LESSON 3

Conflict Resolution

Ages 12–15

Lesson 3. Conflict Resolution

Ages

12–15

Learning Objectives

Cadets and JCRs will be able to:

- Define “empathy” (Activity 1).
- Practice ways to respond to conflict (Activity 2).
- Gather tools to de-escalate conflicts (Activity 3).
- Develop a personal safety plan (Activities 1, 2, and 3).

Facilitators have three activities from which to choose in the body of this lesson. Each activity ranges from 10–20 minutes in length. Time required for the introduction is 3–5 minutes, and time required for the conclusion is 5–10 minutes.

Learning Tools and Materials

If audiovisual equipment is not available, handouts could be produced from the slides, or the information could be displayed on a flip chart or white board.

Slide deck:

- De-escalating
- Look, Listen, Link, Live©
- Kids Help Phone
- Community Resources

Handouts:

- How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios
- How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios: Answer Key
- Lina’s Story
- Support Circles
- Safety Plan

Lesson Preparation

Introduction

- Nil.

Activity 1. Understanding Empathy in Conflict Resolution

- Set up the room as an open space so that participants may easily walk around.

Activity 2. Conflict Resolution

- Prepare and post one piece of flip chart paper at the front of the room, displaying the four conflict scenarios from Activity 2, Paragraph 6.
- Prepare and post one piece of flip chart paper at the front of the room, displaying the six possible responses from Activity 2, Paragraph 9.

Activity 3. De-escalating Conflict

- Set up audiovisual equipment and cue slides (or alternative way to display information):
  - De-escalating.
- Print a copy of the How Would you De-escalate? Scenarios handout for each group.
- Ensure participants have a pen or pencil.

Conclusion

- Set up audiovisual equipment and cue slides (or alternative way to display information):
  - Look, Listen, Link, Live©;
  - Kids Help Phone; and
  - Community Resources.
- Fill in the Community Resources presentation slide with local agency numbers and helplines.
- Print required number of copies of handouts:
  - Lina's Story;
  - Support Circles; and
  - Safety Plan.

Introduction

Estimated Time

3–5 minutes

Review the following safety guidelines at the start of the lesson:

- Participate as you feel comfortable.
- Maintain confidentiality when discussing someone else's experiences.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- If you are uncomfortable with the topic or discussion, you have permission to leave the room for a break. An adult will check up on you.

Let us talk about some of the skills we need in healthy relationships. Conflict resolution is one of them.

Conflict is a natural part of life. While we can try our best to avoid conflict, at some point we will find ourselves disagreeing with someone. The outcome of any conflict—big or small—depends on how both people respond to the conflict, manage their emotions, and choose to resolve the disagreement.

Being able to resolve and work through conflict is an important part of a healthy relationship.

In this lesson, we are going to look at how to de-escalate a conflict by understanding our feelings and by responding calmly.

Read the following scenario out loud to the participants to facilitate a quick discussion on the topic.

Lina finally has a date this Friday. She is feeling excited but very nervous. She had a bad breakup with her last partner. She has had trouble trusting people since then. Lina never talked to anyone about her last relationship, and she feels agitated and angry all the time. She is hoping this date goes well and that it will help her move on.

She tells her mom that she is going out on Friday. Her mother informs her they have a dinner with her Grandma who is not feeling well, so Lina will have to reschedule her date. Lina bursts into tears at this news and begins yelling and screaming at her mother. Her mother tries to talk to her, but Lina will not listen. Lina starts shouting, "You do not care about my life at all! I never want to do anything with this family!" Lina runs to her room and slams the door.

Lina sends you an emoji with a sad face and tears, and she asks you to come over. When you see Lina, she is red in the face and shaking. She bursts into tears.

Is this a positive or negative response to the conflict? Why?

Answer:

Negative. Lina is being disrespectful to her mother by yelling and making hurtful comments.

How could Lina and her mom work towards resolving this conflict?

Possible answers could include: Lina could remain calm and try to work out a solution or a compromise with her mom, such as going to her grandmother's for dinner and then out on her date afterwards.

We are going to do an activity that will help us learn conflict resolution skills.

Activity 1
Understanding Empathy in Conflict Resolution

Estimated Time

10–15 minutes

1. An important part of being able to resolve conflict is having empathy.
2. Ask the participants to give an example of empathy.

   Here is an example:

   Joe sees another cadet / JCR, Derick, being teased. He sees that Derick is really hurt and upset. Joe does not choose to ignore Derick or dismiss Derick's experience as no big deal. Instead, Joe thinks back to how it felt when he himself was teased before, and how it made him feel. This helps Joe understand why Derick is so upset and allows Joe to offer support and understanding.

