

WE CAN SORT IT OUT

An introduction to skills
for resolving conflict



A handbook for trainers
for use on Traveller training programmes

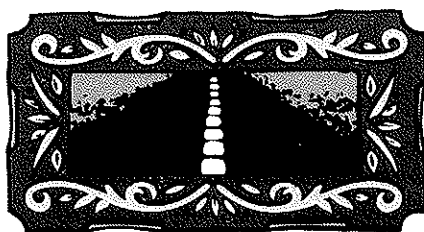
Pavee Point Publications

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An introduction to skills for resolving conflict

**A handbook for trainers
for use on Traveller training programmes**

Prepared by Tom Larkin and Margaret Quinn



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLERS' CENTRE

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Preface

Conflict is part of life. It can be destructive and sometimes violent. It can also be a catalyst for change and transformation, depending, in part, on our capacity to deal with conflict situations and turn them around, ideally to create positive outcomes for all concerned. Social inequalities and injustices give rise to recurring conflicts, disagreements and hostile incidents between members of the majority population and Travellers. Increasingly as travel becomes more restricted and Travellers come under pressure to settle longer in one area, one of the traditional Traveller ways of dealing with internal and external conflict – moving on – has come under strain. There is a need to find alternative ways to resolve conflict situations and to build Travellers' capacity to take part in the resolution process. This "Introduction to skills for resolving conflict" has been developed by the Mediation Service as part of a long-term strategy to enable Travellers to deal constructively with conflict in everyday life by developing the skills to use alternative techniques to resolve disputes.

Introduction

Aim:

This training module aims to provide Travellers with an opportunity to explore the issue of conflict, to examine their own and others' responses to conflict situations and to develop skills which are useful in dealing with conflict.

Content overview:

The *first session* focuses on the causes and consequences of conflict as well as the feelings of those involved in conflict situations.

The *second session* encourages the participants to identify their own and others' responses to conflict.

Session Three explores the ways in which Travellers have traditionally dealt with conflict. It provides an opportunity for participants to analyse a recent conflict situation in which they have been involved and to identify behaviours which are helpful in resolving conflicts.

The *fourth session* focuses on the "sub-skills" that go to make up the skill of "listening".

Session Five introduces a four stage process for resolving conflicts and gives the participants the chance to practice these steps in a role play situation.

Session Six focuses on mediation as an alternative way to resolve disputes.

Where to use this module:

The module has been designed for use on a variety of Traveller training programmes. Each session is based on a one and a half hour training session.

Note to the Trainer:

Conflict can be a delicate and emotive subject and trainers need to be especially sensitive to conflicts which may exist within the group. For the purpose of exercises, it may be necessary to steer the discussion clear of more serious conflict affecting people in the group and to focus on less contentious everyday conflicts of the type illustrated in Session 2, point 2. In order to create a safe space in which to discuss the subject, it is important to emphasise at the outset and at the start of each session the need for the group to maintain confidentiality. What is discussed during each session does not leave the room.

If emotions run high during a session, there are a number of things the trainer can do. Point out to the group that emotions are running high and take a short break and/or try one of the following exercises:

1. Ask the participants to stand in a circle and draw a deep breath. While breathing in, everyone should raise their arms. They should then breath out quickly and at the same time bring their arms down quickly by their side and say in a loud voice "ho"! This is a way of releasing energy through sound and movement.
2. Ask participants to express the emotion(s) they are feeling in words or drawings on pieces of paper. Everyone is then asked to scrunch their pieces of paper up into a ball and throw them into a wastepaper basket, so that the participants symbolically leave the emotions that have been raised behind them at the end of the session.

While working through the sessions, especially during those times when participants are in small groups, we advise the trainer to check that all instructions have been understood. It may be necessary, as with all programmes, to adapt the language or approach so that it is appropriate to the participants. When dividing the large group into smaller groups, the trainer should try to ensure that there is one person who can take notes in each group, where possible.

We encourage anyone who works with this programme to feel free to adapt or make changes as necessary, e.g. where small group work is suggested, it may sometimes be more appropriate to work in the large group, particularly where the activity is brainstorming or listing.

Session 1: Rows and disagreements

Objectives: that the participants will draw up and agree a set of ground rules for working together;

that the participants will distinguish between the useful and harmful effects of conflict;

that the participants will identify the causes and consequences of conflict as well as the feelings of those involved in conflict situations.

Materials Required: Flip chart and markers
4 sheets of flip chart paper on which the questions below have been written - one question to each page, placed in the four corners of the room
4 markers - one with each flip chart page.

