



Day Five: Resolving Conflicts

Time Allowed

60 Minutes

Teaching Format

Troop presentation

Learning Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss several ways effective leaders can minimize conflict.
2. Describe how to use EAR (Express, Address, Resolve) as a tool for resolving conflict.
3. List strategies for resolving conflict.
4. List several communication skills important for resolving conflict.
5. List strategies for responding to bullying and how to be an upstander.

Materials Needed

- Visual aid(s) developed by the presenter on a flip chart
- Video clip(s) available on the National NYLT Google Drive
- Computer
- LCD projector and screen
- Appropriate sound system for presentation venue
- Handout: Conflict Resolution Checklist (one per participant)

Recommended Presenter

NYLT staff member

Recommended Location

Troop assembly area

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Note: Guide participants to locate the Participant Notes sheet for this session in the Participant Notebook. Encourage them to be taking note of key words, key points, and their top three takeaways from the session.

Opening Activity (5 min)

Open the session with two staff members in a simulated conflict over something related to their responsibilities on the NYLT course. It could be a scenario about not completing a task that was asked of them or an example of an issue like constantly being late to course activities. They don't necessarily have to resolve the conflict. Each course has the flexibility

to identify an appropriate topic for this conflict that should last for several minutes. Once over, let participants know that it was just a simulated activity over a conflict, which is our next topic.

What is Conflict? (5 min)

Conflicts can occur when people disagreeing with each other seem unable to find a reasonable compromise. The roots of these disagreements can arise from many sources, including differences in personality, values, and perceptions.

As a leader, you will occasionally need to handle the differences that arise between members of your unit. Conflicts may be minor or they may fester into something that can damage unit spirit and the ability of the youth to work together effectively.

Ask the group to share a couple of conflict situations they've seen arise in their own units.

Discuss the idea that as a team moves through the stages of Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing, the Storming stage can include conflict. A team in the Storming stage has low skills and is experiencing low enthusiasm and low motivation, which can be a recipe for conflict.

By identifying conflict when it is part of team development, team members and leaders might be able to address that conflict in ways that will help the patrol move beyond Storming.

Resolving Conflict (15 min)

Even with the best leadership, there are bound to be occasional difficulties between two people, between groups of people, or between one person and a number of others. The signs of trouble brewing may be small—someone becoming withdrawn and quiet, for example. Or the signs may be obvious—shouting, high levels of emotion, and so on.

If you are a leader within your own unit, you may be in an official role in which you are expected to step in to resolve a conflict. Or you may simply want to help a couple of your friends work through a disagreement.

Whatever the case, there is a proven set of steps to follow to resolve a conflict:

1. Be aware of yourself.
2. Be aware of others.
3. Listen.
4. Use your EAR.

1. *Be Aware of Yourself*

How do we respond when we are hearing something we don't want to hear? How about when you're hungry, tired, or angry?

A key to resolving conflict is being aware of ourselves. If we are upset or angry about something, it may affect how we relate to others. Be aware of your own emotions. Take a deep breath. Count to 10. If you need to, count to 100. It may require calling a time-out to let emotions cool down.



When helping others resolve a conflict, you must keep yourself out of the debate as much as possible. Rather than choosing sides, you are offering others a sounding board, a fresh way of thinking about the situation, and a chance to figure out answers for themselves.

2. *Be Aware of Others*

Being aware of yourself will help you remain as calm as you can and stay focused on finding a solution. Being aware of others will help you adjust the situation to increase the possibility of a good outcome. Be aware of their physical comfort, hunger levels, and other factors that could be affecting their emotions. You might want others to take a break before discussing the problem. Consider the location of a discussion, too. Ideally, you will want to meet out of the hearing of the rest of your group. That will give everyone a chance to air concerns without an audience.

3. *Listen*

The better the information you have, the greater your chances of finding a workable solution to a conflict. Listen carefully to what others are saying, withholding judgment until you have everyone's side of the story. In addition to hearing the words, be aware of the tone of your voice, body language, and any other clues to what a person really means. Remember, listening builds trust.

Understand what each person is expressing—what they want and what they are willing to do to get there. Then clarify that the solution lies with both parties.

In a moment, we will add Step 4—Using your EAR—and then learn how to recognize bullying and how to stop it. But first, let's try an exercise to practice the conflict resolution skills of being aware of yourself, being aware of others, and listening.