3. Having empathy helps us to "respond" rather than to "react" in a conflict situation. When we "respond" with empathy, we can help de-escalate a conflict situation.
4. We are going to play a game that explores different feelings, and we will practice expressing those feelings.
5. The first step of the game is to "walk and freeze". When I say walk, you need to walk through the room, silently and without touching anyone. You should walk quickly—no running—keeping your arms at your sides. Walk in random directions, not just in a circle. When I say freeze, stand completely still as a statue. Hold your position until I say walk, and then you may start walking silently and randomly through the room once again.
6. The second step of the game is to "walk and express". As you walk, I will call out an emotion, such as "happy". I will then count down to three before I tell you to freeze again: three, two, one, freeze! You need to freeze in a position that represents the emotion I called out. After you hold the position for a few moments, I will once again call out walk, and you can unfreeze and walk through the room again.
7. Call out some emotions from the list below:
   - happy;
   - sad;
   - shy;
   - scared;
   - angry;
   - uncomfortable;
   - relieved;
   - nervous;
   - excited;
   - confident; or
   - embarrassed.

8. After you have carried out the activity for a few minutes, have the participants sit down. Ask some of the following questions, based on the time available:

   a. What was it like to communicate these emotions without using words?

      Possible answers could include:
      - fun;
      - easy; or
      - hard.

   b. Did your expressions (statues) come easily, or did you have to think about it? Why do you think that is?

      Possible answers could include:
      - It was easy, because these feelings are part of life that we experience every day.
      - It was hard, because I had to think about what the word meant.
      - It was hard, because I am not used to talking about feelings.

   c. Did anyone begin to feel the emotion in their bodies when they made the statue?

      Our feelings and our bodies are very connected. When we act out emotions, our bodies will often physically respond as well. Feelings such as anger will cause our bodies to produce adrenaline. Physical responses, such as adrenaline, can impact the way we think and behave.

   d. Did you notice any similarities or differences among the different statues?

      We all have different ways of expressing ourselves. Some people are very expressive, while others do not show very much emotion.

   e. "Empathy" is the ability to understand and share how someone else is feeling by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation. How do you think understanding another person's feelings can help in resolving a disagreement or a conflict?

      Possible answers could include:
      - Empathy allows you to understand what the other person is going through and why they might be upset.
      - It lets you put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself how you would feel in the same situation.
      - It helps you understand the situation from both sides, so you can work toward resolving the conflict.

This activity has been adapted with permission from the WITS LEADS Program, https://witsprogram.ca/schools/leads-program

Activity 2
Conflict Resolution

Estimated Time

15–20 minutes

1. What types of conflict do youth experience?

   Possible answers could include disagreements with:
   - parents;
   - peers;
   - friends;
   - other cadets / JCRs;
   - patrol leader;
   - flight commander; or
   - dating partners.

2. Each of us deals with conflict differently. I am going to read various ways people respond to conflict. I want you to think about whether any apply to you. You do not have to share any of your thoughts or responses to the statements.

   When dealing with conflict:
   - I feel uncomfortable and avoid it all together.
   - I get angry.
   - I pretend nothing is wrong.
   - I blame the other person for the conflict.
   - I let the other person have their way, even if I do not agree.
   - I yell and scream.
   - It is important for me to always be right.
   - I take deep breaths.
   - I try to be reasonable and calm and talk about the problem.
   - I listen to the other person's point of view and why they are upset.
   - I talk to an adult or a friend about the conflict and ask for advice on how to deal with it.
   - I suggest ways to resolve the conflict so the resolution works for both people.

3. When conflict happens and we react without thinking or taking the time to listen to the other person, it can often "escalate" the conflict, which means to make it worse.

   When we respond calmly and think about our actions, the level of disagreement will often de-escalate. To "de-escalate" means to act in a way that decreases the intensity of a conflict.

4. We will now use role plays to practice ways to de-escalate and resolve conflict.

5. Explain that you have posted a list of four conflict scenarios at the front of the room.

6. Read out the scenarios on the piece of flip chart paper:
    a. Your friend is mad at you because you did not show up at the recreation centre last night. You had way too much homework.
    b. You have an argument with your friend because they shared a video that you felt was embarrassing, and it hurt your feelings. They thought it was funny and harmless.
    c. You get in a fight with your sibling because they took your shirt and wore it to school without asking permission.
    d. Your dad is mad at you for crashing the ATV and not telling him. He is yelling and telling you that you can never drive it again.

7. Divide the participants into small groups (four or fewer participants per group). Assign each group a scenario. Explain that they will be role playing their scenario and a response that they choose.