The Questions:

1. What things do people have rows/conflicts about?
2. How do rows/conflicts come about?
3. What are the results of rows/conflicts?
4. What feelings do people have before, during and after rows/conflicts?

Suggested Procedure:

1. Welcome and introductions, if necessary.
2. To begin, explain to the participants that, over the next six sessions, they will be looking at conflict. Write the word "conflict" in the middle of the flip-chart page. Ask the participants to call out any words that people would be likely to use instead of "conflict" and write these around the word, e.g. disagreement, argument, row, fight, hassle, dispute, etc.
3. Explain that one of the reasons why people can have rows or arguments is because they want or expect different things. This can be a problem for any group of people working together. To avoid rows that do not need to happen, it is a good idea if the group agrees some rules together at the beginning - that way, everyone knows what is expected of them. These are usually called **ground-rules**.

To illustrate the importance of these, they are going to do a short exercise. Ask the group to sit in a circle. Tell them that you will whisper a sentence to the first person, who is then to whisper what they heard to the second person (once only) and so on until the whisper has passed around everyone in the group. Other people are not meant to listen to the whisper that is going around until it comes to them personally. This is what you whisper to the first person: "The tall man with the yellow shirt stepped out of a dark car into a puddle of murky water". When the last person has heard the whisper, ask them to tell the group what they heard. Compare this with what you whispered to the first person in the group. Ask the participants to try to find out where the whisper got distorted. The point of the exercise is to show that often when a story is repeated from one person to another details can get left out or distorted. It is important not to tell stories about others unless you have the details completely accurate and have their permission to do so. In order for people to have the confidence to open up and share things in a group it is better to agree that the things people say during a session do not get repeated outside it. Confidentiality is an important ground rule for group work.

Divide the participants into four groups, numbering them off 1,2,3,4, 1,2,3,4, etc. In their small groups they should list all the other things that each person needs to do to make the group a comfortable place for everybody to share their stories and to work and learn together.

While the groups are working, move between them to check how things are going - clarify the task if necessary. Encourage them to think about what the group members could do to make the best conditions for meeting their learning needs. Depending on how things are going, allow 5 to 10 minutes for this.

Rather than having any group share all their rules, which may leave the last group with very little to say, ask for one suggestion from each group in turn. Continue to take a suggestion from each group until all the ideas have been noted on the flip chart. It is a good idea to explain to the group that at this stage they are simply listing suggestions and that discussion of the ideas will come later. For this reason, the suggestions should be heard without remark or discussion.

When all of the suggestions have been gathered invite questions, opinions, etc. Try to reduce the list, if possible, to between six and eight rules.

When this has been done ask the participants if they agree with the list as guidelines for working within the group, and if they are willing to stick to them for the rest of the sessions. The agreed list of ground-rules should be copied onto a sheet of flip-chart paper so that it can be displayed during all sessions. This acts as a reminder to everyone and also allows the group to refer to the list if necessary.

Note to the Trainer:

The following is a composite list of **ground rules** which different groups have formulated. They may be of use in helping you to guide your group through the process above.

- Acknowledge that there are appropriate places for dealing with external conflict between members of a group, but that training sessions are not the place to deal with their disputes. This is because people who are not involved can be drawn into them unnecessarily and it can have a negative effect on the work of the group. Rows between members of a group that belong outside, should be dealt with outside the group;
 - What is said in the room stays in the room - confidentiality;
 - Only one person speaks at a time;
 - Listen to others - no butting in;
 - Show respect for other people's opinions;
 - No put-down remarks about or to people;
 - No pressure on anyone to speak - each person has the chance to take part, but no-one is forced to;
 - Be on time for sessions and finish on time;
 - Speak for yourself (I think....., I feel..... etc.), not for other people (we all think....., we feel....., etc.);
 - No swearing;
 - No smoking;
 - Turn off mobile phones;
 - Everyone is responsible for making sure the rules are kept (not just the trainer!).
4. Ask the participants to remain in their small groups. Place the flip chart paper with the 4 questions in various places around the room. Explain that each group should first think about any recent rows or conflicts they have experienced, then go, in turn, to all four sheets of paper and write their group's responses to the questions. Assign a group to each page to get started. Allow 3 - 5 minutes before signalling that it is time to move on to the next page, continuing until each group has had an opportunity to respond to each question.

The completed pages should be displayed so that everyone can see them. The participants should be asked for any general remarks or reactions at this stage. If it does not emerge, it may be necessary, in order to explore people's attitudes to conflict more fully, to ask the following questions:

- Are the words or phrases mostly positive or mostly negative?
- What does this have to say about the way in which we look at conflict?

- When can conflict be useful?
- In what ways can conflict be harmful?

