

Blast: Conflict Resolution

To provide closure for the unit, students will learn about all kinds of conflict resolution techniques and make an attempt at articulating a response to the Blast's Driving Question. Students will explore research links that connect them to more information about conflict resolution.



How can we resolve conflicts that arise from human interaction?

StudySync Blast Info

Background

1 In this unit, you've learned a lot about the challenges that arise from human interaction. Unfortunately, conflicts between individuals, between families, and between entire nations are all too common. But how can these conflicts be resolved?

2 When conflict occurs between individuals, sometimes mediation can be a good solution. Mediation is when a person not involved in the conflict steps in to help all parties reach a resolution that everyone is satisfied with. If you've had an argument with a friend or classmate, maybe a teacher or another friend acted as a mediator. Parents often mediate conflicts between siblings. A mediator's job is to remain calm, and help each side of the conflict remain calm, as well. A mediator listens and encourages others to listen to each person's view of the problem, and doesn't allow name-calling. A mediator encourages people to talk about their own feelings, rather than how they think others should act. Often, having an objective individual listen to both sides and share his or her own perspective can help resolve a conflict.

3 Mediation can also work when the conflict is between families, as in the Hatfield/McCoy feud, or within families. Sometimes a professional mediator or counselor needs to be called in. Th

ese are specialists who are trained to help people find solutions to large or long-held conflicts, and to find a way to co-exist peacefully. This can sometimes take time, but it is worth the effort.

4When conflicts arise between entire nations, things can become dangerous. Wars can break out. To reduce the possibility of such outbreaks, the United Nations was formed. After World War II and the atrocities committed during the Holocaust, world leaders felt that something was needed to prevent similar things from happening in the future. Thus, the UN was born. Countries that joined the United Nations resolved to do everything possible to ensure peace for future generations. Members of the UN practice tolerance and work together to maintain international peace and security. Conflicts still arise and sometimes these conflicts do lead to violence, but the United Nations tries its best to resolve conflicts before they reach dangerous levels.

5How can we resolve conflicts that arise from human interaction?

Answer the StudySync QuikPoll

What is the best way to resolve conflicts between individuals?

- ☐ Informal mediation
- ☐ Professional counseling
- ☐ Separation
- ☐ Time

Number Crunch

193

Number of member nations in the United Nations

EXTRA READING:

Good Communication Starts With Listening

by [Nancy Foster](#)

In my first article, I discussed some [barriers to communication](#) and how good communication promotes better understanding of people, reduces conflict, and enhances relationships. In this article, I talk about the importance of "listening" as the foundation to good communication.

Many of us think that communication is talking - and talk we do. We interrupt, advise, reassure, judge, analyze, criticize, argue, moralize, threaten, divert, diagnose, etc., etc. But, good communication requires good listening as well as talking. In fact, since we have two ears and only one mouth, listening just might be the more important skill. However, we receive almost no training in good listening and usually do not realize that really "hearing" someone is not a passive activity.

To be a good listener, we must, first, pay attention. The remainder of this article will focus on "attending" skills. The next article will discuss how to listen "actively" rather than passively.

When you are speaking and someone is not paying attention, how do you feel? Annoyed, frustrated, discounted, rejected, anxious or angry? Such feelings usually make communication more difficult. So how can we show someone who is speaking that we really are paying attention to them? We can do this both nonverbally and verbally.

Research shows that about 85% of what we communicate is nonverbal. This includes our posture, physical movements, eye contact and our psychological presence. So, when someone is speaking to you, is your posture inclined toward the speaker, so as to invite and encourage expression? Or is your back turned or your arms or legs tightly crossed, which discourages and cuts off involvement? Are you fidgeting or otherwise distracting the speaker or yourself? Are you making good eye contact with the person? By looking at and observing the speaker, not only will the speaker feel "attended" to, you will learn more about what is really important to him or her. Finally, we cannot pretend to pay attention by employing these physical techniques without also being psychologically present. We can't fake interest. The speaker will know if our hearts and minds are not really there.

Verbal ways of showing that we are paying attention include 1) an open invitation to talk, 2) using one or two words to encourage talking to continue, 3) asking open-ended questions and 4) knowing when to be silent. For example, "You look like something is bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?" describes a person's body language followed by an open invitation to talk. It is important to silently allow the person time to decide whether to talk and what to talk about. If someone chooses not to accept the invitation, don't try to force them. Back off and respect their privacy.

Brief responses to encourage continued talking include "mm-hmmm," "I see," "Oh?" "Right," "And?" "Go on," "Tell me more," etc. These don't imply either agreement or disagreement. They simply mean "Yes, I hear you - please go on."

A good listener uses questions sparingly because questions tend to focus the conversation on the questioner's perspective and concerns and can derail the focus of the speaker. Work on asking fewer questions, and when you do, ask "open-ended" questions. Compare "Did you call the police?" to "What did you do?" Or, "Do you feel anxious about the meeting tomorrow?" to "How do you feel about



the meeting tomorrow?" An open-ended question is like an essay question which allows the speaker, rather than the questioner, to lead the conversation and clarify his or her own concerns. A closed question is like a true/false question and often suggests or narrows the agenda.

Source: Robert Bolton, *People Skills* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979)

Create Your Blast

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.