the problem to the parent, demonstrating comprehension, clarifying the common objective, and working together to find a way out of the current predicament.

## 4. CONFLICT BETWEEN GROUPS

Conflicts may emerge between official and unofficial groups within an educational institution, such as between management and performance, between pupils/students, between informal study groups, or between the administration and the union.

Intergroup conflict is very widespread, especially between top and lower levels of government, notably between school administrators and instructors, or between teachers and students.

This is an excellent illustration of dysfunctional conflict. The incompatibility of aims in the battle for finite resources, i.e. the presence of genuine competition, as well as the creation of social competition, causes conflicts between groups.

### Conflict prevention methods

Conflicts in the pedagogical process are inevitable. The pedagogical profession is recognized as one of the most difficult: in its psycho-physiological tension it is at the level of test pilots and climbers, so one of the problems in pedagogy is the problem of constructive conflict resolution.

Currently, the issue of conflicts and its prevention is studied in pedagogy in the following areas:

- Conflict analysis in the pedagogical process.
- Conflicts in pedagogical groups and ways to overcome them.
- Overcoming conflicts in groups of pupils / students.
- Teacher training for conflict prevention and resolution in teaching groups and among pupils / students.

Conflict resolution entails the partial or total eradication of the conflict's causes, as well as a shift in the conflicting parties' goals. Partially resolving a dispute can be accomplished by terminating the parties' external conflict activity while keeping the internal, intellectual, and emotional tension that led to the conflict's conduct. Only when both external and internal components of the conflict situation are modified can complete conflict resolution be realized. Meeting all of the fair needs of the opposing party, for example, is one way to attain such a comprehensive result.

The following variables are thought to play a role in the constructive settlement of a conflict:

- The adequacy of the perception of the conflict, i.e.: a sufficiently accurate assessment of actions and intentions that is not distorted by personal preferences

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- Openness and effectiveness of communication, readiness for a comprehensive discussion of issues, when participants can express their understanding of what is happening and how to get out of the conflict situation
- Creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation

It is recommended that the dispute be mapped for a better solution. The following is the essence of it:

- Identifying the issue of conflict in general terms
- Find out who is involved in the conflict (students, groups, classes, etc.)
- Identify the real needs and concerns of each of the main participants in the conflict

The best way to resolve a conflict situation is to consciously choose the optimal behavioural strategy for the particular case.

The teacher plays a significant role in resolving educational disagreements because they can act as a mediator between the parties involved. The involvement of a mediator is critical in resolving a conflict scenario from a psychological standpoint, as it helps the parties of the disagreement to "salvage the situation" despite mutual sacrifices. The teacher must remember that using force or conviction to resolve a disagreement leads to an increase in the number of people involved, as well as the spread of the conflict by drawing in new people, organizations, and so on. As a result, the middle school teacher must first determine the source of the problem before attempting to address it.

A variety of things can influence the teacher's performance as an intermediary: the participants' faith in the disagreement, the teacher's neutrality on both sides of the argument, and the participants' acceptance of the teacher's conclusion as proper. A teacher's capacity to settle a pedagogical issue necessitates a high level of expertise and pedagogical experience.

Conflict management refers to a teacher's capacity to recognize a conflict scenario, comprehend it, and adopt guiding steps to resolve it. Many conflict resolution

approaches have been created in modern psychology, notably in educational activities.

In an educational institution, conflict management approaches may be divided into various categories, each with its own scope:

- intrapersonal, i.e.: methods of influencing an individual
- structural - methods of eliminating organizational conflict
- interpersonal methods or styles of behaviour in conflict situations
- negotiations
- Offensive retaliatory measures. This group of methods includes aggressive actions that are used in extreme cases when the capabilities of all previous groups of methods have been exhausted. (Of course, the last group does not apply to conflict resolution within school groups.)

Intrapersonal methods of conflict management consist of the teacher's ability to properly organize his own behaviour, to express his point of view without provoking a defensive reaction from the student.

Pedagogy is equipped with a set of behavioural algorithms that are essential for a teacher's success:

- At school, a teacher should merely show that he or she is willing to work. Negative emotions related with personal issues should be kept outside of educational institutions.

- It is not required to avoid disputes; rather, it is vital to steer the conflict resolution process in a positive direction and avoid prolonging the conflict.

- It's critical to treat all pupils fairly.

- The teacher's whole activity should be centred on the process of instruction and education

- You cannot degrade pupils; rather, you must "raise" them to their current level.

- When interacting with co-workers, all you have to do is make a remark as a kind of conduct.

# DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE, STEP BY STEP

## Total duration: 2h

| SETTING: | Classroom | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OUTCOMES: | Recognise, approach and manage conflict | | |
| CONTENTS | 1. Conflict Close-up<br>2. Bull's eye<br>3. Anything goes<br>4. Beach ball pass | **Duration for each activity:** | 1. 25 min<br>2. 30 min<br>3. 30 min<br>4. 30 min |
| ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION (STEP BY STEP) | **1. CONFLICT CLOSE-UP**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br>• To understand our initial reactions to conflict<br>• To consider how our reactions may influence the outcome of the conflict<br><br>Stand in the centre of the room and announce the following to the group:<br><br>*I am conflict. Consider how you typically react when you experience a personal conflict. Position yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that conveys your initial response to a conflict. Pay attention to your body language as well as your distance from the conflict.*<br><br>***Tips***<br>Use this activity twice—once near the beginning of the program and then again at the end—to get a visual picture regarding changes in positions as a result of considering conflict differently.<br><br>**Discussion Questions**<br>**1.** What are some reasons you are standing where you are?<br>**2.** If where you are standing signifies your initial reaction, where might you stand after taking some time to think about the conflict?<br>**3.** What are some things that would cause you to move?<br>**4.** How might our reactions influence the course of the conflict?<br><br>**2. BULL'S EYE**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br>•To understand that how we deal with conflict impacts ourselves, our classroom and the school<br>• To look at the big-picture benefits of effective conflict resolution<br><br>**Draw a large target** (consisting of three circles, one inside the other) on the flip-chart paper.<br>• The innermost circle represents the students themselves<br>• The middle circle represents the class<br>• The outer circle represents the school<br><br>Ask, "How does effectively resolving conflicts affect you, your class, and your school?" As students members shout out various ideas, record them in the appropriate place on the target.<br><br>***Tips*** | **Type of activity:**<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Reflection<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Brainstorming | |

To allow participants time to contemplate the issue, have teams of four to seven draw individual targets and take a few minutes to fill in the circles on their own before the group discussion.

**Discussion Questions**
**1.** How does your ability to resolve conflicts affect you in your class?
**2.** How does colleague's ability to resolve conflicts impact the class?
**3.** How does a colleague's ability to resolve conflicts impact the school?

### 3. ANYTHING GOES

**OBJECTIVES**
• To engage in conflict
• To practice the skills of dialogue
• To build consensus

This game is a great way for participants to engage in a mini conflict with another team member in a nonthreatening manner. Ask participants to find a partner. Have each pair stand face to face, right fist out (as in Rock, Paper, Scissors), and say together, "Nothing, something, anything!" Once the word anything is said, the two participants yell out the name of any item they can think of (dog, coffee mug, shoe). After yelling out their items, team members must now debate one another as to why their item would "beat" the other person's item. Allow about two or three minutes of debate, then call a brief time-out to discuss the difference between debate and dialogue. After that, have the team continue with their conversations, only now, encourage team members to engage in dialogue—asking questions and listening to the answers—to come to an agreement between the two of them.

*Tips*
The essential difference between debate and dialogue is that true dialogue is collaborative. Participants are working toward shared understanding and strength and value in each other's positions. A debate is a discussion with the goal of persuading or advocating for their own view, attempting to prove the other side wrong, and searching for flaws and weaknesses in the other's positions. In dialogue, the intention is to really listen to one another's perspective with a willingness to be influenced by what we hear. Dialogue allows people to develop understanding for one another's perspectives, thoughts, and feelings as well as to re-evaluate their own position in light of the other's understanding. In dialogue, everyone has a chance to be heard, understood, and to learn from each other.

**Discussion Questions**
**1.** How did you react to your mini-conflict?
**2.** Is this how you normally act in conflict situations? Why or why not?
**3.** How were you able to come to a consensus?
**4.** What happened when you switched from debate to dialogue?
**5.** When someone disagrees with you, do you always stop to ask questions?
**6.** Is it difficult to listen when someone disagrees with you? Why?

Group Work

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **7.** What made it easier in this activity?<br>**8.** In what ways could you use these skills the next time you're in conflict with another person?<br><br>**4. BEACH BALL PASS**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br>• To work through conflict<br>• To positively take control and devise a plan rather than engage in negative communication and conflict<br><br>Break any large groups into smaller teams of eight to 15. The team begins by standing in a circle. The facilitator hits the ball into the circle and tells the team that they need to hit the ball twice as many times as there are team members (eight members need 16 hits). The only rules are that no team member can hit the ball twice in a row, or volley the ball back and forth over and over with another member. Because this game is more difficult than it first appears, conflict may erupt early on as the team realizes this and has to regroup and devise a plan. Once the team achieves their goal number of hits, give them the next challenge, which is to hit the ball an equal number of times as there are team members. This time there is a new rule: each team member can hit the ball only one time. Even though this is a more difficult version, they should be able to build on what they have already learned to achieve success without conflict.<br><br>***Tips***<br>This activity requires some space and is best played outdoors (which can make it even more difficult due to weather conditions such as wind).<br><br>**Discussion Questions**<br>**1.** Was this activity more difficult than you originally thought it would be?<br>**2.** If so, did your assumptions lead to any communication challenges or conflict?<br>**3.** How did you and your team deal with the conflict?<br>**4.** In the second round, the goal was even more difficult. Did you experience the same communication or conflict challenges as the first round? Why or why not?<br>**5.** In what ways can you apply what you discovered in this game to the workplace? | Team play |
| **Materials/Supplies:** | **Pens, blank sheets, flipchart, flipchart markers, Power Point, Ball** | |

## 2. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEERS

## Learning Objective

The aim of this module is to educate students on how to fill the position of educational mediators and learn the essence and origin of communication in order to understand different types of communication and gain knowledge and competences in ensuring effective communication in school and out of school environment. In this module, students will learn how good communication can contribute to social inclusion, the keys to effective communication, and how to apply constructive methods in conflict resolution in an educational environment.

## Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this module, students will deepen their knowledge about:

- Emotions, attitudes, and different personalities;
- Recognize and interpret verbal and non-verbal signs in conflict;
- Main types of behaviours and ways of expressing them.

## Key elements

1. Communication – essence and origins (verbal; nonverbal)
2. Communication skills
3. Communication models
4. Communication barriers
5. Passive, aggressive, Self-confident, and dominant communicators

## Methods used

- ❖ Communication as an effective tool for conflict resolution in educational mediation.

## SHORT THEORETICAL PRESENTATION

### WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts, and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home, and leisure. The term "communication" comes from the Latin word "communicare" meaning to share, divide out, or literally "to make common". Communication can be defined as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals.