Go quickly through all of the pages for their reactions and observations. Explain that these pages will be kept and may be referred to in the remaining sessions.

5. Ask the participants what they thought about the session and what they learned from it. Remind them that what people said in confidence during the session must not be repeated outside.

Session 2: Responses to conflict

Remind participants of the ground rules, especially those of listening respectfully and confidentiality.

Objectives: that the participants will identify their own and others' responses to conflict.

Materials Required: Flip chart
A copy of "Responses to Conflict: Agree or Disagree" for each participant (optional)
Copy of "Illustrations" page for each participant
Trainer's notes on "Responses to Conflict: Pen Pictures of the Different Types".

Suggested Procedure:

1. Begin this session by asking the participants how or where they learned to deal with conflict. The likelihood is that all or most will have learned through a combination of observation and experience. It is unlikely that anyone ever sat them down and taught them how to deal with conflict. Depending on who they observed and whether their experience was good or bad, they worked out their own way of responding to conflicts. Explain to the participants that the following statements, which you are going to read out, represent a number of different ways of responding to conflict.

Note to the Trainer:

The set of statements has been organised in handout format, which could, alternatively, be given to the participants to fill out.

Place a sign with the word **AGREE** on one side of the room and a sign with the word **DISAGREE** at the other side of the room. Read out the first statement on the "Responses to Conflict" page. Ask the participants if they agree with this statement to stand by the **AGREE** sign, if they disagree with the statement to stand by the **DISAGREE** sign. Ask both groups why they chose the position they did. Encourage them to respond to any points raised by the other groups. Allow no more than five minutes for the exchange of views and opinions.

Go through each of the statements using the same format. At the end of this process, ask the participants to think about the five statements and see which one most closely describes how they would be most likely to respond to rows/conflict.

2. Inform the group that during the rest of this session, they are going to look a little more deeply at how people in general respond to conflicts. Hand out the "Illustrations" page. Explain that each of the animals matches one of the statements they have just discussed. To help them to finally choose their typical or usual response to conflict, explain that you will read out a short description of each type of response. After the pictures have been read, ask each participant to pick the animal they consider closest to their own typical response.

3. Ask them to form groups according to their choices, e.g. all the "sharks", all the "teddy bears", etc. If there is a very big group, ask them to split up or invite volunteers to form a mixed group.

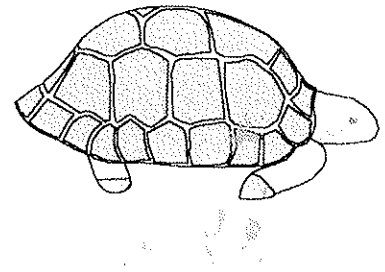
In their groups, ask them to talk about and prepare to report back on when their particular response to conflict would be useful and when it would not. Allow ten minutes for discussion and then invite the groups to feed back on their findings. Others are allowed to ask questions after each report. When all the groups have reported, invite general comments and observations. Draw attention, if necessary, to the reality that different situations require different responses. Largely the response required depends on whether the most important thing is the task, the relationship between the people or both.

4. Ask the participants what they thought about the session and what they learned from it. Again remind them that what people said in confidence during the session must not be repeated outside.

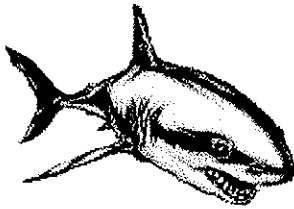
Responses to Conflict:

Agree or Disagree?

| | Agree | Disagree |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. There are winners and losers in every row; winning is what matters. | | |
| 2. It would be terrible if people finished up not liking one another after a row – sometimes you have to give up a lot to make sure that doesn't happen. | | |
| 3. Rows are not worth the hassle; avoid them at all costs. | | |
| 4. In a row you can't always get everything your own way, so you have to meet people half way. | | |
| 5. It takes two to have a row, so it takes two to sort it out. | | |



Responses to Conflict



Responses to Conflict: Pen Pictures of the Different Types

It is important to remember that none of us are entirely one thing or another. Throughout our lives we will react to conflict in different ways, depending on the situation and on how important the issue is to us. What we are trying to do here is discover our preferred way of reacting to conflict. This doesn't mean that you will always do the same thing. It might help to think about how you reacted the last time you really felt under pressure.

Teddy Bears: Teddy bears love to be liked, and will do whatever it takes to make sure that people do like them. They dislike conflict and will try hard to make sure that the conflict does not harm their relationships. Relationships are what matters most to the teddy bears and they will do everything they can to protect them. Sometimes this means that they will give in even when they have a real complaint or a reasonable and important point to make. Teddy bears sometimes give up things that are really important to them in order to finish the conflict as quickly as possible.

