**Conflict and negotiation**

We all face conflict at some time in our lives. But it doesn't always have to be negative. It doesn't have to end up as a war! In fact, if you learn skills to deal with conflict, there can be some really positive and satisfying outcomes.

Conflict is when people disagree on an issue, or can't get along well. This is just a part of life. It's natural for people to disagree at times, because we all have different interests, values, goals and needs. Sometimes we don't understand other people and what they really mean, or they don’t understand us.

Conflict happens in personal relationships, with family, parents, caregivers, friends, partners, teachers and work mates.

Conflict also happens in the wider society, among groups with different interests and values, different religions, races, countries, political parties and even sporting teams. You can probably think of many other examples.

Conflict can also happen within yourself when you learn something new that is different to what you always believed. The conflict inside yourself can make you want to hang on tightly to your old beliefs or it can lead you to change your beliefs.

Conflict can result in changes, often for the better, if dealt with in a constructive way.

Source: <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=243&np=291&id=2183>

**STEPS TO PEER MEDIATION**

* **Introduce yourselves, explain what peer mediation is, the rules for fighting fair and the exceptions to confidentiality.**Ask if they want to continue?
* **Mediators Get the Story.**  
  using listening and communication skills to help fellow students resolve conflict and disagreements before they escalate and lose power over the situation

Use Active listening skills including paraphrasing, clarification and open ended questions.

**The session**

* **Each person in turn tells their story to the mediator**focusing on issues, not on who did what, while the other concentrates on listening without interrupting. It is your job to help them stay focused on the issue.
* **Parties change roles:**  
  each repeats the other's story to their satisfaction to demonstrate they understand the other's position   
  (not that they necessarily agree with it)
* **As Mediators, you then summarize the facts and feelings of both sides**for verification and agreement on the issues;  
  Be sure to acknowledges feelings of both of the people in conflict. Do not agree or disagree. That is not your job.
* **Ask both parties if any solutions have come to mind,**  
  or begin helping them to brain-storm without judgment.  
  All suggestions are noted and acknowledged.
* **Lead a discussion of the solutions**checking off only the solution(s) that both parties can agree to

**Disputants**

* **determine implications of solutions**in selecting the best possible outcome
* **Select the best alternative**

**Mediators**

* **Verify the verbal agreement with all parties,**   
  ensuring that no one is reluctant or afraid to speak out or dissent
* **Write a memo of understanding/contract**   
  in parties' own words

**Mediators and disputants:**

* **Sign contract**
* **Develop a process for follow up**Verify that all will be committed and monitor this process

**Co-mediators thank each person for their contribution to the process,**and for letting the mediation service help them