Group Exercise

Let's continue our exploration of resolving conflict with an exercise. Pair up with another participant. One of you will make a fist. The other has two minutes to convince the first to open that fist.

Give participants two minutes to do this.

Ask participants:

- What happened?
- Did anyone convince the other to open the fist?
- Whether successful or not, what strategies did you try?

Possible strategies may include the following:

- Bribery—"I'll give you five dollars if you open your fist."
- Concern—"It doesn't matter to *me* if you open your fist, but unless you do, you won't be able to pick anything up."
- Persuasion—"I like your hands better open than closed."
- Interest—"I'm curious to see what's inside your fist."
- Straightforwardness—"Hey, open your fist!"

If you ask a friend or a coworker or a family member or anyone else to do something and they refuse, you can't force them to do it. **You can't make a person do anything they don't want to do.**

So, how can you persuade someone to change positions? To open their fist? To resolve a conflict? Use your EAR.

4. Use Your Ear—Express, Address, Resolve

A tool for resolving conflict is EAR—Express, Address, Resolve. As a leader who is trying to manage the conflict, you must use your EAR to help others move through the conflict. Here's what you do.

EAR represents three steps in resolving conflict:

1. **Express.** Ask each side in the conflict, "What do you want, and what are you doing to get it?" Let them Express their pent-up emotions and concerns. Be sure to listen closely and without judgment.
2. **Address.** Ask each side, "Why is that working or not working?" You are helping them to Address the issue themselves. You are holding up a mirror for them so they can better address what they see happening.
3. **Resolve.** Ask each side, "What ways are there to solve the problem?" You are holding them accountable for Resolving the issue. You also are getting information about the problem and gaining time to think about other solutions you might offer up later.

Display the following questions on a flip chart, whiteboard, or slide:

1. What do you want, and what are you doing to get it?
2. Why is that working or not working?
3. What ways are there to solve the problem?

Discuss with the group why these questions, asked in this order, can help resolve conflict. What is the intent of each question? What is the power of each question?

All of the questions are focused on the person(s) experiencing a conflict. You as the person asking the questions are keeping yourself out of the debate as much as possible. You are offering others a sounding board, a fresh way of thinking about the situation, a chance to figure out answers for themselves.

Of all communication skills, the most important for conflict resolution is listening. Use your ears much more than your mouth. Let each party express its concerns. Encourage others to talk but offer no judgments. "I got it," is an appropriate response. Make sure you hear the message. Put it in your own words. "This is what I hear you saying:" Use EAR—Express, Address, Resolve—to find answers to conflict that work for everyone. Using EAR also works in dealing with bullying. Listen without judgment.



Conflict Resolution Exercise

Display the EAR resolving conflict tool on a flip chart, whiteboard, or slide:

1. **Express.** What do you want, and what are you doing to get it?
2. **Address.** Why is that working or not working?
3. **Resolve.** What ways are there to solve the problem?

Show “5_06_Resolving Conflicts_Video Clip 1” from *Night at the Museum*.

Within their patrols, have participants discuss how to resolve the conflict by using the four steps of conflict resolution: be aware of yourself, be aware of others, listen, use your EAR. After a few minutes, have a couple of patrols share their resolutions to the conflict. Some possible discussion points include the following:

- Should we address the conflict as soon as possible? (Yes!)
- Don't allow others to escalate the conflict.
- Help an agreement happen between the arguers to stop the fighting.
- Provide incentives to stop the conflict and to reinforce their positive actions.

Patrol Breakout Exercise in Resolving Conflict (20 min)

Begin by introducing the Conflict Resolution Checklist in the Participant Notebook, and let them know we will refer to it later in this exercise.

Assign each patrol a different topic from the list below or another appropriate one developed locally, and let them know that they will have about 8 minutes to work as a patrol to develop a brief role-play related to their assigned topic. It must involve a conflict and come to a resolution using at least one of the tools taught during this presentation. (**Note:** Troop guides should be available to provide support during the development of these skits.)

Topic List:

- You're on a hike, and three or four of the older members speed ahead of the rest of the group. When they get tired, they stop and wait for the others to catch up, but as soon as the others do, the older members take off again.
- You're on a campout with your patrol, and one member has decided they don't want to follow the duty roster.
- You're on a campout and notice an older Scout being abrasive with several younger Scouts by telling them that it's their job to set up his tent and keep his mess kit clean.
- You're at summer camp, and two members of your troop have overslept and caused your entire troop to be late to the morning flag ceremony.
- You're at a troop meeting, and two members of your troop are being disruptive during the skills instruction portion of the meeting.
- You're at the summer camp trading post, and two Scouts from another troop cut in front of you and several others waiting in a long line.