Turtles: Turtles hate conflict and their first reaction is to withdraw. They just want to get away, even if that means walking away. Sometimes this gives everyone time to think, however, it is very difficult for the Turtle to stick around until the conflict is sorted out, with the result that, very often, the conflict does not get sorted out at all. It is just ignored until the next time it flares up. The turtle response often means that the relationship is in danger from the conflict that hasn't been dealt with. Turtles themselves can often lose out because they do not take care of their own needs if it will involve them in conflict.

Sharks: For the sharks of this world, winning is very important. When they find themselves in a conflict situation, which is likely to be often, they feel that there can only be one winner and that winner must be the shark. For the shark, conflict is not so much something to be sorted out as a battle to be fought. They are very willing to do what needs to be done and can be great organisers. However, they do not mind what or who they have to walk over on the way.

Foxes: Foxes are the practical people, willing to give and take - to meet half way in order to reach an agreement. They will do whatever has to be done to make sure that things can carry on. They are fairly concerned about keeping relationships good and fairly concerned about making sure that things get done. They will give up whatever is necessary to keep things ticking over and running reasonably smoothly.

Owls The owls believe that there is always something to be learned from conflict. They are happy to spend time and energy making sure that the conflict is sorted out in the best way possible. Owls believe that when it comes to sorting out conflict, everyone has something to give to the solution and everyone's ideas/feelings/suggestions, etc. should be looked for. For the owls, conflict can be something that helps everyone to understand, learn and grow.

*(adapted from David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson : **Joining Together; Group Theory and Group Skills**)*

Session 3: Rows – what helps?

Remind participants of the ground rules, especially those of listening respectfully and confidentiality.

Objectives: that the participants will discuss the merits and drawbacks of traditional ways in which Travellers have dealt with conflict;

that the participants will talk about a recent conflict in which they have been involved, analyse and evaluate it;

that the participants will identify behaviours that are helpful in resolving conflicts.

Materials Required: Flipchart and markers

Suggested Procedure:

1. Ask the participants how Travellers have traditionally dealt with rows or conflicts. Ask them to discuss the benefits/advantages and problems/disadvantages associated with these different ways of dealing with conflict. Ask the participants in what way these responses to conflict are similar to the responses discussed in Session 2.

Note to the Trainer:

Some ways in which Travellers have traditionally dealt with conflict include:

- moving on to a new location and away from the people with whom one was at odds;
- asking an older person to help sort out a disagreement;
- having a fist fight and then shaking hands to end the dispute;
- putting up silently with a conflict situation;
- talking things through.

2. Ask the participants to think back over the past few weeks (or months) remembering disagreements, rows, conflicts in which they were involved and to pick one which they would be willing to talk about in the group.

Emphasise that these do not have to be major disagreements or rows, in fact it might be better if they dealt with less serious rows or disagreements in this context, e.g.

- a child refuses to eat a particular food,
- someone didn't turn up for a meeting that had been arranged,
- someone did something they were not supposed to either at home, at work or at school,
- someone didn't do what they said they would.

Give them a few minutes to think about this. Explain to the participants that in a few moments they will be asked to talk to one other person in the group about this conflict. The questions they are asked to keep in mind when they talk about the conflict are:

- who was involved?
- what was it about?
- how did you feel?
- what were the results?
- how do you think you handled it?
- if you had to go through it again, what, if anything would you do differently?

Explain that when they get into pairs, each person, in turn will have a chance to talk about these situations. The other person's job is simply to listen without question, remarks or butting in. If you are the listener, this is not the time to tell your story.

Ask the participants to get into pairs. Allow five minutes for each person to share their story.

4. In the large group, ask the participants if there is anything that they would like to say about that activity. In particular, invite contributions in relation to what people would do differently if they had the opportunity.
5. Ask what needs to happen in a conflict situation so that there can be good outcomes for both sides, e.g.
 - be open,
 - listen,
 - ask questions,
 - don't assume or take things for granted,
 - be patient, etc.

Jot these suggestions down on the flip chart.

Explain that in the next session we will be looking in detail at what is probably the most important skill in bringing conflicts to a reasonable end; listening.

6. Ask the participants what they thought about the session and what they learned from it. Remind them before they leave that what people said in confidence during the session must not be repeated outside.

Session 4: Good listening

Remind participants of the ground rules, especially those of listening respectfully and confidentiality.

Objectives: that the participants will identify and practice the “sub-skills” that go to make up the skill of “listening”.