8. Explain that you have posted a list of possible responses at the front of the room.

9. Read out the possible responses on the piece of flip chart paper:
    a. Tell the other person that you need to calm down first and that you will talk about the situation later. Walk away, but come back later to work on resolving the issue.
    b. Listen to the other person's point of view and the reasons they are upset. Let them know you understand how they are feeling.
    c. Talk about and name your own feelings to help the other person understand you.
    d. Accept responsibility for your actions, and apologize.
    e. Remain calm and open to working towards a solution by making suggestions to resolve the conflict.
    f. Ask an adult or a friend for advice on how to resolve the conflict.

The number of participants will determine the size of the groups and how you choose to assign the scenarios—whether you will need to use them all, or whether you will need to repeat scenarios.

Participants who do not wish to role play can explain their response to the large group.

10. Have each group choose one or two responses they will use to create their response to their scenario. The groups may also choose to make up their own responses, if they wish.

11. Give the participants time to prepare and to practice.

12. Have groups volunteer to share their role plays. Ask the participants the following questions:
    a. Would the strategy you chose help to resolve the conflict in a real-life situation? Why or why not?
    b. What are some other skills or strategies that might be helpful in de-escalating and resolving conflicts?

Activity 3
De-escalating Conflict

Estimated Time

15–20 minutes

1. We are going to talk about how to de-escalate a conflict so people can be calm and work towards a solution. Think back to the scenario with Lina. Her anger got in the way of working out a solution with her mom and allowing them to understand each other's perspectives.

2. Display the De-escalating content, using the presentation slide or the alternative method you have prepared. Explain the steps for de-escalating a conflict.

De-escalating

STEP 1: STOP. Think about ways to calm yourself. Examples include:

- Take deep breaths.
- Go for a walk.
- Listen to music.

STEP 2: THINK. Think about what you want, and try to understand the other person's point of view.

For example, Lina wanted to go out on a date, but her mom wanted her to visit her sick grandmother. If Lina stopped and tried to understand her mom's perspective, Lina would find out that her mom is really concerned about her grandmother and wants to make sure the family is spending time with her. Lina's mom could also listen to Lina explain why she feels so strongly about not attending the dinner.

Empathy is an important part of conflict resolution. "Empathy" is the ability to understand and share how someone else is feeling by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation.

STEP 3: FEEL. Recognize your feelings. Be aware of what is making you upset so that you can manage your anger and your other emotions, such as sadness or frustration.

Anger is often a secondary emotion that arises from a primary emotion, such as frustration or disappointment.

For example, Lina exploded at her mom and was unable to listen to what she had to say.

What was going on for Lina that may have contributed to her losing her temper with her mom?

Answer:

Lina had been through a bad breakup and had never talked about it with anyone. She really wanted this date to work.

STEP 4: ACT. Work to resolve the conflict. When we see conflict as a natural part of relationships, we can focus on finding a solution instead of deciding who is right or wrong.

For example, Lina could make a compromise with her mom: she could go visit her grandmother and then go on her date afterwards. Another option could be that Lina could commit to visit her grandmother the next day.

There will be times when it will not be possible to effectively de-escalate a conflict. In these situations, always remember your personal safety. Your personal safety is the most important thing. If you ever feel that you are in danger, leave the situation: do not try to de-escalate the conflict.

3. Divide the participants into small groups (four or fewer participants per group). Distribute a copy of the How Would you De-escalate? Scenarios handout to each group. Assign each group one of the scenarios.

4. Allow the groups time to read their scenarios and work through the four steps for de-escalating conflict. Have them fill in their responses after each step. As part of Step 4, they will need to come up with a solution to de-escalate the conflict.

The number of participants will determine the size of the groups and how you choose to assign the scenarios—whether you will need to use them all, or whether you will need to repeat scenarios.

You may also choose to work through the scenarios as a large group.

If some groups are struggling to come up with responses, use the How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios: Answer Key to cue them with ideas.

5. Have each group share their scenario and the answers they came up with for each step of the process. Use the How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios: Answer Key to supplement the discussion with any points that may have been missed.

6. Go around the room and ask the participants the following questions:

   a. Was it helpful going through the four-step process? Why or why not?
   b. What are some other skills or strategies that might be helpful in de-escalating and resolving conflict?

How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios

Scenario 1

One weekend, you plan to take your new girlfriend to a party at your friend's place. Your girlfriend says that she would rather go to a movie with you alone, since she is not comfortable with your group of friends yet. You get angry and start yelling at your girlfriend that she is selfish. She storms out of the room.

STEP 1: STOP.

STEP 2: THINK.

STEP 3: FEEL.