Individuals should have the skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of communicative situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation. This skill also includes the ability to distinguish and use different types of texts, to search for, collect and process information, to use aids, and formulate and express one's oral and written arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context. Good communication is essential in all areas of life as it helps to preserve a good environment for gaining knowledge and social inclusion.
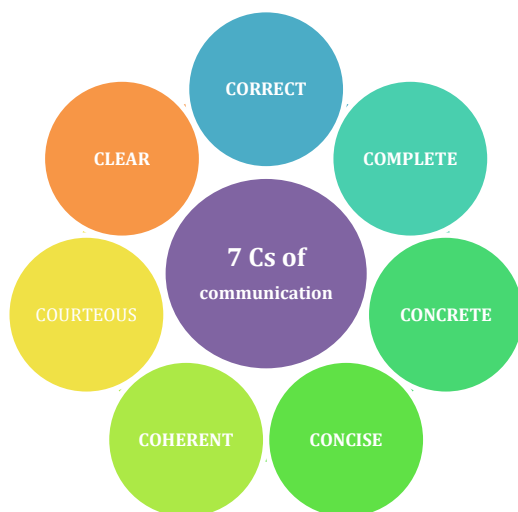
Effective communication is defined as communication between two or more individuals in which the intended message is:

- Properly encoded;
- Delivered through an appropriate channel;
- Received;
- Properly decoded;
- Understood by the recipient(s).

Through effective communication ideas and concepts are being heard and people are acting upon them. In this way, students are able to listen, understand and take action on what other people say

The seven Cs of effective communication:

**Clear** – main ideas are easily identified and understood.

**Concise** – gets to the point without using unneeded words or images.

**Concrete** – includes specific examples or explanations.

**Correct** – in information, word choice and grammar.

**Coherent** – information is presented in a logical sequence.

 **Complete** – when creating a message, it is important to give the recipient all of the information they need to your line of reasoning to reach the same conclusions you have.

**Courteous** – messages are nonviolent, friendly, considerate, respectful, open, and honest.

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION

It is expressed through language, both written and spoken. It refers to the use of words. Verbal communication is any communication that uses language to convey a meaning. It includes oral communication, sounds, words, language, and speech such as speaking to another person over the telephone, face-to-face discussions, interviews, debates, presentations as well as written communication. There are four main types of verbal communication:

- *Intrapersonal communication* – private and restricted to ourselves. It includes silent conversations with ourselves and monitors the roles between the sender and receiver who are processing our thoughts and actions. It can be conveyed verbally or stay confined as thoughts.

- *Interpersonal communication* – a one-on-one conversation that takes place between two individuals who change their roles of sender and receiver in order to communicate in an effective manner.
- *Small Group communication* – involves more than two people who allow each other to interact and communicate with the rest. For example, it can be in a form of team meetings, or classroom discussions.
- *Public communication* – involves a large gathering of people for public discussions like election campaigns, and public speeches. Typically, involves one sender and several receivers of information.

## NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Is the transfer of information through the use of body language including eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. For instance, smiling when you meet someone conveys friendliness, acceptance, and openness. Everyone uses nonverbal communication all the time whether they know it or not. Nonverbal communication plays a significant role in our lives, it can improve a person's ability to relate, engage and establish meaningful interactions in everyday life.

The forms of nonverbal communication are varied and provide extensive insight into a person's thoughts and/or feelings. Some of the key elements include:

- *Gestures* – body movements (hands, arms, and head) emphasis on communication and emotional state.
- *Facial expressions* – usually emotions are expressed with an element of verbal communication
- *Touch* – handshakes, hugs which help in building relationships.
- *Eye contact* – eyes are the main source of information, through movements builds an impression of closeness.
- *Tone of voice* – intonation of voice or the rhythm of speaking can convey different messages.
- *Para-language sounds* – signs of expression of feelings (laughter, crying, sighs).

- *Physical appearance and clothes* - express the relationship with the interlocutor.

Body language sends messages about emotions, attitudes, and personality. This is because we express our emotions most clearly through our body language. It is mainly in this way, as we cannot help it, as strong states such as guilt, shame, embarrassment, anger, boredom, and sexual excitement have strong physiological reactions. Our emotions can cause blushing, sweating, pupil dilations, changes in breathing, and so on.

The first key to effective communication is the first impression. It is essential that we are always presenting ourselves in a positive way, with confidence and specific behaviour. Nonverbal signs can result in feeling better in your companion encouraging them to speak and listen to you. Formulating the correct message is vital in a communication process as it increases the probability of our interlocutors understanding it. Some of the important points to include are:

- A high degree of accuracy in formulating information, expectations and emotions;
- A clear goal, the main points of the message;
- Orderly, logical flow of information;
- Commitment, enthusiasm of speech;
- Style matched to the recipient;
- Grammatical correctness;
- Monitoring the degree of understanding.

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are needed to speak appropriately with a wide variety of people; they can be trained and developed easily. Here are some of the essential communication skills:
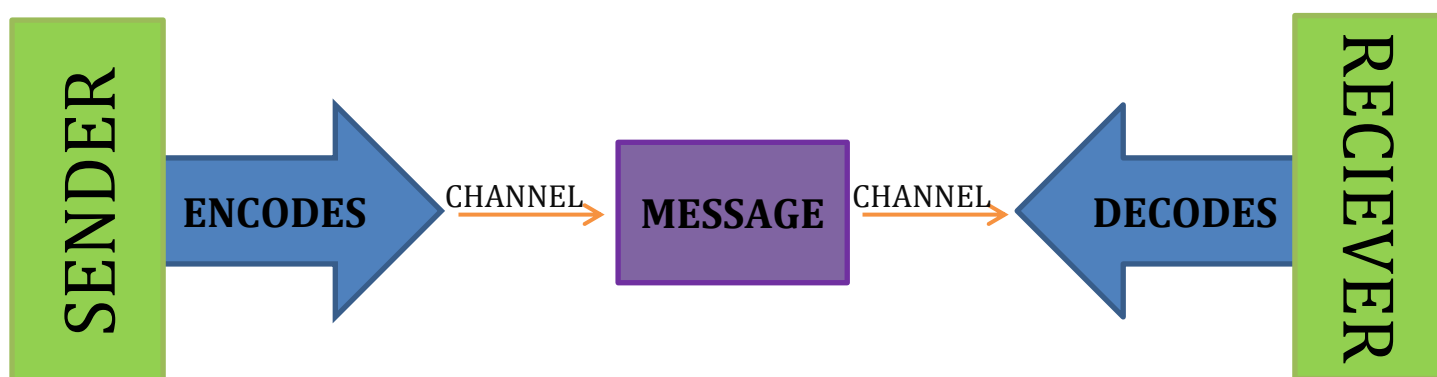
**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

**Verbal Communication**
Effective speaking

**Listening skills**
Active listening

**Non-verbal communication**
Tone & pitch of voice
Body language
Gestures

**PERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

**Personal appearance**
Dressing style
Facial expressions
Overall fitness
Tidiness

**Personal Presentation**
Marketing YOU

- *Active listening* – involves engaging with others and bringing empathy to the table to enhance the quality of our dialogue.

- *Clarity and concision* – clear, concise way of communication, making sure that the most important information is passed on.

- *Ability to ask questions* - sometimes mentioned along with 'reflective questioning', it involves, "restating a paraphrased version of the speaker's message, asking questions when appropriate, and maintaining moderate to high nonverbal conversational involvement" (Weger Jr et al., 2014: 13).

- *Engagement* – involves paying attention to the behavior and words of the interlocutor. Show your enthusiasm for students asking questions and expressing themselves.

- *Empathy* - the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

- *Feedback* – it is the information received after a specific action. When giving feedback, make sure you concentrate also on the positive sides.

- *Friendliness* - being seen as a friendly person can significantly raise the quality of communication you have with other people, as they will trust you more.

- *Open-mindedness* - instead of only getting your message across and forcing your ideas try to enter a dialogue with an open mind. Remember

that the objective is often exchanging ideas or creating solutions to problems.

## COMMUNICATION MODELS AND LISTENING IN COMMUNICATION

Effective communication occurs between people when the recipient understands the message as intended by the sender. In effective communication, the sender's information accurately reflects his/her intentions and the recipient's interpretation coincides with the sender's intentions. This is visible in the communication model presented below:

**SENDER** **ENCODES** CHANNEL → **MESSAGE** CHANNEL → **DECODES** **RECIEVER**

Source: https://mayecreate.com/blog/back-to-basics-the-basic-communication-model

Another important aspect of communication consists of not only speaking but also listening. When communicating, we have to make sure, our interlocutors are given equal access to voice, can express their feelings freely, and will be heard and understood. Communication differs depending on the fact with whom we communicate. Therefore, it is important to accordingly suit our communication techniques to the students we are communicating with during the lessons.

## COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Communication barriers are obstacles that hamper the communication process. Examples of obstacles can be:

- Conducting communication in a superior or condescending manner – when working with students it is important to feel support and while maintaining respect should not be feeling as worse.
- Use of fast and routinely expressed questions – this could suggest that you are not really interested in the message that you are receiving.
- Frequent interruptions for asking questions or meddling comments – it is important to avoid that behaviour as the fluency of talk suffers in such situations.
- Rare reference to the thoughts of our interlocutor – this suggests that you are concentrated more on yourself than on the message that you are receiving.

**Main types of behaviours and expressing them: passive; aggressive; self-confident and dominant**



**Aggressive**
"This is how we do it"

**Passive**
"I don't mind"

**Assertive**
"I can see that, but…"

**Passive communication.** Individuals with this kind of behaviour have developed a pattern of avoiding expressing their feelings and opinions, protecting their rights, and identifying and meeting their needs. Normally, passive communication is born out of low self-esteem. Typically, individuals believe: "I am not worth taking care of".

Passive individuals do not respond to hurtful or anger-including situations. Instead, they allow grievances and annoyances to mount, usually unaware of this build-up. Once they have reached their tolerance threshold for unacceptable

behaviours, they are likely to have explosive outbursts, which are usually out of proportion to the triggering incident. After the outburst, they feel guilt, shame, and confusion and return to being passive.

Passive communicators often:

- Fail to assert for themselves
- Allow others to inadvertently infringe on their rights
- Fail to express feelings, needs, or opinions
- Tend to speak softly or apologetically
- Exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body posture
- Feel anxious/depressed/confused because life seems out of their control, feel stuck and hopeless and ignore their own feelings

Typically, a passive communicator will say, believe or behave like:

- "I am unable to stand up for my rights"
- "People never consider my feelings"
- "I am weak and unable to take care of myself"
- "I get stepped on by everyone"

**Aggressive communication.** Refers to a style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Aggressive communicators are verbally and/or physically abusive. It is usually caused by past physical and/or emotional abuse, unhealed emotional wounds, and feelings of powerlessness.