Materials Required: Flip chart and markers
watch or clock

Suggested Procedure:

1. Write the word TALKING on the flip chart. Ask the participants to call out the advantages of this activity and list their responses on the page. Then ask them to call out any problems and list these too. There is likely to be a longer list of advantages - ask them why they think this is the case. Emphasise that talking only works when there is someone to listen!
2. Explain that talking is really important in relating to one another and in working out difficulties. The other thing, which is equally important, is listening and it is on this that the session will focus. Write the word LISTENING on the flip chart and explain that while this is something we all know how to do, it is also a skill that we can get better at. Improving listening skills is the purpose of this session. Clarify that listening is made up of a number of activities - there are several things that a person does when listening - ask for examples and list any that are mentioned. It might be useful to invite the participants to think of a time when someone listened to them - what can they remember the person doing? These might include:
 - look at the other person
 - concentrate on the other person
 - keep eye-contact
 - listen to the words the other person speaks
 - notice the other person’s facial expressions, the speed, volume and tone of their voice, their gestures, their body language
 - show attention by nodding, checking out what you’ve heard, asking questions, etc.
 - repeat what the person has said in different words to show that you understand (**paraphrasing**). This gives them the opportunity to correct you if you have misunderstood or overlooked something they said.
3. Explain that the participants will now have a chance to practice some of these skills. Have the group divide into pairs or count them off around the room (1,2,1,2,1,2, etc.) Invite them to turn their chairs so that each pair

are seated facing one another. Ask them to agree who is to be **A** and who **B** within each small group. Ask the **A**'s to speak for one minute about "The part of Ireland I like best." The **B**'s are only to look at the **A**'s, keeping up **eye contact** and showing that they are listening without words. After one minute, reverse roles and repeat for a further minute. When round 1 is over, ask them to think about when they were listening, what they thought and what they felt.

4. Ask the **A**'s to think of an incident or event that happened to them and to communicate it to their partner in one minute without using any words. When **A** is finished, **B** is to try to tell **A** what s/he "heard" without interruption. **A** may then correct that version of the story if necessary. Then reverse roles. When this is finished, ask all the participants to think about their time as the listener; what they thought and how they felt. Explain that listening is not only about using our ears. A lot of the time it also involves using our eyes. Human beings communicate more with their bodies than they do in actual words. **Body language**, however, is even more open to misunderstanding, so it is important that when in doubt we check it out. We can never take it for granted that we know what another person is communicating, this is particularly true in conflict situations.
5. Explain that one of the most important skills in dealing with conflict is to be able to communicate back to the other person what they have said - both the words and the feelings - in your own words. This is called **paraphrasing**. It is the listener's understanding of what s/he has heard the speaker say. In resolving conflicts, it is really important to understand what is going on for the other person; how they see the problems or difficulties and, perhaps more importantly, how they feel about them. Therefore you try to see things from their point of view and feel something of what they feel - like trying to stand in their shoes.

Ask the **A**'s to talk for two minutes about a person who had or has a big effect on them. **B**'s are asked to listen using all the skills we have talked about so far, including asking questions to check their understanding. At the end of the two minutes, **B** will be asked to sum up or paraphrase what **A** has said. When the first round is over, reverse roles. When both have had an opportunity to speak and to listen, ask the large group how they found the experience of listening.

6. Tell the participants that they are now going to repeat the last activity, but this time, the paraphrasing does not have to be kept to the end of the story, but can take place during it too. This time, they are also to **listen out for feelings** communicated in words or body language and include these in the paraphrasing.

This time ask the **B**'s to begin, and to talk about what it was like for you growing up. They have 5 - 7 minutes for this, depending on available

We can sort it out

time. **A's** are to use all they have learned so far in their listening. After the agreed time, reverse roles and on completion of the exercise ask the large group how the listening went and how they felt about it.

7. Ask the participants what they thought about the session and what they learned from it. Remind them that things people have said in confidence during the session must not be repeated outside.

Session 5: A way of sorting out rows

Remind participants of the ground rules, especially those of listening respectfully and confidentiality.

Objectives: That the participants will become familiar with and understand the four stage process for resolving conflicts as outlined below;

that the participants will practice this process.

Materials Required: Flip chart, markers and/or O.H.P
Trainer's notes
Outline of "A Way of Sorting out Rows" (Steps towards Conflict Resolution) on individual copies, flip chart or transparency
Story : "A Row in the Family 1" or "A Row in the Family 2" for the trainer.