STEP 4: ACT.

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How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios

Scenario 2

You have been playing basketball after school with your best friend, Anthony, at the community centre for years. You both try out for the school basketball team. While you make the team, Anthony is cut. He is bummed out, but you tell him he needs to get over it. He keeps sending you mean text messages arguing that he is just as good of a player and it is not fair. Later, you see him in the hallway at school and he tells you that he does not want to hang out anymore. You are really upset.

STEP 1: STOP.

STEP 2: THINK.

STEP 3: FEEL.

STEP 4: ACT.

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How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios

Scenario 3

You are good friends with both Liz and Hardeep. The three of you do everything together. One day Liz tells you that Hardeep hurt her feelings and she does not want to hang out with her anymore. Later, you are standing with Liz by your locker and Hardeep approaches. Liz grabs you by the arm and gets you to walk away without saying hi. Later in the lunch room, Hardeep approaches to sit at your table, and Liz tells her there is no room. You feel uncomfortable and try to talk to Liz about it. She tells you that she is the only friend you need. Hardeep shows up at your house that evening and bursts into tears when you answer the door.

STEP 1: STOP.

STEP 2: THINK.

STEP 3: FEEL.

STEP 4: ACT.

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How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios: Answer Key

Scenario 1

STEP 1: STOP. Take a few deep breaths and calm down before you talk to your girlfriend.

STEP 2: THINK. Do you want to stay in the relationship? Your girlfriend is shy, and you know that your friends are loud and like to joke around a lot. How can you make your girlfriend feel comfortable around your friends? Your friends are important to you. How can you ensure that you are still able to hang out with your friends?

STEP 3: FEEL. What happened made you feel angry. Do you feel upset that your girlfriend does not seem to like your friends? Are you afraid that you will have to give up your friends for your girlfriend?

STEP 4: ACT. Let your girlfriend know that she is very important to you, and that your friends are also very important. Suggest that you go to the party for a short time and then catch a late movie.

Scenario 2

STEP 1: STOP. Take a few deep breaths and calm down.

STEP 2: THINK. Anthony has always been a good friend to you, and you want to stay friends and hang out. You also want to play basketball without feeling guilty. You understand how being cut from the team would be awful. You love basketball, and you know that you would be really upset if that happened to you.

STEP 3: FEEL. Anthony's text messages and reaction made you feel very upset. You are afraid of losing Anthony as a friend.

STEP 4: ACT. Ask for help from your basketball coach. See if he can talk to Anthony to explain why he was cut and offer support. Approach Anthony and say you are sorry this happened, and you really want to stay friends. Let him know that he is an important person in your life and that you want to work through this conflict. Set some boundaries around how you deal with conflict; for instance, you need to be able to talk about stuff in a respectful way. Ask Anthony if he wants to go shoot some hoops at the community centre.

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How Would You De-escalate? Scenarios: Answer Key

Scenario 3

STEP 1: STOP. Take a few deep breaths and calm down.

STEP 2: THINK. You want all three of you to be friends again and get along. What you and Liz did to Hardeep was very hurtful, and you understand why she is so upset.

STEP 3: FEEL. You are upset that you hurt Hardeep's feelings. You feel pressured by Liz to go along with what she wants. This is unnecessary drama in your life that is creating stress.

STEP 4: ACT. Apologize to Hardeep for your hurtful behaviour. Let her know that you want to stay friends. Plan for the three of you to meet so you can talk through what happened between Liz and Hardeep and try to come to a resolution. Make sure everyone feels heard and respected. Ask for help from an adult, if needed. If Liz decides she does not want to be friends with Hardeep, then have them at least make a plan to agree to still be respectful toward each other and to respect that you will remain friends with them both.

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Conclusion

Estimated Time

5–10 minutes

Safety Planning

Distribute a copy of the Support Circles or Safety Plan handout to any participants who did not fill one out prior to the lesson. Have them fill in the required sections.

If the participants filled out the Support Circles or Safety Plan handout already, ask them to revisit the section in which they recorded the safe people they would talk to. Are these the same people they would talk to about resolving conflict in their relationships? Allow them time to record any changes.

Intervention: How to Help

Look, Listen, Link, Live©: How to Help a Friend

1. We know that youth will reach out to their peers for help before they will talk to an adult. We want to give you information so you can support a friend or peer if they come to you for help with relationship problems.

2. Display the Look, Listen, Link, Live© content, using the presentation slides or the alternative method you have prepared.

   This is a four-step model that we use to help a friend. Let us consider how we can help Lina from our scenario. We are going to review the scenario and help Lina using the Look, Listen, Link, Live© model.