Aggressive communicators often:

- try to dominate others
- use humiliation to control other
- criticize, blame, or attach others
- be very impulsive
- speak in a loud, demanding voice
- act threateningly and rudely

- not listen well
- use "you" statements
- blame others instead of owning their issues

The aggressive communicator typically behaves or believes like:
- "I am superior and right and you are inferior and wrong"
- "I am loud, bossy and pushy"
- "I can dominate and intimidate you"
- "I will get my way no matter what"
- "You owe me"
- "It is all your fault"

**Assertive communication.** A style of communication in which individuals state their opinions and feelings; they advocate for their needs and rights without violating the rights of others. Assertive communication is built upon self-confidence. These individuals value themselves, their time, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs and strong advocate for themselves while being respectful of the rights of others.
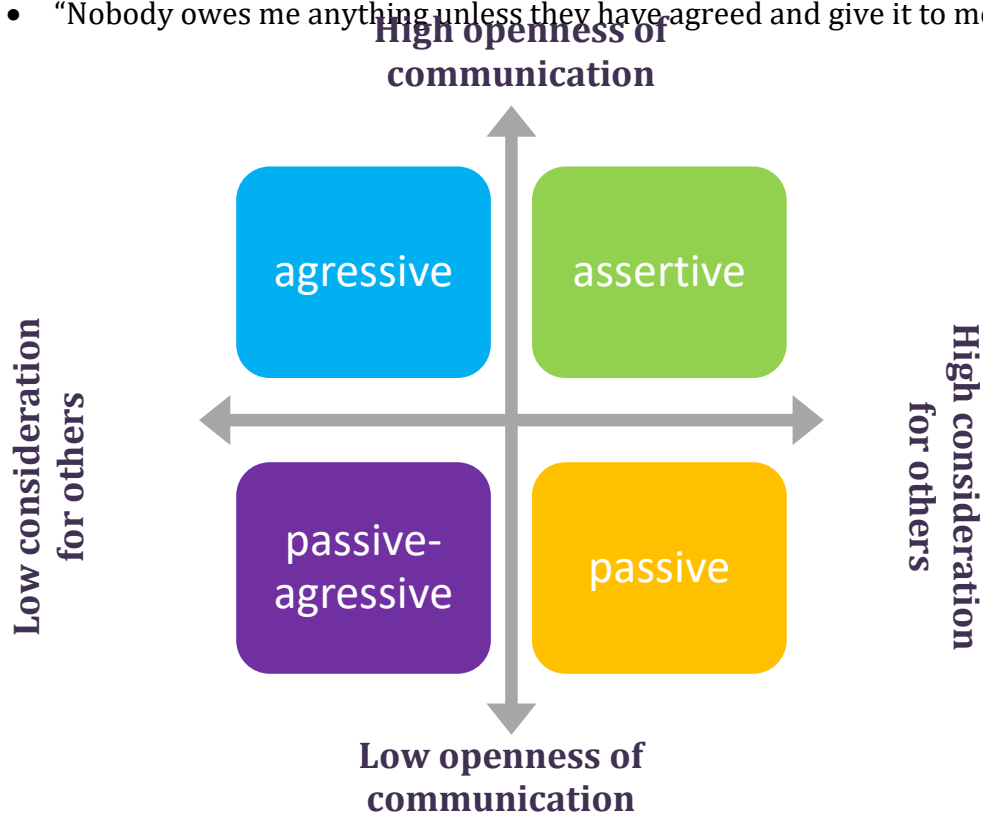
Self-confident communicators:
- state needs and wants clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- express feelings clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- use "I" statements
- communicate respect for others
- listen well without interrupting
- have good eye contact
- have a relaxed body posture

The assertive communicator believes or behaves in a way that says:
- "I am confident about who I am."
- "I speak clearly, honestly, and to the point."
- "I am 100% responsible for my own happiness."

- "I am responsible for getting my needs met in a respectful manner."
- "Nobody owes me anything unless they have agreed and give it to me."



# DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE, STEP BY STEP

**Total duration: 3h**

| Setting: | Classroom | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outcomes: | **Improving communication skills in students, recognise and interpret verbal and non-verbal signs in conflict, main types of behaviours, and ways of expressing it** | | |
| Contents | 1. Active Listening Games<br>2. Assertive Communication activities<br>3. Role-playing<br>4. Communication in daily life | Duration for each activity: | 1. 30 min<br>2. 60 min<br>3. 60 min<br>4. 20 min<br>5. 15 min |
| Activities description (step by step) | **1. WHAT DO YOU HEAR?**<br><br>This game is easy to play but not so easy to "win." It requires participants' full attention and active listening. Gather your group of participants together and hand out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil to each player. Tell them you will give them verbal instructions on drawing an object, one step at a time. For example, you might give them instructions like: Draw a circle within the square, such that it fits exactly in the middle of the square. Intersect 2 lines through the circle, dividing the circle into 4 equal parts. The exercise can become progressively more difficult with every instruction, and unless the group has listened to the instructions carefully, there can be no hopes of completing the exercise successfully (https://plentifun.com/).<br><br>**2. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION GAMES**<br><br>Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-7 people. Write out a list of non-verbal behaviours.<br>Have the groups act out and interpret the meanings of these behaviours. This activity helps participants recognize nonverbal communication cues from others. Within their groups, have students display one of the nonverbal behaviours, while everyone else in the group shares or writes down what nonverbal message they are receiving.<br><br>Non-verbal behaviours can include:<br>➢ Leaning back in a chair with arms crossed;<br>➢ Leaning forward in a chair;<br>➢ Smiling; | Type of activity:<br><br>Group work | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ➢ Frowning;<br>➢ Yawning;<br>➢ Nodding;<br>➢ Resting chin in both hands;<br>➢ Resting chin on knuckles;<br>➢ Rubbing your temples;<br>➢ Tapping fingers on the table;<br>➢ Looking at your watch;<br>➢ Staring around the room;<br><br>Ask the participants afterward to share their small-group findings. Ask the class if anyone has ever experienced a nonverbal cue that signalled to them much stronger than any words? Chances are that they have, and this provides context from their direct experience.<br><br>**3. SITUATION SAMPLES**<br><br>Have a list of scenarios where assertive communication would be the most effective. Offer the teens an opportunity to practice responses to the situations. Have them demonstrate aggressive, passive, and then assertive styles.<br><br>When they know the difference, the better they may practice it in real-life scenarios.<br>Some sample scenarios could be:<br>• You are standing in line at the school cafeteria and two salespeople are engrossed in a deep conversation ignoring you.<br>• Your teacher graded a paper that you feel should have received a higher mark.<br>• Someone calls you a name that is hurtful.<br><br>Go through various options for responses and get the teens brainstorming.<br><br>**4. ROLE-PLAYING**<br><br>Put the group into pairs and have them play different roles. Have the teens brainstorm scenarios from the past where they wish they had been more assertive.<br>This gives students the chance to learn from mistakes, and the empowerment to express their needs during the next uncomfortable situation. Have a list of possible scenarios ready, just in case the brainstorming does not produce enough opportunities to explore.<br><br>**5. Communication styles** | Nonverbal communication<br><br><br><br><br>Brainstorming<br><br><br><br><br>Role-play | |

| | Describe your communication style. How do you communicate with peers and what do you think should improve? | Reflection | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| **Materials/ Supplies:** | Pens, blank sheets, flipchart, flipchart markers, Power Point, *Mentimeter* |
|---|---|

## 3. PRINCIPLES AND TASK OF EDUCATIONAL PEER MEDIATION. CO-MEDIATION.

## Learning Objective

Provide knowledge about problem solving within the educational sphere

## Learning Outcomes

- Timely and painless conflict resolutions
- Improving communication through individual and group approaches
- Learn how to engage in a timely and meaningful manner to avoid the development of problems, escalation of tension, stress and dissatisfaction in community members

## Key elements

- Peer mediation
- Co-mediation
- Communication with groups
- Escalation of conflict
- Strategies to deal with conflict

## Methods used

Theoretical presentation and Practical activities.

## SHORT THEORETICAL PRESENTATION

### Key elements of Peer-mediation in schools

**Mediation:** corresponds to the process whereby individuals, together with the support of a neutral person, systematically isolate disputed issues to develop alternatives and reach a consensual settlement that will adjust to their needs. This process emphasises the participants' own responsibility for making decisions that will directly affect their lives.

**Peer mediation** requires two trained student mediators helping two students in conflict through a coordinated process to achieve a resolution of the conflict.

This type of mediation offers a dispute resolution procedure by which students are actively involved in resolving their own disputes, and the peer mediation programmes are normally coordinated by school staff that are trained in mediation, who offer continuing supervision and assistance to student mediators (NSW Government, n.d.[1]).

### The benefits associated with this kind of mediation can be:

✓ An alternative solution to effectively solve conflicts. Mediation sessions result in an agreement that satisfies not only the parties, but teachers, administrators, and parents; it encourages their peers to discuss all issues in dispute, not only the precipitating incidents;

✓ Development of vital social skills. Communicate effectively, understand the consequences of actions, produce and evaluate alternative resolutions to problems, coexist with people with whom they are in disagreement;

✓ Motivation to resolve conflicts collaboratively. It is a process influenced by students, where the procedures and students model behaviour in terms of

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[1] https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/peer-mediation/primary-whole-package.pdf.pdf

problem solving (i.e., students learn from their peers through mediation how to resolve conflicts peaceably);

✓ Heightening of the educational impact of school. Peer mediation can be a teaching tool that offers strategies to solve conflicts, using mutual benefit rather than intimidation; it's a non-punitive technique that encourages students to take responsibility for their actions;

✓ Empowerment of students. It encourages children and youngsters to resolve their own conflicts in a supervised setting but do not exonerate them from their responsibility;

✓ Enhancing of self-esteem. It enhances self-confidence in the ability to make difference in the lives of their, and the feeling of being successful;

✓ Offer of a greater insight. Students understand by being a peer mediator, that conflicts it's not limited by right vs. wrong or us vs. them, but rather can perceive a conflict as a complex process and a result of misunderstanding and differing needs; it helps to understand different points of view and to develop diversity awareness;

✓ More time for learning. Teachers can spend their valuable time teaching whereas students are not distracted and know how to resolve conflicts before they escalate, and get to a peaceful resolution.
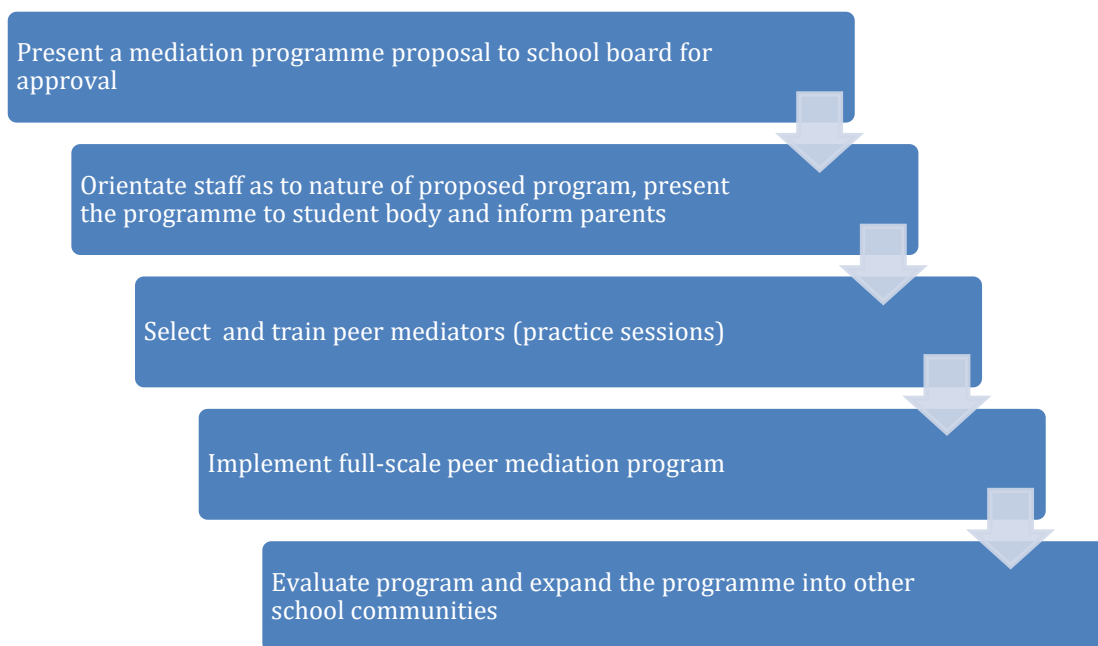
The first key element of importance when determining a peer mediation program is to achieve a **commitment of support from the management and staff of the targeted school**. Without the complete support and collaboration of the administration, regarding both financial and organizational assistance with the day-to-day processes of the program, a peer mediation program will not be effective. It is often the school staff who will actually be introducing and explaining the mediation program to the students and recommend students to be considered for selection as peer mediators in the mediation programs. To achieve staff and teachers' support, it is required to convince them that a peer mediation program will be advantageous to the school community. The majority of peer mediation programs have several basic operational rules.