Suggested Procedure:

1. Explain to the participants that the first step in attempting to resolve difficulties between people is a decision on the part of one or both people to sort things out. "Remember you are the part of the conflict over which you have the most control." What they are going to do in this session is learn a plan or strategy for working towards a solution to rows or conflicts; the method represented by the owl in Session 1. Taking this approach is not a guarantee that the conflict will end, but if both parties work openly and honestly with each other through the process, it should go a long way towards helping them to understand each other. This may help solve the problem or at the very least improve the situation.
2. Using the trainer's notes, outline the stages of the conflict resolution process on the flip chart or the overhead projector ("A way of sorting out rows").
3. Inform the participants that they will now have a chance to try out this way of doing things. Divide the group into threes. If the numbers in the group do not work out evenly, ask some people to volunteer as observers who will give some feedback at the end. Read out one of the stories "A Row in the Family" to the group. It may be necessary to read the story through twice so that everyone gets familiar with it.

In their groups, ask each person to take on one of the roles in the story. Guide them through each step of the conflict resolution method. To begin, encourage each person to think him/herself into the role of their character. Ask them to think about what the problem is here and what

their character needs in this situation - **no solutions at this point**. Give them five minutes for this. Now ask them to take it in turns to talk to the other two about how they see the situation, how they feel and what they need. Ensure that after each person speaks, the other two have an opportunity to check that they have understood what they have heard.

When all of the characters have had a chance to speak, ask them how that stage went.

4. Explain the next step. In preparation for the Brainstorm, ask each group to appoint one person to keep a record of the group's ideas and suggestions. Guide them through the rest of this step and at the end ask them how that went.
5. Explain step three. Guide them through it, asking for thoughts and feelings at the end.
6. Now that they have tried out most of the method, ask them what they think about this way of working things out and how it might work in real life.
7. Explain that sometimes the feelings in a conflict can run so deep that one or both parties may not be able to allow themselves to get involved in this process and may get stuck in blaming and accusing. It is therefore helpful if a person who has nothing to do with the dispute can bring those involved through this process. How this might work will be the focus of the next session.
8. Ask the participants what they thought about the session and what they learned from it. Remind them that things people have said in confidence during the session must not be repeated outside.

A way of sorting out rows

(Steps towards Conflict Resolution)

- 1. Thinking, talking and listening.**
- 2. Solutions, solutions!**
- 3. Nuts and bolts**
- 4. Action**

A Way of Sorting out Rows (Steps in Conflict Resolution)

1. Thinking, talking and listening.

Talk about the problem in turn:

i) Say what you **need** from this process/method to make the situation better. Be as clear and specific as you can. Ask yourself - "If I had a magic wand, how would I fix things?" Then ask yourself - **why** do you want this solution? This will give you a good idea about what your needs are. Decide what you want to say. Don't offer a solution now, just make a statement about what you need in this situation.

ii) If there is a clash of values, or if feelings are running high, then one of you begins by describing **how you feel**. One of the listeners should then try to communicate to you what s/he has heard (paraphrasing feelings). Then switch roles so that each person gets a chance to speak.

2. Solutions, solutions!

The issue, difficulty or problem should now be clear to all parties to the conflict. You can now **begin** to look for a solution to which you can all agree.

i) To do this, together you should first list quickly as many solutions as you can, preferably in writing - so that none are forgotten and they can be seen easily. It is really important that all solutions are recorded, no matter how crazy they might appear, and that no remarks or questions at all are made about any of the suggestions at this point.

ii) When you have no more suggestions to make, then you can ask questions if necessary so that you can understand the suggestions better - still no remarks allowed.

iii) One of you picks out the suggestion or suggestions you would like to see taken up. Then the others do the same. See if any of the choices are the same, or similar.

iv) Together, decide on one of the suggestions or a mixture of them to try out. Try to think ahead. Ask yourself how this might work out. Are there any problems that might arise? Thinking through the suggestion now can help to avoid problems later.

3. Nuts and bolts

This is where you get down to planning the details. Who will do what, how, where and by when? It may be useful to write out this agreement, making sure that everybody has a copy. It would also be worthwhile to agree a time at which you will get together to check out how the suggestion has worked.

4. Action

i) Everybody does what they have agreed to.

ii) Everyone meets to see how it worked out and, if it didn't work, to start the process over again, until a solution that does work is found.

A Row in the Family 1

Bridgie and Thomas have been married for eight years. They have two young children. Three years ago their lives changed a great deal. Thomas discovered that he had a problem with his lungs. The doctor warned him to stay off cigarettes.

Before they had the children, both of them used to smoke and drink a lot. Bridgie gave up the cigarettes altogether when she was pregnant with their first child.

