



**PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT
TRANSFORMATION METHODS
C-11(PEACE EDUCATION)**

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PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION METHODS

The five main conflict strategy dimensions

Avoidance low concern for the relationship and the issues

Accommodating high concern for the relationship, low concern for issues

Compromise moderate concern for relationship and issue

Competition high concern for the issues, low concern for relationship

Cooperate high concern for the relationship and the issues

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Avoidance

Avoiding a conflict seems to be the easiest way to get out of a conflict — hoping that time will solve the problem. The conflict is denied, kept hidden or suppressed, but the conflict manifests and worsens. Finding a solution becomes more difficult the longer the parties wait to solve the conflict. Neither one's own needs and interests nor the others are taken into account. The chance to find a solution is not used — both parties lose. People who avoid conflict are generally unassertive and uncooperative. They do not immediately pursue their own concerns or those of the other person, but rather avoid the conflict entirely or delay their response

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By doing so, they diplomatically sidestep or postpone discussion until a better time; they withdraw from the threatening situation or divert attention. Perspective on conflict: conflict is hopeless, avoid it; overlook differences, accept disagreement or get out. Avoidance often implies that one party is giving up. Sure, there are situations in life where giving up is the best strategy, as the risk of being harmed is too high or the issue is not very important for oneself. For example, if a drugged, armed thief enters your house, it is better to give him what he wants instead of arguing. Generally it seems that conflicts are solved quickly when one gives up. But the one giving up can frequently develop an inner desire to be on the winning side one day and just wait for a chance to seek revenge.

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Accommodation People who accommodate are unassertive and very cooperative. They neglect their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of others. They often give in during a conflict and acknowledge their own mistakes or decide that their own concern is no big deal. Accommodating is the opposite style of competing. People who accommodate may be selflessly generous or charitable, they may also obey another person when they would prefer not to, or yield to another's point of view. Usually people who accommodate put relationships first, ignore the issues and try to keep peace at any price. This strategy is connected to submissive behaviour, which involves denying needs, allowing others to choose, not expressing the self. Perspective on conflict: conflict is usually disastrous, so leave it; sacrifice your own interests, ignore issues, put relationship first; keep peace at any price

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Compromise People who compromise are moderately assertive and moderately cooperative. Both parties have about the same amount of power and cannot oppress each other. They therefore look for a compromise and usually try to find fast, mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts that partially satisfy both parties. Every conflict party gives in as much as it can stand in order to reach a better solution at the end. Every party is willing to cut back on their own goal to meet in the middle. Conflicts are often managed like this, but none of the parties is fully happy about the final solution. This is so, because often the parties do not abandon their different opinions and finally gain less than expected. They only agree on a common point to reach a particular step which both think is of advantage to them. The overall conflict might remain dormant for a while until the short-term goal is reached, then the conflict might break out again.

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The dimension of compromise can be applied to situations when both conflict parties are equally in power and find ways and means to agree on how to solve specific issues. It can also describe situations where a majority (the powerful) rules and decides while the minority (the powerless) agrees with what the majority proposes and does not feel oppressed. Generally, compromisers give up less than accommodators but more than competitors. They explore issues more than avoiders, but less than collaborators. Their solutions often involve 'splitting the difference' or exchanging concessions. Perspective on conflict: conflict is mutual difference best resolved by cooperation or compromise; if each comes halfway, progress can be made by democratic process.

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Confrontation/Competition People who approach conflict in a competitive way assert themselves as they pursue their own concerns even at other people's expense. To compete, people take a power orientation and use whatever means or force that seems appropriate to win. This may include arguing, pulling rank, or instigating economic sanctions. Competing means defending a position and pushing it through, believing it to be correct, or simply due to the desire to win — even by using force. This is linked to the term aggressiveness which involves achieving needs at the expense of others, making choices for others and hindering them from expressing their emotion⁷. **Suppression of the minority** One party (A) suppresses another party (B) by any means available. A holds the position that its opinion is the best and only correct one.