   Read the scenario out loud.

> You may distribute copies of the scenario (Lina's Story) to allow the participants to follow along, or you may put the scenario on a presentation slide.

Lina finally has a date this Friday. She is feeling excited but very nervous. She had a bad breakup with her last partner. She has had trouble trusting people since then. Lina never talked to anyone about her last relationship, and she feels agitated and angry all the time. She is hoping this date goes well and that it will help her move on.

She tells her mom that she is going out on Friday. Her mother informs her they have a dinner with her Grandma who is not feeling well, so Lina will have to reschedule her date. Lina bursts into tears at this news and begins yelling and screaming at her mother. Her mother tries to talk to her, but Lina will not listen. Lina starts shouting, "You do not care about my life at all! I never want to do anything with this family!" Lina runs to her room and slams the door.

Lina sends you an emoji with a sad face and tears, and she asks you to come over. When you see Lina, she is red in the face and shaking. She bursts into tears.

3. Have the participants go through the four steps of the Look, Listen, Link, Live© model by asking the questions below.

STEP 1: LOOK. In this step, we are looking for signs that a person is upset and in need of help.

What are the signs that tell you Lina needs help?

Possible answers could include:

- Lina sent the sad emoji and asked you to come over, which may indicate that she wants to talk about something bothering her.
- She is visibly upset and starts crying.

STEP 2: LISTEN. In this step, we listen to the person without judgment.

How would you approach Lina to talk to her? What would you say?

Possible answers could include:

- Comfort Lina, and try to help her calm down.
- Get her to take some deep breaths.
- Ask her if she is okay, and let her know that you are here to listen.

STEP 3: LINK. In this step, we link the person to helping resources.

Where would you link Lina for help and support?

Possible answers could include:

- Encourage Lina to talk to her mom and share her feelings about what has been going on.
- See if Lina and her mom can work out a compromise for Friday night.
- Let Lina know that you are available to listen to her and support her.
- Encourage her to talk to a counsellor about her breakup so she can work through her feelings of anger and mistrust and find healthy ways to cope.

STEP 4: LIVE. In this step, you take care of yourself and find healthy ways to cope. Helping a friend deal with a difficult situation can take a physical and emotional toll.

How would you take care of yourself, and what suggestions would you have for Lina?

Possible answers could include:

- Write down your feelings in a journal.
- Play your favourite music or sport.
- Exercise.
- Spend time with a pet.
- Watch videos.
- Go to a movie.
- Get outside and hunt or hike, and enjoy the outdoors.
- Get creative and bead, sew, or write poetry or music.
- Eat healthy.
- Talk to friends and family to help work through your own feelings about the situation.
- Do something fun with Lina that you both like.
- Offer to go with Lina to visit her grandmother.

4. To summarize, display the Look, Listen, Link, Live© content, using the presentation slides or the alternative method you have prepared.

Closing Comments

- Conflict is a natural part of life. While we can try our best to avoid conflict, at some point we will find ourselves disagreeing with someone.
- The outcome of any conflict—big or small—depends on how both people respond to the conflict, manage their emotions, and choose to resolve the disagreement.
- Everyone has a right to be safe, and there are people you can talk to if you need help or support. Some examples are: friends, caregivers, parents, foster parents, aunts, uncles, elders, cadet and JCR leaders, and school personnel.
- Display the Kids Help Phone content, using the presentation slides or the alternative method you have prepared.
- Display the Community Resources content, using the presentation slide or the alternative method you have prepared.

Lina's Story

Lina finally has a date this Friday. She is feeling excited but very nervous. She had a bad breakup with her last partner. She has had trouble trusting people since then. Lina never talked to anyone about her last relationship, and she feels agitated and angry all the time. She is hoping this date goes well and that it will help her move on.

She tells her mom that she is going out on Friday. Her mother informs her they have a dinner with her Grandma who is not feeling well, so Lina will have to reschedule her date. Lina bursts into tears at this news and begins yelling and screaming at her mother. Her mother tries to talk to her, but Lina will not listen. Lina starts shouting, "You do not care about my life at all! I never want to do anything with this family!" Lina runs to her room and slams the door.

Lina sends you an emoji with a sad face and tears, and she asks you to come over. When you see Lina, she is red in the face and shaking. She bursts into tears.

Using the Look, Listen, Link, Live© model, answer the following questions:

- STEP 1: LOOK. What are the signs that tell you Lina needs help?
- STEP 2: LISTEN. How would you approach Lina to talk to her? What would you say?
- STEP 3: LINK. Where would you link Lina for help and support?
- STEP 4: LIVE. How would you take care of yourself, and what suggestions would you have for Lina?

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