Thomas's brother, Pat, has come to visit them. It's his first visit since the children were born. Bridgie and Thomas are delighted to see him. When they were first married, Pat was very good to Bridgie and Thomas. He put them up until they got on their feet. They had some great times together. Pat is going through a hard time at the moment, and they are glad to be able to help him out. They tell him to make himself at home with them.

This is exactly what Pat does. He invites his friends around for card games, not just once, but regularly, they all smoke like chimneys, leaving their butts in cups and plants after they have filled the ashtrays, they are very noisy when they get together and never leave until very late.

Bridgie mentions it to Thomas, but he doesn't want to say anything to Pat, in case he might be offended. Bridgie won't say anything to Pat herself because she thinks it's Thomas's place to do this. Now she's fuming with both of them. Thomas is angry too. He's annoyed with Pat, and now he feels under pressure from Bridgie.

Tired of waiting for Thomas to do something about the situation, Bridgie has demanded that the three of them get together for a chat.....

A Row in the Family 2

Brian and Nora have been married for nineteen years. They have five boys, four of whom are teenagers. Brian works in a factory. He works long hours and is always very tired when he gets home. The older children are also working. The younger two are still in school.

When the children were very young, Nora believed that it was important to be there for them. For that reason, she has always taken care of the home, doing the cooking and cleaning, the washing and ironing.

As they got older, Nora realised that her children were very well able to look after themselves and didn't need as much of her time as when they were little. Recently she took a job. Although she was always happy at home, since she took the job she feels like a new woman. She enjoys the work as well as the independence the extra money gives her. She has done well at her job and has taken on longer hours.

Then things start to go haywire. Nora now has less time to do the things she used to do in the home and if she doesn't do things, they are not done. Mealtimes are not as reliable as they used to be and the housework is getting neglected. Nora feels torn. She believes that she has given a lot to the children over the years and that it should be okay for her to take some time for herself. On the other hand, she does feel guilty about spending less time looking after the home.

There is a lot of tension in the family now. Brian and the children have talked among themselves and feel that Nora should stay at home and look after the family. Nora thinks that she is being taken for granted. Between the job, the housework and the rows, Nora is starting to feel worn out. Brian and their eldest son Michael have decided to ask Nora to give up the job.

Session 6: Mediation

Remind participants of the ground rules, especially those of listening respectfully and confidentiality.

Objectives: that the participants would understand the role of a mediator and the process of mediation,

that they show this understanding by taking part in some practice sessions which highlight both of these.

Materials required: Flip chart and markers
O.H.P (optional)
Situations for role plays

Suggested Procedure:

1. Refer the participants to the remarks made at the end of the previous session. Tell them that this session will take up the last point made in that session. Write the word MEDIATION on the flip chart and tell them that this is what the process they will be looking at and working on is called. Let them know that you will talk to them about it before they practice it.

Begin by explaining that mediation is when **someone listens to people who are arguing or having a row about something and helps them to sort it out**. The person who does this is called a **mediator** or **go-between**. Explain that the mediator guides people through the steps for sorting out rows that we used in the last session or some similar method.

Using the trainer's notes and either the flip chart or overhead projector, outline the following - in order:

- what mediation is not;
- what the role of the mediator is;
- ground rules for mediation.

Invite questions during this presentation to ensure clarity.

2. Divide the large group into smaller groups of three. Tell them that you will give each group three situations. Each situation will involve two people in dispute or disagreement. Each person in the group is to take on the role of mediator in one of the situations. The two remaining participants will take on the role of the people in conflict.

Briefly recap the role of the mediator and the ground rules for mediation before they begin. Remind the participants that the process they are going through is one that they have already tried in the previous session.

Allow approximately fifteen minutes for the first situation, during which time the trainer can circulate among the groups to see how things are going and to offer support and reassurance where necessary. When most of the groups have got a plan together (step 3), ask the participants to talk about how they found the process - addressing each group in turn, invite contributions from the mediator first, then from those in dispute. The trainer may need to clarify any confusion by going over the process again.

3. Repeat the above process for the other two situations.
4. This might be an opportune point at which to explain to the group about the Mediation Service offered by Pavee Point (please refer to Sources of Further Information page 39, at the end of the handbook).
5. In the large group, invite the participants to look back over the six sessions and pick out one thing they learned which has been useful or which they remember especially. Going around the group, allow a brief contribution from each member who wishes to speak. In conclusion, thank the group for their participation.

Possible Ground Rules for the Mediation Process

- Treat the other person with respect; separate the person from the problem
- Confidentiality may be important and should be agreed on before entering into the mediation process
- Use "I" statements
- One person talks at a time - calmly - the other listens without interrupting, making remarks, etc.
- Try to remain open to thinking about all possible solutions to the row/disagreement - not just your preferred one.