Confrontation/Competition

Therefore A tries to put through its own ideas by any means, which can happen through punishment, bad talk or just ignoring the other's wishes. The opinion of B is not seen as worthy or important because A's own stands above all. One party may win lots of times because of its power over the other party. This strategy might work for some time, because the minority is afraid, but sooner or later tensions and hostility will become so strong that the oppressed party will break apart or develop a form of revenge. Perspective on conflict: Conflict is obvious, some people are right and others are wrong; central is who is right; pressure and coercion are necessary

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Cooperation People who cooperate are both assertive and cooperative. They are really interested in finding a solution where their needs, wishes and values are taken into account. The different opinions are discussed, weighed against each other and measured against the common aim. They assert their own views while also listening to other views and welcome differences. Everybody involved in the conflict is involved in this conflict solving process that aims at a win-win solution for all. Therefore both parties attempt to work with others to find solutions that fully satisfy the concerns of everyone. This approach involves identifying the concerns that underlie the conflict by exploring the disagreement from both sides of the conflict, learning from each other's insights, and creatively coming up with solutions that address the concerns of both.

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This approach is linked to the term assertiveness which is based on respecting oneself and others and involves honestly expressing one's own feelings and aiming for what one actually wants, while allowing others to achieve their goals.

Perspective on conflict: conflict is natural and neutral; affirm differences, value each others uniqueness; recognize tensions in relationships and contrasting viewpoints but want to work through conflicts

New ideas are created when working with this strategy. A common solution can only develop when the parties gain knowledge of the interests of the other/s and this can even mean an overall improvement in the situation

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❖ Steps

- ❖ ▶ Concentrate on your motive (cut off from your goal).
- ❖ ▶ Exchange needs and interests (integration of different wishes).
- ❖ ▶ Work on developing a common goal, which serves both sides and integrates the different wishes into new ones.

❖ Some general recommendations for strategies in conflict situations

- ❖ ▶ Try to listen to what the conflict-partner/s offers.
- ❖ ▶ Try not to leave the conflict too early; it might bring loss for you.
- ❖ ▶ Try to give cooperation another chance as previously planned.
- ❖ ▶ If you feel you are losing, leave the game for a while.
- ❖ ▶ A win-win strategy is neither pacifistic nor altruistic.

METHODS OF TRANSFORMING CONFLICT

Conflict resolution is the process of leading the conflict parties to a shared and agreed solution. In many cases a final solution is hardly reached, therefore the focus of this resource book is on conflict transformation. Still, solutions to specific issues are surely possible to find in every conflict. What is presented below is a list of methods in alphabetical order, applicable depending on the type and level of the conflict. All of them are aimed at reaching acceptable solutions by peaceful means.

ARBITRATION

Arbitration means that the conflict-parties appoint a third party or a representative among themselves to assist in solving the conflict. The conflict parties appoint the arbitrator to make the arrangements for the arbitration process and to take the decisions on their behalf. Often there is no obligation for the parties to accept the outcome, but the weight of the arbitrator's decision might provide impetus for the parties to reconsider their options to the solution of the conflict.

FACILITATION

Facilitation is an assisted process that is similar to mediation in its objective: to increase the effectiveness of their communication abilities and therefore their problem-solving abilities. The facilitator must not be an 'outsider'; it can be a person within the group who is able to provide assistance. Another difference to mediation is that the process does not follow a defined procedure.

INTERVENTION

Intervention means that a third party takes steps to try to end the conflict — this means that the intervention could be one of the methods described in the following. An intervention of a third party is useful, if one conflict-party feels afraid to confront the other party with the conflict, but feels able to inform a neutral actor about the situation. It could also be useful in situations where the conflict-parties have reached a stage where they refuse to communicate directly with each other.

LITIGATION

Litigation is a way of conflict resolution, wherein the conflict-parties transfer their cases to lawyers, who handle the case in court. Often the matter is taken out of the hands of the conflict-parties and placed in the hand of the judiciary. The conflict is resolved according to the judgement, which is based on the law of the country. Keep in mind that the intention of a lawyer is to win for his party at all costs.

