

CONFLICT VS. BULLYING: HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT

“Conflict” and “bullying” are sometimes used interchangeably, but serious differences distinguish them.

Conflict is disagreement, differing opinions, or a clash of interests. With conflict, students have equal power even if they don't agree or don't like each other. Conflict is natural and normal; it's how people learn how to problem-solve.

Bullying is a deliberate and repeated act of intentional harm, usually in an aggressive form. It can be physical, verbal, or emotional (or a combination). There is usually a power imbalance, with the student being bullied feeling intimidated or helpless.

There's no doubt that negative emotions are associated with not just bullying but conflict too: it can make people feel nervous, uneasy, angry, or uncomfortable. But conflict is a necessary part of life as you learn how to navigate different types of people, relationships, and growing up. With the steps below, students can learn how to reframe conflict with positivity and mitigate those “yucky” feelings.

- 1 Become an active listener.** Carefully listen to what the other person says and make sure you understand correctly. Listen to understand instead of respond.
- 2 Identify emotions.** Name the emotions that arise during conflict and communicate about them.
- 3 Learn how to brainstorm solutions.** Come up with more than a few ideas and agree with the other person on how to move forward in the best way.
- 4 Practice empathy.** Try to see the situation from the other person's perspective and consider their feelings.

Explain that you welcome opportunities for students to reframe and resolve conflict at the studio so that they can feel strong, confident, and empowered. Remind them to think through their words and actions, especially when communicating through social media channels. Conflict will happen from time to time, but it is an opportunity to learn and grow as a human being.

Sources:

[Stop Bullying](#)

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