Situations for Mediation

Situation 1

- A. Every time I come in here to shop, I'm followed around the place. It makes me very uncomfortable
- B. Loads of stuff disappears from this shop, we have to watch everybody.

Situation 2

- A. We have no idea where she goes, she comes in at all hours and uses our home as if it was a hotel.
- B. My parents can't accept that I've grown up, they treat me like a child, asking loads of questions - they don't allow me any privacy or independence.

Situation 3

- A. He can't be trusted to finish any work on time.
- B. She never makes it clear what I am supposed to do and then she complains about my work.

Note to the trainer:

If you know the group well, you may wish to adapt the situations to make them more relevant to the group.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

MEDIATION SERVICE

Introduction

In Ireland the relationship between the Traveller community and the majority population is one which is often characterised by hostility, prejudice, discrimination and conflict. In recent times conflicts have been on the increase, sometimes giving rise to physical violence. In order to respond to this situation, a mediation service has been established under the auspices of Pavee Point.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a process in which an impartial third party (a mediator) provides a framework for people to listen to each other when the normal lines of exchange have broken down. Mediators help people identify their needs, clarify issues, explore solutions and work out an agreement to their problem. The parties in dispute, not the mediator, decide the terms of the agreement.

Mediation has been used world-wide as an effective tool to resolve disputes and conflicts between individuals, communities and governments. It is a specific approach to conflict resolution that facilitates and empowers people involved in disputes to resolve their own conflicts.

Mediation can take place directly, on a face to face meeting between all parties or indirectly, where the mediators act as go-betweens conveying messages between the parties.

Why a Mediation Service?

Mediation can help people preserve their relationships or build new ones. It can help sort out disputes before they escalate towards court cases or criminal offences. Unlike statutory controls, mediation is non-adversarial, so there are no winners or losers. Mediation helps give both sides a chance to talk and to listen to other views in a non-threatening atmosphere. It is a voluntary process.

Who is it for?

The service is available to members of both the Traveller community and the majority population who wish to find a solution to their conflict through the process of mediation.

Further information can be obtained from:

Mediation Service Co-ordinator,
Pavee Point,
46 North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1.

Phone: 353 1 8780255
Fax: 353 1 8742626
E-Mail: mediation@pavee.iol.ie

SELECTED CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION RESOURCES

- Beer, Jennifer E. with Stief, E., (1997) *The Mediators Handbook*, New Society Publishers, Canada.
- Bush, Robert A. and Folger, Joseph P., (1994) *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict through Empowerment and Recognition*, Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cornelius, Helena and Faire, Shoshana, (1989) *Everyone Can Win: How to Resolve Conflict*, Simon and Schuster, Australia.
- Fisher, Roger; Ury, William with Patton, Bruce (Ed.), (1999) *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, Random House, London.
- Fitzduff M., *Beyond Violence: Conflict Resolution Processes in Northern Ireland*. United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan.
- Fitzduff M., (1988) *Community Conflict Skills; A Handbook for Group Work*, Express Litho, Belfast.
- Hoover Herrnstein, Becky (1996) *Women and Mediation: A Chance to Speak and to be Heard*, Mediation Quarterly, vol. 13, no.3, Spring 1996.
- Leimdorfer, Tom, (1992) *Once upon a Conflict: A Fairytale Manual of Conflict Resolution for all Ages*. Quaker Peace and Service, London.
- MacFarlane, Julie (ed.) (1997) *Rethinking Disputes: the Mediation Alternative*.
- Mediation UK, *Mediation Skills*. Mediation UK, Alexander House, Telephone Avenue, Bristol BS1 4BS.
- Mediation UK (1998) *Community Mediation Video*. Mediation UK, Alexander House, Telephone Avenue, Bristol BS1 4BS.
- Mediation UK (1998) *Training Manual in Community Mediation Skills*. Mediation UK, Alexander House, Telephone Avenue, Bristol BS1 4BS.
- Slaikeu, Karl A. (1996), *When Push Comes to Shove*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Ury, William, *Getting Past No: Negotiating with Difficult People. Negotiating Your Way from Confrontation to Co-operation*. N.Y. Bantam.
- Williams, Michael (1998): *Why People Fight and How to Help them Stop*. Poolbeg Press, Dublin.

'We can sort it out' is a six-part training module, designed for use on a variety of Traveller training programmes run by Traveller organisations and Traveller training centres. It aims to provide Travellers with an opportunity to explore the issue of conflict, to examine their own and others' responses to conflict situations and to develop skills that are useful in dealing with conflict.

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