MEDIATION

Mediation refers to a process through which a third party provides procedural assistance to help individuals or groups in conflict to resolve their differences. The mediator is present to structure and facilitate the process in a way which creates a safe space for parties to discuss their issues and to find solutions which will meet their interests. It is not the duty of the mediator to judge but the role of the conflict-parties to reach an acceptable agreement for all. At the end all parties should be able to sign a mutual agreement and practice what is worked out.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation means that the conflict-parties present their cases alternately to the third party who sets guidelines and directs the negotiation. The parties choose the negotiator as a third party to speak on their behalf in the conflict situation. But the parties keep the decision-making power for themselves. Negotiation refers to either competitive processes (positional negotiation) or cooperative efforts (interest-based negotiation).

NEGOTIATION

▶ In positional negotiation, parties make offers and counter-offers which they feel will resolve the conflict and/or aim at achieving the outcome which is in their favour. In this way, the parties show their respective positions of strengths and weaknesses.

NEGOTIATION

▶ Interest-based negotiation is designed for parties who have a need to create or maintain healthy relationships. In this type of process, parties discuss the conflicting issue and in doing so express their interests, values and needs. Instead of focusing on competitive measures and winning the negotiation, the parties collaborate by looking to create solutions which maximize the meeting of their interest, values and needs.

Traditional ways of resolving or transforming conflicts

In the case of inter-personal, domestic or family conflicts the matter is generally placed in the hands of an intermediary.

The intermediary either acts:

▶ as an arbitrator – one who listens to both points of view and then makes an independent judgement, ▶ as a negotiator – one who helps the parties to express their perspectives, but does not take decisions, or

▶ as a mediator, whose role is to help the conflict-parties reach their own agreement.

SOME OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMING OR SOLVING CONFLICTS

Diplomacy There are various different forms and levels of diplomacy involved in various types and stages of conflicts:

Track one diplomacy government to government interaction at official level; including official negotiation (often with international organizations) or traditional

diplomacy where the persons represent the respective state or party and reflect their positions during discussions.

Track two diplomacy describes the interaction between “experts” in the area of the issues at hand. The experts can be actors from civil society, religious communities, business experts, local leaders or politicians who are influential in their respective field. The interaction is generally informal and involves middle and lower levels of society with representatives from governmental institutions.

SOME OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMING OR SOLVING CONFLICTS

Track three diplomacy is basically people to people diplomacy. It is carried out by individuals or groups who are dedicated to promoting specific ideals or norms and who enact systemic social changes. Often this kind of diplomacy involves conferences, media exposure, political and legal advocacy supporting marginalized communities or groups that might be unable to achieve positive change without outside assistance.

SOME OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMING OR SOLVING CONFLICTS

Peacekeeping refers to military operations, generally undertaken with the consent of all major parties involved in the conflict. The objective is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of agreements and support the diplomatic efforts to reach a long term political settlement. Peacemaking refers to the diplomatic efforts intended to end the bloodshed, the execution of violence between the conflicting parties. The objective is to move a violent conflict into a nonviolent stage where other methods like negotiation, arbitration, facilitation or mediation can be applied. International organizations or international courts might act as the neutral third parties that provide nonviolent channels for transformation.

. MEDIATION

Conflict resolution with the help of a third party has probably been practised since the existence of three or more people on earth. Historical roots have been found in China, Japan and parts of Africa. In ancient China, mediation was the main means of solving conflicts. Based on the understanding of self-determination, mediation is still widely practiced today

MEDIATION

Gandhi in India, many wanted to remain strictly non-violent in their rallies and actions of civic disobedience. New awareness and growing self-confidence about becoming involved in political issues went along with the upcoming “humanist” interpretation of the human being: the individual is born to be autonomous and to live in self-determination and mutual responsibility regarding fellow creatures. Applied to conflict situations, each human being is meant to be their own expert: every individual knows best what their wants, needs, fears and desires are. According to this, mediation — at its origin — turned out to serve two goals on two different levels:

MEDIATION

Practical – During political turmoil the clash of needs, values and interests caused a growing number of conflicts within the population and between civilians and authorities. The courts were over-crowded beyond their capacities. They needed to be relieved. That was when mediation as a new way of conflict resolution outside of jurisdiction could comply with an actual public need.