The programs typically consider that the disputants must agree on the following:

- Begin the process of mediation.
- Not fight during the process.
- No put-downs or name-calling.
- Only one person will speak at a time.
- All participants will be honest.
- The confidentiality of all conversations during the program will be respected.

These guidelines of the peer mediation programmes are meant to guarantee fairness and impartiality to all parties involved and a "win-win" resolution, i.e., that will benefit both parties. By attaining a result equally satisfactory to each party, the mediation programs show students that there does not need to be a losing party. The peer-mediation programs also attempt to build an alternate to violence and conflict within the school community as a technique to resolve students' problems that students will carry with them into their adult lives. Namely, by using conflict mediation on a daily basis, students build an environment of cooperation that will expand beyond the problems being mediated. This has the potential to benefit them long-term, in their future career and as a member of the society. To set a proper mediation programme within the school a certain process must be respected.

The following is a list of steps to be followed when establishing a peer mediation program within a school (Addapted from Harper, 1993):

Present a mediation programme proposal to school board for approval

Orientate staff as to nature of proposed program, present the programme to student body and inform parents

Select and train peer mediators (practice sessions)

Implement full-scale peer mediation program

Evaluate program and expand the programme into other school communities

There are several common reasons given for the implementation of a peer mediation program within schools, such as:

- Approach the conflict in the schools with training.
- Establish a better way of dealing with conflict rather than using expulsion, detention, etc.
- Enhance communication between all parties involved.
- Decrease violence, vandalism, suspension, and school absence.
- Encourage dispute resolution skills for students and staff.
- Enhance student interest in the legal system, conflict resolution, justice, and citizenship activity.
- Shift the problem-solving responsibility to students and thus allow teachers to concentrate on educating students instead of disciplining them.
- Improve the basic social skills of listening, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- Prepare students to live in a multicultural world by emphasizing listening to other points of view.

- Address problems which are unique to young people and are difficult for students to take to adults.

## CO-MEDIATION

Co-mediation involves multiple mediators, normally two, who may complement each through diversity (e.g. gender, personality, cultural or professional background, etc.) in a way that can enhance the quality of the mediation process as well as its outcome. The main **goals** of co-mediation can be considered as to (Epstein & Epstein, 2006):

- Offer an extra set of eyes and ears to help resolve the conflict;
- Plan the mediation process before it starts;
- Speed up the mediation process and promote timely agreement of the parties;
- Assist efficient follow-up after the mediation process is completed.

### Advantages and disadvantages of Co-mediation

Although co-mediation can bring a lot of advantages it can also bring some disadvantages. For example, even though co-mediation provides an opportunity to model co-operative behaviour, it also provides an opportunity to model inflexible behaviour. Bellow you can find some advantages, disadvantages and tips for effective co-mediation (Foley, 2017):

### ADVANTAGES

- Modelling of behaviours.
- More ideas and perspective taking – "two heads are better than one".
- Extra help in handling practical aspects of mediation (e.g., maintaining eye contact, checking on engagement level, observing body language, etc.)
- Avoiding unethical and unsuitable behaviour.
- Sharing of the roles and tasks (practical/logistical and emotional).
- Creative way to solve conflict.
- Gives opportunity to learn new approaches in mediation, to develop experience, knowledge and skills.

- Someone to assist when impartiality is challenged.
- Balance in gender, personality, cultural and professional background.

### DISADVANTAGES AND RISKS

- Power imbalances between mediators (e.g.; one mediator monopolise the process; "My way is the best way").
- Incompatible mediation styles (different skills, procedures).
- Imbalance in gender, personality, cultural or professional background.
- Learning bad habits.

### * TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE CO-MEDIATION

- Be thoughtful with your co-mediator.
- Learn to respect the differences and create connections.
- Clarify your expectations of each other and prevent working for conflicting principles.
- Preparation is a key aspect (focus on mediation principles, purpose, and process).
- Communicate, collaborate, and cooperate at each step of the process;
- Give space to silence.
- Timing is everything: time interventions with rather than against your co-mediator.
- Be open, honest, and transparent.

## TIMELY AND PAINLESS CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS IN PEER MEDIATION

Escalation is more likely to appear when the parties share a history of antagonism, view the conflict as win-lose, and when the conflict is thought to threaten central values or critical resources. Typically, as one participant escalates tactics, it is reciprocated by others resulting in vicious escalatory spirals and an overall intensification of the conflict. This typically results in the broadening of the scope of the conflict (an increase in the number and size of the issues), the use of

ever heavier tactics, and the involvement of more participants. As conflict escalates, and the intensity of conflict crosses certain thresholds, important psychological, social, and community-based changes occur. With conflict intensification, we see a shift in motives from doing well or problem-solving to reducing loss or, eventually, to harming the other as much as possible. As conflicts intensify, the quality of communications between the disputants transforms from direct discussions and negotiations to autistic hostilities where communication is non-existent except through direct attacks. In addition, loosely knit, politically inactive sets of individuals develop into well-organized conflict groups that become capable of challenging the perceived threat. As a result, strong norms develop supporting a contentious approach to the conflict (Coleman, et. al, 2005).

## UNDERSTANDING ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

Behaviour escalates when a variety of responses appears in a subsequent pattern in which successive responses are of heightened severity or intensity. There are seven stages of behavioural escalation (Shukla-Mehta, 2002), as well as some strategies to use in each step of the escalation.

1. **CALM** - The student is calm and cooperative.

Strategy: Reinforce calm and on-task behaviour; Establish expectations; Teach procedures and routines; Use high rates of positive acknowledgement

2. **TRIGGER** - The student experiences conflicts or situations that trigger their behaviour to escalate.

Strategy: Modify the environment; Change the task/distract; Provide support

3. **AGITATION** - The student loses focus, and becoming visibly upset; might challenge authority or avoid situational factors they find stressful.

Strategy: Employ active listening; Use empathy; Provide reassurance; Reduce or remove demands

4. **ACCELERATION** - If the conflict continues to be unresolved, the behaviour of the student will escalate and may become more intense; it becomes very hard to engage in rational discussion.

Strategy: Give brief verbal redirection; allow processing time/wait; Provide physical space; Move others away

5. **PEAK** - The students are not in control of their emotions or behaviour and will likely exhibit self-injury, shouting, swearing or destroying objects.

Strategy: Minimise verbal interaction; Take evasive action if necessary; monitor and ensure safety

6. **DE-ESCALATION** - The student calms down and a drop in the intensity of the expressed emotion becomes visible.

Strategy: Speak calmly; Acknowledgement student's feelings; Emphasise fresh start

7. **RECOVERY** - The student's behaviour drops to their usual baseline and they appear calmer; may express regret or fear; some have difficulty expressing their emotions when in this phase.

Strategy: Reinforce appropriate behaviour; Offer support when calm; re-establish routine.

Thomas and Kilmann identified **five conflict management styles**:

- Accommodating - when you cooperate to a high degree. It may be at your own expense and work against your own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other party is the expert or has a better solution. It can also be effective for preserving future relations with the other party.

- Avoiding - when you simply avoid the issue. You aren't helping the other party reach their goals, and you aren't assertively pursuing your own. This works when the issue is trivial or when you have no chance of winning. It

can also be effective when the issue would be very costly or when the atmosphere is emotionally charged, and you need to create some space. Sometimes, issues will resolve themselves, but "hope is not a strategy." In general, avoiding is not a good long-term strategy.

- Collaborating - when you partner or pair up with the other party to achieve both of your goals. It's how you break free of the "win-lose" paradigm and seek the "win-win." This can be effective for complex scenarios where you need to find a novel solution. This can also mean reframing the challenge to create a bigger space and room for everybody's ideas. The downside is that it requires a high degree of trust and reaching a consensus can require a lot of time and effort to get everybody on board and to synthesize all of the ideas;

- Competing - the "win-lose" approach. You act in a very assertive way to achieve your goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party, and it may be at the expense of the other party. This approach may be appropriate for emergencies when time is of the essence or when you need quick, decisive action, and people are aware of and support the approach.

- Compromising - the "lose-lose" scenario where neither party really achieves what they want. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It may be appropriate for scenarios where you need a temporary solution or where both sides have equally important goals. The trap is falling into compromising as an easy way out when collaborating would produce a better solution. By knowing your own default patterns, you improve your self-awareness. Once you are aware of your own patterns, you can pay attention to whether they are working for you, and you can explore alternatives. By using a scenario-based approach, you can choose more effective conflict management styles and test their effectiveness (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

These authors also identify some **key conflict resolution** strategies:

- **Problem-solving negotiations:** When both the goal and the relationship are highly important to the students, problem-solving negotiations are initiated to resolve the conflict. Solutions are sought that ensure both students fully achieve their goals and that any tensions or negative feelings between the two are dissipated.

- **Smoothing**: When the goal is of little importance, but the relationship is of high importance, one person gives up their goals so that the other person can achieve theirs.

  This is done to maintain the highest-quality relationship possible. If the teacher detects that one student's goals or interests in the conflict are much stronger than the others, the teacher can facilitate a smoothing of the conflict. Smoothing should be done with good humour.

- **Forcing or win-lose negotiations**: When the goal is very important, but the relationship is not, students will seek to achieve their own goals at the expense of the other person's goals. They do so by forcing or persuading the other person to yield. They are competing for a win.

- **Compromising:** When both the goal and the relationship are moderately important, and it appears that neither person can have their way, the students will need to give up part of their goals, and possibly sacrifice part of the relationship, in order to reach an agreement. Compromising may involve meeting in the middle or flipping a coin. Compromising is often used when students wish to engage in problem-solving negotiations but do not have the time to do so.

- **Withdrawing:** When the goal is not important to the student and neither is the relationship, a student may wish to give up their goal completely and avoid the issue with the person. Sometimes it is good for both students to withdraw from the conflict until they have calmed down and are in control of their feelings.

During a conflict negotiation, it is also **important to highlight the importance** of:

- **Empathy**: the pillar of good communication and the connection between teacher and student, which allows one to understand each other's feelings and motivations;
- **Assertiveness**: being able to expose your point of view, emotions, or opinions without provoking a defensive attitude, through a self-affirmative phrase that tells students what to think without blaming you, not putting you as an opponent. Being assertive requires understanding limitations to do another.

The teacher when negotiating a conflict must establish their position and build self-confidence thus limiting abuse situations without attacking students;

- **Active listening**: a tool is useful to obtain more information, corroborating data so that the student knows that he was heard. When we listen actively, we are asking, paraphrasing, asking for clarification, defining, and contextualizing. Some ways of they appear can be by echo, repetition of what the other said, reformulation, expressing in words what was understood, resolving points or questions, summarizing and ordering information or reflection of the feeling, an expression of what we perceive of the other; and
- **Feedback**: the teacher must support and encourage positive behaviour, correcting the inappropriate ones. To put feedback into practice, it is necessary to let the student know what the teacher feels and what he thinks.

That way, thinking of the joint construction of solutions to the conflict, through the correct use of empathy, assertiveness, active listening, and feedback can make those involved in the conflict evaluate their actions and rethink their attitudes, discovering ways to solve the problems, trying to maintain respect and balance. Knowing how to listen, evaluate, rethink with everyone involved in the conflict, creating the habit of dialog. Because when those involved in the conflict

participate in the construction of possible actions for solutions, relationships can be restored, and the conflict constructively resolved.

Therefore, classroom conflicts when managed constructively contribute to the preservation of interpersonal bonds and promote the socio-emotional skills of involved, since it makes possible to develop skills to know how to see reality from the perspective of the other, knowing how to cooperate, and also learn that conflict is an opportunity for growth and maturation.