- You just found out that you lost a very close race to be the next senior patrol leader, and you suspect that the votes were not counted correctly.
- You're on a campout, and two members of a patrol cannot seem to put their cell phones away and do not want to participate in scheduled activities.

Have each patrol share their role-play in front of their troop. After each one, give the other patrols a minute to discuss the conflict they just witnessed and try to identify the strategy that they used to resolve it. Remind them to reference the Conflict Resolution Checklist.

Once all patrols are done, reinforce some of the conflict resolution examples from their role-plays and thank them for their creativity and delivery.

Recognize Bullying (10 min)

What is bullying? Bullying can be:

- Verbal: saying mean things, calling others mean names, saying threatening things.
- Physical: hitting, pushing, kicking, being aggressive.
- Relational: Leaving someone out of a group, spreading rumors about another person.
- Electronic: Using social media to engage in verbal bullying.

Bullies often use all forms of bullying.

It is going to happen to everyone at some point. Someone will be teased, be mean, or make you feel left out or hurt. The good thing is that all these are usually temporary actions and feelings. But when teasing and mean words cross the line and become bullying, it's time to step in and step up. When we see bullying, it is not the time to stand back and do nothing. Become an upstander.

Being an Upstander

Show "5_06_Resolving Conflicts_Video Clip 2" on upstanders (available in the National NYLT Google Drive or at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNnHdR9DQDA>).

Ask participants why they think people didn't step up to help the young man being bullied.

Possible answers may include the following:

- Didn't want to get involved
- Not their job
- Afraid to get involved

Hypothetically, what would you do if you witnessed a situation like that? Would you say something or do something?

Who is an upstander? You and I! As leaders, it is our responsibility to be prepared to do the right thing at the right time. If you see someone being bullied or you know of someone being bullied, you can do something about it! Here are some ideas of what to do when we see someone being bullied:

- Use EAR
- Tell the person that bullying is NOT okay.



- Ask the person if they need help.
- Offer to go with the person to tell a trusted adult.
- Include in your group the person being bullied.
- Help the person to not feel alone.
- Offer kindness and a smile.

Doesn't this sound like being a servant leader?

Bringing Others into Conflict Resolution (2 min)

Discuss strategies of what to do when your best efforts cannot resolve a conflict.

Problems that continue too long or that seem not to respond to your efforts at resolution should also be discussed with the patrol leaders' council and with adult leaders in order to draw on their suggestions and involvement.

Serious problems such as those involving drugs, alcohol, hazing, bullying, or harassment should be reported immediately to the adult leaders of your unit. In some cases, finding a satisfactory solution may require the involvement of adult leaders and the families of the members in conflict.

Summary (3 min)

Even with the best leadership, there are bound to be occasional difficulties between two people, between groups of people, or between one person and a number of others.

In considering the causes of conflict, recognize the Storming stage of team development (low skills, low enthusiasm, low motivation). Storming is an expected phase in a team's progress. By dealing with it head on rather than ignoring it or trying to minimize the stage, a team can gain the value of the Storming experience and be better able to move beyond it.

When people are in disagreement with one another, you often can find a workable solution by using many of the same skills that are effective when the actions of a single person are unacceptable.

Remember the following strategies from the Conflict Resolution Checklist:

1. **Be aware of yourself.** Stay calm and use your best communication skills.
2. **Be aware of others.** Notice body language, tone of voice, comfort levels, and other clues to what they are saying. Ask if bullying is occurring.
3. **Listen.** Hear what each person wants and what he is willing to do to get there. Then clarify that the solution lies with all of the parties involved.
4. **Use the conflict resolution EAR—Express, Address, Resolve.**

Finally, encourage each person to see the situation from other points of view, then enlist the aid of all parties working together to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone. Know when to involve adult leaders in resolving conflict.

Remind participants to take a moment to ensure they have noted their top three takeaways in their Participant Notes for this session.



Conflict Resolution Checklist

1. Be aware of yourself.
2. Be aware of others.
3. Listen.
4. Use your **EAR** to:

Express—What do you want, and what are you doing to get it?

Address—Why is that working or not working?

Resolve—What ways are available to solve the problem?