Philosophical – The new humanist philosophy suggested people should be independent of judges and courts in order to resolve conflicts on the basis of self responsibility and mutual respect. The model of mediation as described below is a result of this new thinking. Mediation processes vary throughout the world in form and underlying philosophy. In many western countries, the mediator is usually an independent, impartial person who has no decision-making authority.

FUNDAMENTAL PRE-CONDITIONS ARE:

- ▶ The two or more conflict-parties are willing to go through the process and accept the mediator(s) to support them with the aim of finding their own way of settling their differences.
- ▶ The mediator creates a safe environment by their presence, the way the process is structured and by applying skill to facilitate the procedure. When the conflicting parties feel safe, the process allows misunderstandings and suspicion to evaporate. The parties can bring up whatever concerns them most, they are given a chance to air their grievances and can discuss their issues

FUNDAMENTAL PRE-CONDITIONS ARE:

They can talk directly (with the mediator and later the opponent) and hear the other's perspective. In this way, there is a chance of finding solutions which meet the interests of all involved.

▶ It is neither the role nor duty of the mediator to judge who is right and who is wrong. It is the role and task of the conflict-parties to reach an acceptable agreement suitable for all involved.

▶ As mediation is not bound by rules of formal proceedings (like courts), people are not bound to the official subject of dispute.

MEDIATION

The success of mediation lies in the readiness and willingness of the conflicting parties and in the mediator's skills. All the conflict-parties involved should win in the end; they should be able to sign a mutual agreement and practice what is worked out. If everyone wants to see the conflict end, mediation can be an efficient way of achieving this.

GANDHI'S NORMS OF CONFLICT

The following is a list of ideas on how to work on conflict, structured in three conflict stages according to Mahatma Gandhi.

Define the conflict precisely!

- ▶ Emphasize common and agreed aims!
- ▶ State the facts decisive to the conflict objectively!
- ▶ Take a positive approach to the conflict!
- ▶ Place positive emphasis on the conflict!
- ▶ View the conflict as a chance to encounter the opponent!
- ▶ View the conflict as a chance to reshape society!
- ▶ View the conflict as a chance to change yourself! Settling conflicts during conflicts! ▶ Refrain from taking action that injures or damages! ▶ Refrain from using words that injure or damage! ▶ Refrain from thinking thoughts that injure or damage ▶ State your aims clearly! ▶ Try to understand your opponent's aims!

GANDHI'S NORMS OF CONFLICT

Settling conflicts

- ▶ Adopt a policy of non-violence during conflicts!
- ▶ Refrain from taking action that injures or damages!
- ▶ Refrain from using words that injure or damage!
- ▶ Refrain from thinking thoughts that injure or damage
- ▶ State your aims clearly!
- ▶ Try to understand your opponent's aims!

GANDHI'S NORMS OF CONFLICT

Means of pressure Alternatives make a personal attack on the other party tackle the problem by non-violent means view the negotiation as a contest view the negotiation as a method of jointly solving problems commit myself at a later point in time remain open to convincing arguments maintain a fixed standpoint attempt to find out the various interests limit the options to 'either – or' suggest a variety of options try to break the will of the other party try to convince the other party with fair arguments put the other under pressure and deny alternatives offer alternatives

- ▶ Do not damage your opponent's property!
- ▶ Do good to those who do evil!
- ▶ Act in a manner appropriate to your aims/purpose!
- ▶ Be prepared to make sacrifices!

Solving conflicts

- ▶ Find a solution to the conflict!
- ▶ Stick to essential and not non-essential matters!
- ▶ Consider yourself imperfect as a being!
- ▶ Demonstrate a generous attitude to your opponent!
- ▶ Persuade, do not coerce!



THANK YOU