## COMMUNICATION – INDIVIDUAL *VS* GROUP APPROACH

The distinction between group communication and individual communication is that group communication is frequently related to a unified voice within the group. For example, a team of teachers must all agree on what should and should not be included in a course curriculum; therefore, the final draft should be approved by all members before their target audiences (in this case students) are able to see the finished product. Thus, group communication is a coalition between multiple members that enables one group's mentality and one group thinking. Individual communications in the other hand, is the act of communicating an idea not including the cooperation of other team members. Each idea created is merely of one individual and is up to the individual to execute a plan to undertake his/her goal or main objective. Since individual communication in a one on one interaction with other, it allows continuous feedback based on each parties input and that allows a better understanding of each other thoughts, opinions, and point of view. In that way, it is possible to respond directly to each other. In the other hand, group communication is contact between more than two people, and it relies on the prior understanding of the group objectives and culture or social norms. When communicating in a group, individuals do not provide feedback directly to one another, but they provide feedback to be addressed by the entire group. Therefore, every individual's input is necessary to help the group comprehend the objectives so that the whole group can arrive at mutual understanding and benefit from it.

## COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is a two-way process that involves effort and skills by both sender and receiver during the process of mediation. Some communication skills that mediators must develop can be summarized as:

a) **Practice active listening**. Engaging with what people say by giving affirmative replies and asking follow up questions to show that you are paying attention. Effective listening skills can be developed. How to listen actively?

✓ Listen more than talk; you cannot listen if you are talking; ask questions.

✓ Put the talker at ease and have an environment they feel comfortable in, smile and use positive body language such as nodding.

✓ Show them you want to listen, look and act interested, use verbal indicators to show that you are following what they are saying.

✓ Focus your mind on what is being said and stay in the present moment, avoid doing other things while listening (e.g. shuffling papers).

✓ Do not rush them to finish, a pause doesn't always mean that the speaker has finished what they are saying.

✓ Observe the tone, volume and the message not just words, you want to get the whole picture, not just bits and pieces.

✓ Don't interrupt; everyone deserves an equal chance to be heard. If a person is cut off or interrupted while presenting an important idea, he or she is likely to feel unappreciated.

✓ Don't jump to conclusions and don't assume you know what the speaker is going to say.

✓ Appear genuinely interested in the conversation by making encouraging responses or paraphrasing certain comments to show you're, summarize the key elements of what each of you said.

✓ Avoid to turn the conversation to your experiences and opinions and to find immediate solutions to problems you may be hearing.

b) **Pay attention on nonverbal communication**. Controlling nonverbal cues can help prevent miscommunication so attention to your facial expressions and body language when you are speaking with someone (e.g., maintain eye contact, limit hand gestures).

c) **Provide and ask for feedback**. Ask your peers for their advice a perspective on your communication skills to understand how you are coming across in several contexts.

d) **Develop a filter**. Effective communicators generally have highly developed social skills and can modulate how they express their thoughts and feelings to those around them. Know what's appropriate to express in different interpersonal contexts. Developing a filter will help supplement other communication techniques and ensure that you maintain a certain level of decorum and avoid conflict in the workplace.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE, STEP BY STEP

**Total duration:3h**

| Setting: | Classroom | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outcomes: | Understand the principles of co-mediation and how to apply strategies to communicate effectively and apply effective conflict resolution strategies | | |
| Contents | 1. Peer mediation<br>2. Co-mediation<br>3. Escalation of conflict<br>4. Communication skills | Duration for each activity: | 1. 30min<br>2. 1h<br>3. 1h<br>4. 1h |

| Activities description (step by step) | 1. **PEER MEDIATION**<br>**OBJECTIVES:**<br>- Explain the Key elements of Peer-mediation in schools<br>- Show the main steps of setting a mediation programme in schools<br>Exercise:<br>Form groups of 4-5 people and ask them to brainstorm on the necessary steps to set a peer mediation programme in a school. Encourage them to draw a scheme of what this process could look like and what are the key elements of each of the steps. After the brainstorming (15min), all groups presents their conclusion.<br><br>2. **CO-MEDIATION**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br>-Explain co-mediation<br>-Present advantages and disadvantages of co-mediation<br>-Offer tips on co-mediation<br>Explain the principles of co-mediation and reflect together with the trainees what are the advantages and disadvantages of co-mediation<br><br>3. **ESCALATION OF CONFLICT**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br>- Explain how the escalation of conflict works<br>- Show the steps of the escalation of conflict<br>- Explore conflict management styles and strategies<br><br>Divide participants in groups of 4-5. Ask them to recall a challenging conflict that they had to mediate. Ask them to identify in that particular situation the different stages of escalation of conflict and to reflect on what was the most difficult and what strategies they applied or should have applied to solve the conflict.<br>You may provide a table for participants to fill with the main conclusions: | Type of activity:<br><br><br><br><br><br>Exercise |

| Steps of the escalation | The most challenging aspects | Strategies I applied | What could I do better? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |
| 7. | | | |

4. **Communication skills**

**OBJECTIVES**
- Explain the difference between group and individual communication
- Explore communication skills

Exercise:
Ask participants to get a piece of paper (preferably A4). Ask them to close their eyes and to follow the trainer instruction without opening their eyes. Provide the following instructions:

- Fold the paper in half.
- Rip the top right corner
- Fold the paper again.
- Rip the lower left corner.

Don't provide any instruction beyond these 4 points even if the participants ask for them. After finalizing the 4 steps ask the participants to open their eyes and compare the paper with each other. All will look different. Ask them: If the instructions were the same for all, why the result is so different? Discuss about the importance of communicating clearly and assertively and how nonverbal communication has a crucial role. Ask them to reflect on the main communication skills that are essential during the mediation process.

# 4. MAIN STEPS IN CONDUNCTING A SCHOOL MEDIATION SESSION BETWEEN PEERS

## Learning Objectives

The objective of this module is that students learn the necessary skills to guide the participants in a conflict by conducting a school mediation session between peers. Learning to mediate between peers teaches certain social skills such as the use of certain tools that not only in the classroom but also in our personal, social and family life.

## Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this module, students will deepen their knowledge on:

- Clarifying the history behind a conflict
- Shifting from a non-constructive to a constructive dialogue
- Methods for reaching a balance and restoring relations between the parties in a conflict
- Techniques for separating facts and circumstances from opinions

## Key elements

This module introduces the following key theoretical elements:

- factors are important in the history of a conflict and the recommended roles to be played by the peer mediator
- basic constructive dialogue
- methodologies for keeping relationships in balance
- the importance of separating fact from opinion

## Methods used

The selection of methods to carry out in this module will be activities oriented to train, deepen the theory by focusing on reflection activities, role playing and debates.

# SHORT THEORETICAL PRESENTATION

## HOW CAN WE CLARIFY THE HISTORY OF A CONFLICT?

When we talk about conflict, we may be thinking about the disagreement or opposition that may exist between two people or more due to a situation of opposing interests.

A conflict can have its origin in different reasons or causes such as communication failures, different interests and roles, personal or cultural differences, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships or an absence of norms or rules that result in undesirable behaviours and even serious behaviours such as aggressions and physical-verbal violence.

During this section, we are going to see how the life of a conflict takes place and which points are important to address in each one of them:

**1. Exposure of the problem by the parties involved**: Each of the people involved in the conflict will have time to explain, tell their points of view, emotions and feelings they have, always with the intention of respecting the point of view of the other and accepting the values of the other.

**2. Debate:** Once the people involved have exposed their ideas and points of view, they will be able to expose their opinions about it, during a debate that will organically form when there is a situation of conflict.

**3. Discussion:** This part occurs when people do not agree with each other and the parties do not reach any agreement.

**4. Conflict:** This is the point where none of the parties involved are willing to give in, there is no consensus on the main ideas of the problem and there is no negotiation.

## FROM NON-CONSTRUCTIVE TO CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

As we have already seen in the previous section, it is important that the parties to the conflict do their part to try to find solutions to a problem through

communication in the presentation of ideas. Dialogue can be a facilitating tool in the process of peer mediation.

To move from non-constructive to constructive dialogue, the person in charge of being present in the peer mediation will be in charge of making sure that both parties respect certain behaviours and facts that we are going to describe below in order for the communication to work.

- The peer mediator is in charge of communicating the rules and establishing the limits to be carried out as well as the location of the session.



- Each person will speak in turn, respecting the other person and communicating assertively.

- The mediator will be in charge of the time that each person can enjoy and that the previously established rules are complied with.

- Each person will relate the facts as he/she has lived them. It is important that the space is the most appropriate to avoid more tensions than those already experienced.

- Each person will try to focus on the conflict situation, avoiding other parallel facts, comments, unclarified questions or doubts that may arise.

- Each part involved in the conflict has the right to disagree.

- Even if the parties do not reach an agreement, now each of them can communicate their feelings and emotions that they have or that they have experienced. This aspect is quite personal so it is important that it should not be forced if the person does not feel comfortable to express their feelings.

-  Finally, we can mention that, if they follow the guidelines described above, the communicative climate will improve and the constructive dialogue will improve the situation before the conflict.

## METHODS FOR ACHIEVING BALANCE AND RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PARTIES OF A CONFLICT.

The development of a conflict as the skills that we can use to establish the balance between the parties involved, may not be enough to solve the conflict. There are methodologies that help us to establish relationships between the parties to a conflict. Mediation is one of them and below we will explain others that are useful:

1. **Arbitration** is a method that gives the parties involved the opportunity to tell the facts they have experienced and the mediator tries to help them. Through arbitration the idea is that each one can **listen** to the arguments of the other.

2. **Facilitation** is a methodology that as its word says its intention is to facilitate, that is to say to help the **dialogue** between the people who have the conflict through the mediator.

3. **Negotiation** is a technique that mainly involves the two people to find a solution to the conflict, that is, the intention is to seek **cooperation** and the mediator guides the parties involved if in the process of conflict resolution process does not advance the process.

4. **Engagement** is a technique in which the parties involved in the conflict reach agreements in which they commit themselves to carry out in order to reduce the conflict burden. It should be emphasized that the **agreements** must be realistic and simple so that the commitments to execute them are comfortable and feasible.

5. **Collaboration** is a methodology that involves the parties involved working together, i.e., **teamwork** to achieve a goal, in the case of peer mediation it would be to resolve a major disagreement or conflict. That is why comfortable goals should be set for both parties to carry them out.

## TECHNIQUES FOR SEPARATING FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES FROM OPINIONS.

In this part of the module it is important to emphasize the differences between fact and opinion in a theoretical way in order to apply it to practice.

➢ A fact is an idea, situation or event verifiable through the senses. It is real and objective. For example: this is an apple

➢ An opinion is the expression of a thought, feeling or judgment arising from a situation or event. For example: This is a delicious apple

➢ The point of view is the social, cultural, generational or other position from which a subject is approached; for example, from a religious, medical, legal, etc. point of view.



**Feedback** is a technique that consists on describing the objective facts in a given situation. Observe what has happened and relate the facts as they have lived or have occurred.

This technique helps us not only to improve our communication but also to observe, listen and separate certain facts.

- It is important to convey a positive message
- Keep sentences short
- Avoid generalities such as always, never…
- Use the, although for him, but to reduce the negative charge in the communication.

The *sandwich* is a feedback technique that consists of giving a positive message, a negative one and finally a positive one. This technique is very useful because, although there is some component of improvement, the person who receives it will feel more

comfortable since there are two positive aspects compared to the only negative one.

