

Social and Emotional Learning in the Time of Distance Learning: An Online Resource for Educators Concerned About Children's Coping Skills

Lesson # 9

Dealing With Conflicts

(Narration appears in italics throughout this lesson.)

Always begin your class meeting with a Check-In.

A check in is a very important part of each session/lesson/meeting. "Checking in" with each other involves naming and acknowledging feelings, and is a great way to connect members of the group with each other, creating a sense of community. Checking In allows students to pause at the beginning of a session and, by naming their feelings, free up cognitive processing power for engagement in the session. Research has suggested that the check-in activity builds empathy among group members and strengthens group connections. Students are permitted to pass. If time is a problem, hand signals can be used by students to participate in the check in (thumb up, thumb horizontal, or thumb down).

Today's Check-In: Explain to students that when we make a choice that makes us or others feel good, it is like the sun is shining on us. We feel warm and satisfied. When we make a choice that makes us or others feel bad, it feels like the sun has gone behind clouds and the day has become stormy. On a stormy day, we often want to retreat, hide, or avoid/attack the conflict that has caused the storm. Have students take out their journals and draw a representation of a choice they made that brought the feeling of sunshine. Now have students draw a representation of a choice they made that resulted in storm clouds gathering.

Mini-Lesson: Dealing with Conflicts

When teaching conflict resolution, it is important to make sure that kids have words to use when talking about conflict. Conflict Resolution, and, with it, the end to bullying, is only possible when students are able to Stop, Listen to the message of their emotions, Explain how they feel to the other person, Listen to the other person's point of view, and work together to create a compromise.

Here is a quote from a fifth-grade student in a school that I studied.

(Steve: this is on page 38 of my book, along with a picture.)

“Everybody understands each other so well that they don’t really want to be the bully. If we didn’t have Emotional Intelligence (skills) to help manage our emotions, then the school would be kind of like one big bully yard. Because they know how others feel and everything, they don’t really want to be a bully.”

Students need a lot of guidance and a lot of practice in these skills. It is important to talk conflicts through when they occur in the classroom and model the solution to the problem. When doing research for my dissertation, I became acquainted with one technique called the Fish Bowl. Students would put problems they had encountered during the week in a glass bowl. During a specific and scheduled problem-solving time, slips were pulled from the bowl. The class formed a circle on the classroom floor and the students who had put the conflict slip in the bowl sat in the center of the circle. As they practiced the conflict resolution steps, all students saw the process modeled.

I was astounded when I saw this process and privately asked some students if they weren’t afraid the kids in the circle would make fun of the kids in the center of the circle, doing the problem solving. The answer was very clear!! “Why would they do that? We are all trying to solve a problem here!!”

The class should watch this Video together.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arFGdviw_ys

Debrief: Discuss the steps of Conflict Resolution. Have the children write the 4 steps of Conflict Resolution in their journals. (Stop; Listen Up; Watch Your Words; Don’t go there!!) Ask the students to answer the following questions in their journals.

- 1. How do the “tools” of Taking Deep Breaths and the Body, Mind, Heart check help us to STOP and listen to our emotions?***
- 2. What are the “tools” the video recommended in the Watch Your Words segment of the video? (Use nice words; Use a calm voice; No Put-Downs; No Mean Comments)***
- 3. Is it difficult to listen when you are experiencing intense emotions? Why? What can you do to change this and help yourself to listen?***
- 4. The video tells us that it is possible to find a solution if we listen and “don’t go there.” What does “don’t go there” mean?***

Next Lesson: *Dealing with Rejection and Limiting Thoughts*