



# Dealing with Difficult People & Conflicts

## NYS PTA CONVENTION 2018

Presented By

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# OBJECTIVES

- Understand what conflict is
- Build a skill set in resolving conflict
- Learn positive ways of managing conflict with school staff and families

## What is Conflict?

*A conflict is when two or more parties perceive that they have mutually incompatible goals, priorities, or values.*



**Think of a time when you had a positive experience  
communicating with someone.**

*What was working?*

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**Now think of a time when you had a negative experience  
communicating with someone.**

*What was not working?*

# Communication Road Blocks

- Perceptions
- Stereotypes
- Gender differences
- Language
- Word choice and meaning
- Holding back information
- Negative reactions
- Sending responses
- Diverting
- Solving the wrong problem
- jumping to conclusions

## Ways to Improve your Communication Skills

- Becoming more aware of your thinking and reasoning
- Making our thinking and reasoning more visible to others
- Inquiring into others' thinking and reasoning

# Steps to Resolving Conflict

- Understand the conflict
- Create a positive atmosphere
- Develop a mutual understanding
- Problem Solve



## *Can Conflict be Good?*

Some Benefits of conflict:

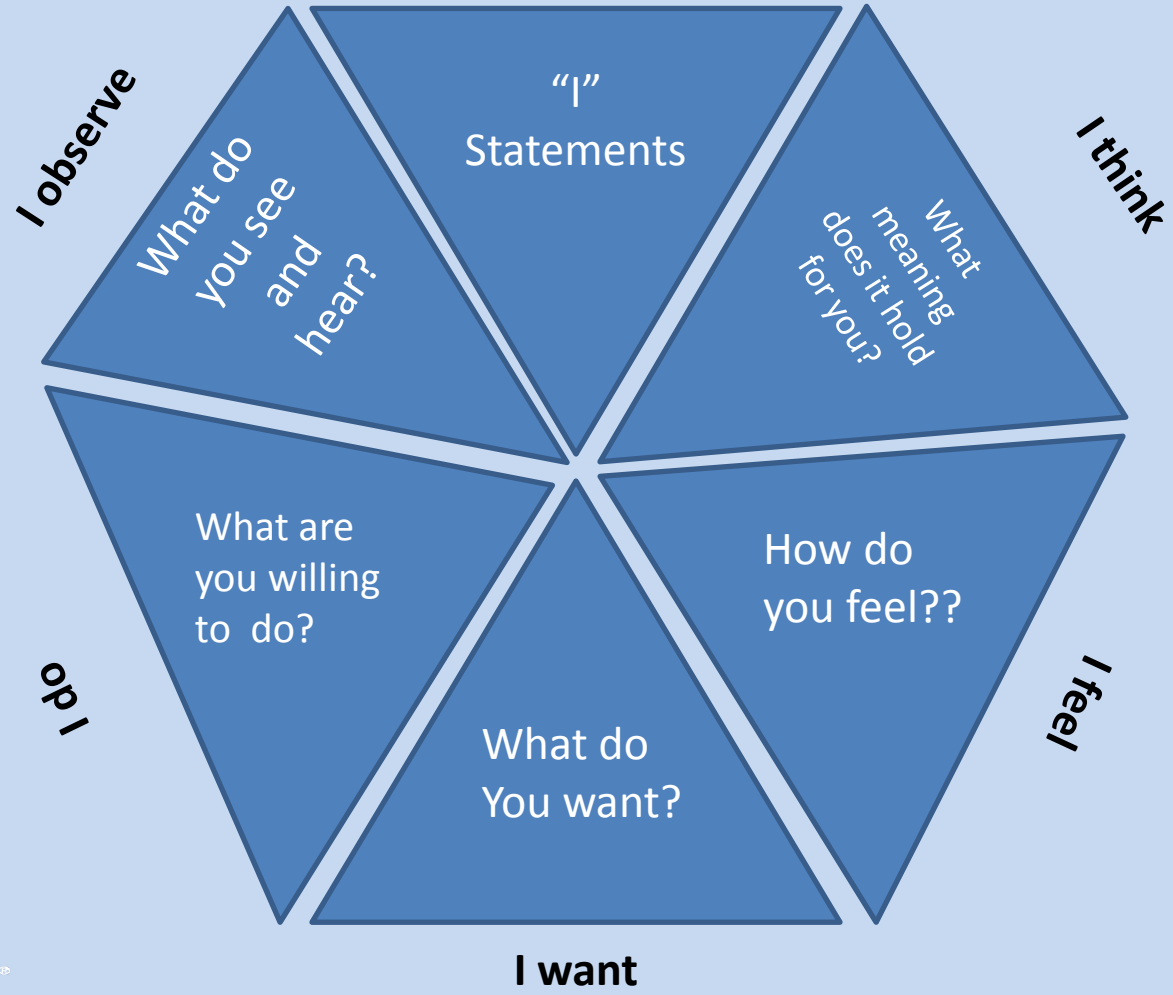
- New Knowledge
- Innovative Strategies
- Different Perspectives



## Positives and Negatives of Conflicts

- Increased involvement
- Increased cohesion
- Personal growth & change
- Clarification of key issues
- Organizational vibrancy
- Individual & group identities
- unresolved anger
- Personality clashes
- Negative climate
- Diversion of energy from work
- Group cohesion disruption

# Communicating to Others



## Active Listening *Listening to Understand*

To gain understanding before moving into action  
By helping someone say exactly what he or she wants to say

**On the road to conflict resolution, listening is the super highway!**



**Be present: Attend and acknowledge**

**Be responsive: Ask questions, provide feedback**

## Attributes of Effective Communication to Resolve Conflict

- Problem Oriented, Not Person Oriented
- Descriptive, Not Evaluative
- Specific, Not General
- Validating, Not Demeaning
- Owned, Not Disowned
- Two-Way, Not One-Way



## Be Responsive: Ask Questions

**Draw the Speaker Out** *“I’d like to hear a little more about that?”*

**Gain More Information** *“What led you to that conclusion?”*

**Refocus the Discussion** *“What’s the problem we are trying to solve?”*

**Show Respect** *“Is there anything else you think I should know that would help me understand your position on this?”*

**Introduce Information** *“What would you think if we did... “Do you see any flaws in my reasoning?”*

## Be Responsive: Provide Feedback

- **Reflect (Paraphrase)** – “So, when that incident happened, you felt like....” – “What I think I’m hearing is that you really need....”
- **Reframe**
  - Speaker: “He’s a two-faced liar!”
  - Listener: “You value honesty in human relations.”
- **Summarize** – Let me share what I think I heard and please correct me if I am wrong.

## Steps to Resolving Conflict

### 1. Understand the Conflict

- Analyze the conflict situation – what is the cause?
- Identify the appropriate conflict resolution style.

### 2. Create A Positive Atmosphere

- Neutralize your emotions and the other person's emotions

### 3. Develop a Mutual Understanding

- Using communication skills to gain information and understanding.

## Key Points to Remember

- Be a model of calm and control
- Don't give in to emotional outbursts
- Don't assume people are being difficult intentionally
- Find a quiet place in to resolve conflicts....privately Set some ground rules for the discussion:
  - No raising of voices
  - This is not a debate
  - Speak only for yourself..."I" phrases
  - Confront the issues, not the people
  - Maintain or enhance self-esteem



## Conflict Resolution All Around Us

Conflict resolution is an opportunity to learn and bring others along in learning how to be a contributor in this world! These skills learned here can be used in all aspects of your Life:



QUESTIONS???