The *washing machine* is a very visual sandwich-like feedback technique that can be used for all ages. The washing machine is a metaphor for applying negatives, positives, compromises and desires between the parties involved. It can be used to name the facts and opinions in the given conflict.

| WASHING MACHINE | | |
|---|---|---|
| DIRTY CLOTHING | WASHING MACHINE | CLEAN CLOTHING |
| **Description:** Dirty laundry is a parallel to negative events, discomfort, negative views, unwanted behaviors. | **Description:** The washing machine is a parallel to that possible compromises, solutions that facts and opinions can be implemented in mediation. | **Description:** The clean clothes is a parallelism of the positive deeds that we can carry out and that are going to come if our agreements and commitments in the face of conflict we carry them out |
|  |  |  |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE, STEP BY STEP

**Total duration: 3h**

| Setting: | Classroom | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outcomes: | conducting a peer mediation session, identifying constructive communication, how to conduct feedback, and differentiating facts from opinion | | |
| Contents | 1. Fact or opinion<br>2. Constructive dialogue<br>3. Technics for educational mediation between peers<br>4. Clarify the history conflict | Duration for each activity: | 1. 15 min<br>2. 60 min<br>3. 60 min<br>4. 20 min<br>5. 15 min |
| Activities description (step by step) | **1. THERMOMETER**<br><br>This activity is about students knowing how to differentiate between facts and opinions.<br>The group is in the classroom standing up, each end of the room will be the poles of a thermometer, cold for the false answer and hot for the correct answer. The teacher, volunteer or student will say the phrases out loud.<br>If an answer is marked as correct when it is false, they must justify it.<br>Examples:<br>- You have frowned<br>- I wish you wouldn't talk to me so loudly.<br>- You speak too fast<br>- You shouldn't have thrown the paper on the floor.<br>- You should not be disturbed<br>- You have disturbed<br>- The sun is hot<br>- It's hot<br><br>**It is important to train these aspects and to distinguish facts from emotions, feelings and desires (opinions).*<br>**Trick: The fact is what we see simply through our senses; the rest would be opinions (value judgments).*<br><br>**2. THREE OF CONSTRUCTIVE!**<br><br>We divide the group into groups of three. Two people will represent the different parties to a conflict and the third will be the mediator. The activity is about each one carrying out a constructive communication by carrying out the steps mentioned in the theory.<br><br>It is important to look for conflicts that young people are interested social networks<br>- Teenage love<br>- Conflict with the teacher<br>- Conflict with parents<br>- Violent communication, etc.<br><br>You will have 15 minutes to prepare the discussion, how to carry out the constructive dialogue and the agreements that will be made. | Type of activity:<br><br><br>Individual reflection<br><br><br><br>Reflection & Role-play | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Each group will represent for the whole group their choice.<br><br>Small groups can write on the blackboard or paper the conflict they are going to discuss.<br><br>They will expose their conflict.<br><br>When they have finished, the rest of the group will comment on observations and if they have constructed the dialogue correctly, if they have reached agreements, if the situation is realistic or if they feel reflected in the example.<br><br>Materials: Blackboard<br><br>**3. ARE YOU HUNGRY? TODAY SANDWICH!**<br><br>The activity involves the group dividing into pairs and using the sandwich technique to reach agreements. Each person should say or describe personal aspects of that person, two positive and one negative. This way the positive reinforcement will be greater and personal satisfaction will not be damaged.<br><br>** *If the activity is fun and they like it, they can use the washing machine technique as a continuation of the activity.*<br><br>**4. ROLE-PLAYING: GETTING CLOSER TO REALITY**<br><br>The activity will be conducted as a peer mediation session as real as possible.<br><br>The class will have to choose:<br><br>• Two mediators (boy and girl).<br>• People involved (boy and girl)<br>• The conflict (insult, fight, bullying)<br><br>The people who will lead the mediation will stand in a crescent in front of the rest of their classmates.<br><br>The rest of the group will not be able to intervene, speak, disturb during the mediation session, only OBSERVE.<br><br>Two people of this group will take notes, of the things that are said, important points of the conflict, techniques used, and agreements if they are reached.<br><br>At the end of the session, the group together with the notes taken by the partners will give their opinion, improvements and which aspects are important and which are not. | Reflection<br><br><br>Role-play | |

| Materials/<br>Supplies: | **Pens, blank sheets, flipchart, flipchart markers, Power Point, Mentimeter** |
|---|---|

# 5. NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

## Learning Objectives

The general aim of Module 5 – the last part of the training programme under IO4 – is to navigate students through the process of "non-violent communication" (NVC) as a pathway to manage better their feelings and connect with their compassionate nature for being able to handle a difficult situation in a non-hostile way. Through the module's theoretical and practical resources, young learners have the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge for natural communication via specific techniques that can help them deal with negative emotions and mental stress; often the root of problems and conflicts in the educational environment.

## Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of module 5 are addressed to students as end-users of training programme and are the following:

- Strengthen the cultivation of soft skills, with emphasis on the skill of empathy as core feature of NVC with adaptable methods.
- Offer knowledge and resources to every student to practice NVC, by learning how to build healthier relationships with their peers.
- Trigger students' motivation on how to put a curb on their negative feelings by adopting a positive thinking attitude and coping effectively with their anger release.

## Key elements

The module introduces the theory, concept and process of NVC, by focusing on its origin and basic components. Then, the module continues with a small analysis of the following thematic areas, as key elements of the module:

1. Origin and basic components of NVC model
2. Ways of controlling and correcting behaviour
3. Practices for releasing and managing peacefully anger
4. Blaming others
5. Building healthy relationship between people

6. The value of positive thinking and speaking

The module finishes with some indicative exercises (worksheets) or group reflection/discussions to be implemented among students or between students and teachers.

## Methods used

The selected methods include group reflection activities, brainstorming, quizzes, etc.

## SHORT THEORETICAL PRESENTATION

### ORIGIN AND BASIC COMPONENTS OF NVC MODEL

Teaching students to communicate a message in a non-violent way while disagreeing with others is a life-long learning process that can be learned in the school environment. One of the most significant processes for connecting peacefully with others is the process of *"Nonviolent Communication"*. NVC is a critical way to resolve conflicts[2] and manage emotions without violence. It is characterised as the 'language of life' that can transform old patterns of defensiveness and aggressiveness into compassion and empathy[3]. The theory of NVC was spearheaded by clinical psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg who supported that most people have a "language-problem" since they are trained and brought up in a language which teaches them to analyse and judge, keeping them away from their needs. He defines NVC as the '*combination of a language, a way of thinking, a skill in communication and the means of influence serving the desire to accomplish three things:*

1. *Free myself from a cultural conditioning in discrepancy with the way in which I wish to live my life;*

2. *Acquire the power to access my inner being and others, in a way allowing me to give naturally from the heart;*

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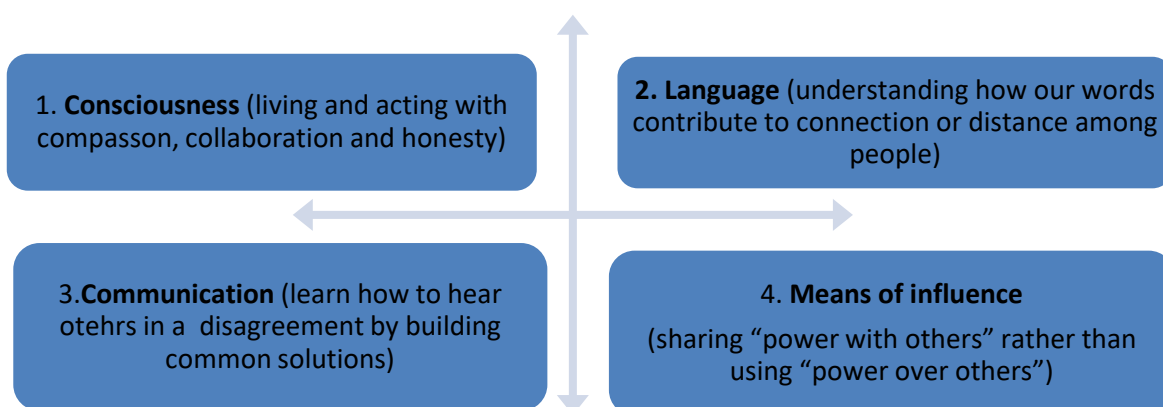[2] NVC in education. (2022). Nonviolent communication. Available here.
[3] Center for NonViolent Communication. (2020). NVC Instruction Self-Guide.

3. *Acquire the power to create structures that support this way of Giving'.*[4]
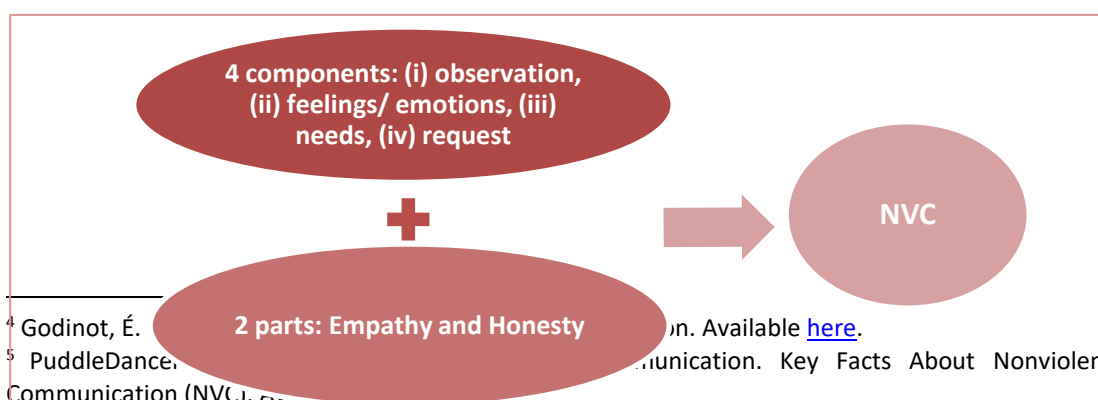
NVC can offer multiple benefits both to educators and to students. Worth mentioning benefits of using NVC language in education are the following:

- Encourage students' interest, retention, and connection to their work
- Foster safety, trust, and connection inside classroom
- Improve classroom teamwork, efficiency, and cooperation
- Reinforce classroom and productive teacher-parent relationships[5]

NVC language includes four basic elements (see figure below)[6]:



The basic model for NVC incorporates the following parts: (i) **Honesty** and (ii) **Empathy** are the two main parts that are expressed through four components: ***observations, feelings, needs, and requests***, as the next figure depicts[7]:

[4] Godinot, É. ... n. Available here.
[5] PuddleDance... ...unication. Key Facts About Nonviolent Communication (NVC). A...
[6] Rosenberg, M. (2015). Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. 3rd edition. Available here.
[7] Koopman, S. & Seliga, L. (2021). Teaching peace by using nonviolent communication for difficult conversations in the college classroom. Available here.

The four components are specific ideas and actions that form the model of NVC, while Empathy and Honesty provide a solid foundation of NVC theory for living non-violently. The essence and meaning of each of the four components are summarised below:

1) **Objective observation of a situation**: In NVC language, when we observe something, we must separate our judgments, evaluations, or interpretations from the event.

2) **Identification of emotions and feelings**: Distinguishing feelings from thoughts is an essential step. The point is to focus on words that describe our inner experience rather than on words that describe our interpretations of people's actions.

3) **Identification of needs**: All individuals have needs and values that support and enrich their lives. Our feelings are related to a trigger/ provocation, but they are not caused by it – they come about through our own experience of met or unmet needs.

4) **Formulation of a request to satisfy a need**: Making clear requests is crucial for the NVC process. When we learn to request concrete actions that can be carried out in the present moment, we begin to find ways to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

The other side of NVC model relates to the **Empathy** and **Honesty**.[8] Empathy means moving beyond the simple expression of compassion. The empathic connection may happen indirectly and more 'silently' while getting connected with another person whose feelings are understood by us and their needs matter to us. This is a turning point in problematic situations. Also, the practice of NVC

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[8] Kashtan, I. & Kashtan, M. (2022). Basics of Nonviolent Communication. Available here.

includes an empathic connection with ourselves: the "*self-empathy*". The purpose is to support us in maintaining connection with our own needs, managing our actions based on values of self-connection and self-acceptance [9]. The part of Honesty means to truly understand ourselves and our own needs and be in harmony with what is alive in us in the present moment.

To sum up, these components and parts lead to a model for non-violent and positive communication which is briefly outlined in the following small box:

When I see that_____

I feel _____

because my need for _____ is/is not met.

Would you be willing to _____?

### WAYS OF CONTROLLING AND CORRECTING BEHAVIOUR

Knowing how to control a student's misbehaviour is half of the solution to an incident (conflict, quarrel, etc.). Teachers and other practitioners of educational community are often called upon to resolve various behavioural issues with their students. There is a variety of methods that an educator can opt for to manage students' behaviour. One of the most effective approaches related to NVC language is the adoption of **'positive behaviour strategies'**. These strategies encourage you to see behaviour as a form of better communication. They are **evidence-based, proactive** approaches that help change challenging students' behaviour. Instead of reacting to challenging behaviours, educators/ teachers can proactively reduce them. The most important advantages of positive behavioural strategies are the following:

- **Build trust-based relationships between teachers-students-families**: An educator can look at students with compassionate curiosity.
- **Teach and reinforce new skills**.
- **Prompt them to consider multiple reasons for behavioural difficulties**.

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[9] Ibid.

Some examples of positive behaviour strategies[10] are presented below:

➢ **Pre-correcting:** a strategy that can remind students of behaviour expectations before potential behaviour problems occur. The educator identifies what may be challenging and teaches the correct response, using action-oriented language.

➢ **Prompting**: you use it to remind students of expectations for familiar situations.

➢ **When-then**: a method offering students a choice about how they want to behave. It is phrased in a way that promotes a positive student mindset. Example: '*When you speak to me in a calmer voice, then we can talk this through*.'

➢ **Nonverbal signals**: a way to foster better communication while limiting interruptions during instruction or a problem's resolution. It is focused on the use of nonverbal signals, which are also called 'silent signals'. With nonverbal signal, students can communicate with each other quietly and discreetly, by communicating simultaneously their needs to their educator. It is supported that those students prone to aggression seem to respond well to the use of signals rather than teacher talk (such as hostile verbalisations, threatening, or shouting)[11].

➢ **Respectful redirection**: a quick, in-the-moment strategy to give corrective feedback to students. The key message is to use a calm tone, neutral body language, and clear wording. We usually tell students exactly what they are doing incorrectly and what they should be doing instead, with as few words as possible.

➢ **Brain breaks**: quick, structured breaks using physical movement, mindfulness exercises, or sensory activities. They can be practiced individually or as a class.

**PRACTICES FOR RELEASING AND MANAGING PEACEFULLY ANGER**

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[10] Morin, A. (2022). Positive behaviour strategies: A guide for teachers. Available here.
[11] Guetzloe, E. (2022). Practical Strategies For Working With Students Who Display Aggression And Violence. Available here.

Anger affects all of us in many aspects of our life. It is a feeling usually associated with violent communication. Below anger there are other feelings such as sadness, disappointment, regret, or frustration. Digging for the nature of those feelings may help identify more quickly the underlying needs that cause the feeling of anger.[12] Anger does not manifest in all people in the same way. It can be caused by either external or internal influences. When we feel angry, three situations may happen:

1) We are upset because our needs are not met

2) We are blaming someone or something else for not getting what we want

3) We will speak or act in such a way that we will not get what we need.

Anger as emotion may be expressed through three main types:

1) **Passive-Aggressive Anger**: An individual tries to suppress their anger to avoid dealing with it but typically ends up expressing it in an unhealthy way.

2) **Assertive Anger**: It involves handling anger by using our words to calmly explain the situation. Anger is expressed in a non-threatening way.

3) **Openly Aggressive Anger**: This type of anger might be accompanied by physical or verbal aggression such as screaming or hitting things. The aim of this type of anger is typically to hurt the person the anger is directed at emotionally or physically.

Anger can also be expressed either verbally or nonverbally:

1) **Verbally**: When a person expresses their anger verbally, you are likely to see them raise their voices. They might become insulting and say hurtful things.

2) **Non-verbally**: You will notice some slight physical changes in a person who expresses their anger nonverbally. They might frown or scowl and fist.

Practicing nonviolent communication plays a critical role in releasing and handling students' anger constructively. In situations where a student feels angry, two important elements should be investigated to approach the anger's origin:

1) what is that particular need of ours that was not met, and

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[12] Source here.

2) what was the trigger for causing our anger [13]

Some additional steps that can help students and other stakeholders of the educational community transform their anger into compassionate connection are presented below through **10 specific simple steps**[14]:

**STEP 1: THINK OF ANGER AS A RED LIGHT ON YOUR DASHBOARD**

First, we must learn that anger is a warning signal that tells us to stop and look under our "emotional hood" at our feelings and for outcomes that make life more satisfying.

**STEP 2: LOOK CLEARLY AT WHAT HAPPENED OR IDENTIFY 'JUST THE FACTS'**

We take a clear look at what you are reacting to. Once you are able to objectively describe what happened, you are more likely to be clear about what you need.

**STEP 3: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL**

To release and evaporate smoothly your anger, we must remind yourselves that this emotion is a signal that some of your needs may have been ignored. You can use your anger to 'listen your heart' so as to find out what needs further attention from you.

**STEP 4: "NAME THE BLAME" AND GET CLEAR ABOUT WHAT WE FEEL**

When you get angry, you are likely to cultivate automatically a "blame thinking" in your mind. When you become aware of your "blame statement" you can explore your feelings and use them to get clear about which of your needs are going unmet.

**STEP 5: DETERMINE YOUR NEED**

In step 5, you experience a fuller sense of yourself because you get in touch with your needs, realising that you can take positive action in meeting those needs.

**STEP 6: FIND A DO BEHIND A 'DON'T'**

You begin to envision actions that can possibly meet your previous unmet needs. It is necessary to focus your attention on what you want, not on what you do not,

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[13] Module 5: Practicing Nonviolent Communication in our Daily Lives. Available here.

[14] Gibson et al. (2001). Ten Steps that Transform Anger into Compassionate Connection. Available here.

by trying to come to an agreement around a "positive" request that states this achievement.

**STEP 7: ENVISION A POSITIVE ACTION**

Here the idea is to envision that the other person does or says something right now that is in harmony with your desire and likely to meet your unsatisfied need. You can ask yourselves "*Right now, what could the other person say or do to honour my needs*?"

**STEP 8: NAME YOUR FEELINGS AND NEEDS**

In this step, you refocus your awareness on the others involved, connect with their feelings and needs, and identify actions that might contribute to meeting their needs.

**STEP 9: DECIDE WHOSE NEED YOU WILL TALK ABOUT FIRST**

After a difficult situation (conflict, quarrel) it can be relieving for you to choose who you would like to speak first (either we are involved in a situation or simply help as facilitator-mediator), knowing that you can continue the dialogue until everyone's needs are met through actions that everyone is willing to take over.

**STEP 10: BEGIN THE COMMUNICATION WITH FOCUS ON HOW YOU FEEL AND ABOUT WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED OF YOU**

The final step is to put it all together and begin an empathetic communication, where you express how you are and receive how the other person is feeling as well. You need to stay focused on **making clear requests** and being aware of how you feel about what is being requested of you.

A final method that can be used as a good classroom behavioural strategy for managing students' anger or as a help to release it smoothly is the **'RID'** process (Recognise – Identify – Do) [15]. Through RID, the student can manage more effectively negative emotions and facts that may cause stress and disappointment in their life. The figure showcases the 3 basic steps of this method, including some tips.

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[15] Classroom Behavioural Strategies And Interventions. Available here.

## BLAMING OTHERS

Blame is a human reaction to negative consequences that helps us safeguard our sense of self-esteem by evading the awareness of our own failings or mistakes[16]. It is defined as the process of assigning responsibility for a fault. We blame others for a number of incidents and a first reason behind which people seem to blame others is that they want to quick escape from guilt. David Burns has described in his book '*Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy'* that blame is considered, among others, a cognitive distortion [17] that can be expressed either through **personalisation** or through **blaming other people** for what happens in our lives[18].

One of the most common behavioural expressions of blaming is the 'blame game'. Sabrina Romanoff has stated that '*when people face repercussions or unintended consequences after making a mistake, their fear may cause them to defend themselves by shifting the blame away from themselves and transferring it to a person defined as a 'scapegoat'.* Signs that someone adopts a 'blame game' approach are:

1) **Finger-pointing[19]**,

2) **Denial of personal responsibility**,

3) **Exclusion**. People may consistently exclude a person from a group by attributing to them a guilty 'sense' and rendering them as 'scapegoat'.[20]

There are various ways to accept responsibility for our emotions rather than blaming others provided that we connect our feelings with our needs. For example, instead of saying *'I feel (an emotion) because...'* we can say "*I feel...because I need*...". Additional useful steps[21] are presented below that can help students and teachers prevent a cycle of blame in a school environment:

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[16] Mindful.care. (2020). The Power of Responsibility vs Blame. Available here.

[17] These distortions are described as patterns of thinking that are false or inaccurate and have the potential to cause psychological distress.

[18] Gonzalez, A. (2022). Why We Blame Others? Available here.

[19] Finger pointing is 'the act of assigning blame as for a harmful policy or unwise decision to another or others, often in an effort to deflect blame from oneself'. Available here.

[20] Gupta. S. (2022). What Is the Blame Game? Available here.

[21] Ibid.

- ➢ **Assign responsibilities**: This can help reduce ambiguity. It can also help foster a sense of ownership and personal accountability.
- ➢ **Accept mistakes**: They are omnipresent and a part of the human experience.
- ➢ **Respond with empathy**: Even if someone makes a mistake or their behaviour is not correct, it's important to view their situation empathically.
- ➢ **Focus on solutions**: The key is to shift from who is to blame to what can be done about it. Students focus their energy on potential solutions.

## BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE

Creating productive and healthy relationships is essential for students' life, inside school community and society. Healthy relationships incorporate a lot of benefits (such as making everyone feel respected, valued, and encouraged). In contrast, unhealthy relationships can have a long-term negative impact both in communication among students and in their inner balance among their feelings and external facts. It is essential that students be aware of what characteristics healthy and unhealthy relationships entail. A healthy relationship is made up of the following features: **Mutual respect; Trust; Equality; Honesty; Good communication**[22].

Although healthy relationships are inherently positive, unhealthy ones are negative; they are structured on an imbalance of power and control. The table summarizes the nature of a healthy relationship in comparison with that of an unhealthy one[23].

One of the most critical aspects for creating healthy relationships among students is to induct them into **relationship-based** practices inside classroom that can help them learn about what is called "relational power" or power with others. In a relationship-based classroom, teachers and students try to become aware of fundamental steps on how to express needs or practice new ways of expressing them that are most likely to be heard and respected by everyone. A relationship-

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[22] Sword, R. (2021). How to Teach Children About Healthy Relationships. Available here.
[23] Inspired by: Western Health. (2011). Healthy Relationships. P. 3. Available here.

based classroom uses guidelines about how to communicate better with one another.

## THE VALUE OF POSITIVE THINKING AND SPEAKING

Cultivating a positive mind-set to every student's thinking is fundamental for keeping their mental and emotional health at a good level in every aspect of their life, including their educational experience. Positive emotions promote creative actions, innovative ideas, and social bonds, which in turn enrich further an individual's personal resources (ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources). All these resources are built up over time and increase the individual's overall well-being. This forms a positive cycle: **Increased well-being → more positive emotions → higher resilience → increased well-being**.[24]

People who feel and are expressed positively tend to be more efficient and more open to information and options. In addition, positive emotions enlarge the cognitive width of a person, an effect that can lead to an increase in 'brain dopamine levels'. All previous statements and opinions are in contrast with negative emotions, which are considered to promote narrow, immediate 'survival-oriented' behaviour. For example, the negative emotion of anxiety leads to the specific 'fight-or-flight' response for immediate survival. To survive, negative minds immediately focus their attention on a specific behavioural response such as 'running or fighting', and therefore they do not expand their thinking to other behavioural alternatives.[25]

Positive thinking has several benefits that cannot be overlooked, especially in the school environment where children experience a lot of challenges during their interaction with their peers and their teachers. Before proceeding with the crucial

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[24] Ibid.

[25] BANNINK FREDRIKE P. (2017). Building Positive Emotions in Mediation. Available here.

role of positivity in students' way of thinking, it is essential to mention the definition of positive thinking. Specifically, positive thinking is framed as '*a complemented attitude in every society. It encompasses a mental attitude that encourages an individual to aim for pleasing and acceptable outcome'*[26].

For students, their daily responsibilities can become really stressful. For this reason, some practical techniques should be followed to think of and communicate positively. Some examples for developing positive thinking skills within school classroom[27] are:

### 1. Make Attitude Acrostics[28]:

The idea of this practice is applied as follows: first an educator offers students a piece of paper and asks them to write the word "ATTITUDE" vertically down the left side of their paper. They set a timer and next ask students to write down traits and characteristics that are observed in positive individuals with words or phrases that correspond to the letters on the left side. For example, in the letter "A" in "ATTITUDE" they could write: "Always sees good in a situation." Afterwards, have students get into groups and share their acrostics with their classmates.

### 2. The Turn-it Around Attitude:

This approach can be implemented as follows: educators can offer students a piece of paper, by asking them to fold it into some parts and label "school", "friends", "family", "home", "self-image" and "activities" in all parts. Then, some students who act as volunteers ask their classmates what problems they often meet for each category. Next, they guide them to take these issues/ problems and form a question about how to solve them. Then, they turn the attitude around by helping participants ask themselves the following questions:

- How do I feel about this? Do I want to solve this problem?

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[26] Macleod, A and Moore, R. (2000). Positive Thinking Revisited: Positive Cognition, Well-being and Mental Health. Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy. 1099 – 0879.

[27] Educationworld. (2022). Four Activities for Positive Thinking Day. Available here.

[28] Type of word puzzle

- Have I been blaming other people for this problem?
- What will happen in the short-term if I don't solve this problem?
- What little things can I do to work toward solving this problem?
- How do I have to change my attitude to solve the problem?
- What will happen once this problem is resolved?

This activity offers students the opportunity to reframe the mentioned problems they have met and offer a solution towards them.
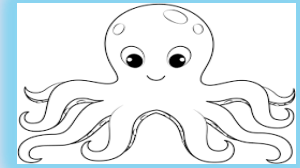
### 3.  *Positive Shark Formula*:

Jon Gordon offers a specific model that can help develop students and young learners' positive thinking when things go wrong and not always as they were initially scheduled. This model is formed as "**E+P=O**" which is interpreted as follows:

- **E'** stands for **"Events"**: we first ask students realize that various events in their lives cannot be easily controlled by themselves.

'What can be under their control are their **'P'**, which stands for **positive responses,** and the **'O'** the **outcomes** of the described situation.

# Description of the module, step by step

| Setting: | Classroom | |
|---|---|---|
| **Outcomes:** | Managing anger, connecting with feelings and personal responsibility, recognising warning signs of unhealthy relationships, practising positive thinking. | |
| **Contents** | 1. The Angry Octopus<br><br>2. Dealing peacefully with negative emotions<br><br>3. Recognizing my feelings and responsibility<br><br>4. 'Love is…Love isn't'<br><br>5. Focusing on the positives | Duration: 130'<br><br>1st activity:  25'.<br><br>2nd activity: 25'.<br><br>3rd activity: 25'<br><br>4th activity: 30'<br><br>5th activity: 25' |
| **Activities (step by step)** | **1ST ACTIVITY: THE ANGRY OCTOPUS**<br><br>**OBJECTIVES**<br><br>Teach students who may feel angry or behave aggressively with a person or a fact on how to calm down and cooperate with others to control their emotion<br><br>**TIPS**<br><br>Try to apply this activity in groups not with each student individually as they can share more easily ideas while reflecting on 8 different strategies.<br><br>**STEPS:**<br><br>Students (with an educator) start watching the following video with an octopus that tries to spread its 'anger' into the surrounding sea (link of the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMYF_IFcSVM). Next, they discuss 8 different ways the octopus can calm down (in relation to its 8 feet), by drawing a picture of an octopus (like the following one) and suggesting in small groups eight anger management strategies (on each leg of the octopus respectively). Once write the 8 different anger management ways, the groups discuss all together what is the most difficult and most flexible strategy to adopt when they get angry with a particular fact.<br><br>**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** | **Type of activity**:<br><br>Group reflection on anger management / smooth release<br><br> |

How anger can be visualized or depicted?

2. What are the strategies- the tools we need to follow to tame our anger?

Sources: Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMYF_IFcSVM and for more info: http://www.stressfreekids.com/10667/anger-management

## 2ND ACTIVITY: DEALING PEACEFULLY WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

### OBJECTIVES

- to first examine and understand the role that emotions play in conflicts
- to learn concrete steps for dealing with difficult emotions such as anger

### TIPS

It is suggested to implement this activity with a relatively small number of students (up to 10 maximum). Otherwise, some students narrate the story and other offer tops and ask questions for the story.

### STEPS

First students discuss the role that emotions play in their day-to-day lives and how they surface during conflicts/ disagreements in school. They recall a past experience where they felt angry and read silently the steps of the following handout (in a form of image):
Then, they are asked by their educator or another classmate to write/draw/talk about this specific experience due to it they felt this emotion. They can consult the following inventory to pick up the exact feelings that represent best their experience/ emotion that shows anger or a similar feeling that is underneath anger:
https://www.cnvc.org/training/resource/feelings-inventory
Once they write down or draw in a piece of paper the factors that provoked such a feeling or the incident itself, they come up with solution that comes first to their mind for this experience. At the end, they close the activity by listening carefully all stories, offering to each other a positive tip to release calmly their anger and find balance with their inner self.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What role emotions play in our day-to-day lives and how they surface during conflicts/ disagreements in school?
2. Under what conditions you have felt angry in the past?
3. What would you do to change this emotion?

## 3RD ACTIVITY: RECOGNIZING MY FEELINGS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Narrative,

group reflection

**OBJECTIVES**

 • Reflect together on how to collectively adopt a non-blaming attitude towards others.

**STEPS:**

One or more students can first take over the role of speakers and pose the first 5 questions to their peers in order to test their ability to recognize if the statement focuses on personal responsibility and feelings or gives emphasis on 'blaming the other'. Next, a part of listeners and respondents take over the role of the speaker and poses to the initial students as speakers the remaining questions. After these steps, they discuss about their assumptions and reflect together on how to collectively adopt a non-blaming attitude towards others.

The quiz can start as follows:

Examples of statements (part of **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS)**

*Which of the following statements accept responsibility for feelings rather than blaming someone else?*

1. "You insult me when you do not introduce me to your friends."
2. "I am jealous when you choose to spend time with her instead of me, because I need to feel important in your life."
3. "I feel delighted when you bring me flowers."
4. "I'm horrified that you feel that way because I was hoping that we would be able to reach an agreement."
5. "I feel despondent because you never fulfill your promises."
6. I'm worried because I thought we would make good time on the road."
7. "Certain words make me very uncomfortable."
8. "I feel relieved that you weren't hurt."
9. "I feel exhilarated when they shout out my name."
10. "I am hurt that you did not invite me to your party, because I thought that we were friends

**4TH ACTIVITY: LOVE IS…LOVE ISN'T**[29]

**OBJECTIVES**

 • help students identify characteristics of a "healthy" relationship
 • recognize warning signs of an "unhealthy" relationship
 • develop an understanding of the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

**TIPS**

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[29] Source available here.

The words in the index of cards should be as large as possible and either typed or printed clearly.

**STEPS:**

The first step is to prepare a set of index cards, each containing one of the "Love Is…Love Isn't" words listed above:

**Freedom   Self; Openness   Touching; Boss   Independence; Compromise   Responsibility; Hard work Fear; Pressure Trust; Commitment   Violence; Manipulation Respect; Closeness Sharing; Possessiveness Control; Promise Honesty; Intimidation Obsession; Caring Pain; Empathy Cruelty; Sharing Threat**

The 2nd step is to prepare two signs: the one will indicate the word "Healthy" and the other the word "Unhealthy". Alternatively, students can use two signs with symbols indicating "thumbs up" and "thumbs down". Before beginning the activity, 2 volunteer students post the two signs on the wall. The "Love Is…Love Isn't" words will be posted under each of the previous two signs, with some empty space between them. Also, the students who act as facilitators place a couple of strips of tape in between the two signs, to create a space for words that are ambivalent or do not belong clearly to one or another category.

The activity begins by distributing the words to students who participate in groups. One by one, some students from each group will hold up a card to be read aloud either by them or by a volunteer classmate/ their educator. The group will then discuss whether the word on the card is or is not a characteristic of a healthy relationship. Once the group reach a decision, the cardholder then adds the word under the appropriate heading (either "Healthy", "Unhealthy", or in between).

**5TH ACTIVITY: FOCUSING ON THE POSITIVES[30]**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Focus on the positive side of negative things /experiences
- Develop further our ability to think of and act positively

**TIPS**

Younger students may need an example suggested by their teacher. Students should be assured that their answers will remain confidential unless they wish to share further personal stories with the class.

**STEPS:**

Students start by reading or being read by their educator/ a volunteer classmate the following introductory paragraph:

Group reflection,

quiz

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[30] Source: http://uploads.registerguard.com/nie/positive-thinking.pdf  (p. 9).

*"People with positive attitudes believe they have within themselves the ability to overcome many obstacles. No matter what life hands them, their ability to think positively gets them through even the most difficult situations…attitudes are more important than facts," according to famed psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger. If you have a defeatist attitude, then you believe you're a failure whether you really are one or not".*

Next, students think of something that has worried them and record their responses to questions asked on the following activity sheet:

Teacher or a volunteer student: 'Think of a situation that made you feel worried. Write a sentence describing that situation. Then make a list NOT of the factors that are against you but the factors that are for you. It may surprise you how many positive things you really have going for you'

**A situation I'm worried about:**

**Factors that are favorable for me:**

Once students answer the above-mentioned questions, they next try the same exercise with a real-life situation covered or reported in a newspaper. They will identify a person who is struggling with a crisis or problem. On a separate piece of paper, they will make a list of the factors or attitudes that might help this person deal with the situation successfully.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What attracted most your attention in the newspaper?
2. What the person that experiences the problem needs most?
3. What are the factors that could easily resolve this problem?

| Materials | Internet connection, pens, pencils, papers, whiteboard or flipchart with big papers, markers, a big paper to outline a body, tapes, indicative newspapers (in national language) |
| --- | --- |

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