

Ice Floe



Goal(s): Cooperation; group building



Duration: 20 minutes



Age group: All ages



Materials needed:

- As many chairs as participants
- Some tables or large sheets of paper



Description:

- 1) Push a few tables into the middle of a big room to form an "island".
- 2) Arrange as many chairs (ice floes) as there are participants around the tables (the island) for the participants to stand on. Only one chair is close enough to the tables to step directly from the floe to the island.
- 3) As the ice is melting, the whole group needs to move quickly from the "dangerous floes" (chairs) to the "secure island" (tables). They can do so by passing over the floes in the "water". Each floe can only carry one participant at a time however.



Variations:

Variation 1:

It is possible to use large sheets newspaper instead of the chairs and tables. However, chairs and tables are more "challenging" and appropriate for youth. Using newspaper is a possibility to adapt this activity for adults.

Variation 2:

The "island" is omitted and sheets of newspaper are used to represent a big ice floe. Participants have saved themselves after their ship has sunk by climbing onto the ice floe. After 5 minutes, a rescue boat is going to come to save them. However, the floe melts rapidly (pieces of newspaper are taken away) and participants are obliged to squeeze together on the remaining floe in order to survive.



Discussion points:

This activity entails an opportunity to discuss the issue of cooperation and group building. Did the group cooperate? Why and how? How did group members feel about cooperating (or someone "falling in the water")?



Attentiveness:

In order to move from chairs to the table the participants need to help and support each other. They may do this by pushing floes closer towards group members who are far from the tables. However, the trainer(s) should not give any support in terms of how to accomplish the task. This activity is supposed to promote cooperation between participants by presenting them with a challenge

that they have to deal with by themselves.

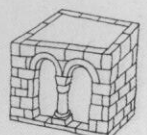
As with the "Spider Web" activity, the ice floe should not be at the very beginning of a workshop, but towards the middle or end.

Adults might find the activity inappropriate for their age. By using newspapers (variation 2) instead of chairs and tables (variation 1) however, they might still find it possible to do this activity. If adult participants want to train youth, it is important for them to experience training activities themselves.



Source:

This activity was adapted from two similar activities conducted during trainings with the Youth Education Centre Kaubstrasse and with Georg Roessler, trainer for de-escalation in schools, Jerusalem



Spider Web



Goal(s): Cooperation; group building



Duration of activity: 60 minutes



Age group: All ages



Materials needed: Cord/rope



Description:

1. The trainers creates a "spider web" in the middle of the room by stretching cords from one side of the room to the other, and from the floor to a height of about 1.70m. There should be as many holes as there are participants in the group. The holes should also be of different sizes, just as there are small and large, and short and tall participants in the group.
2. The group gathers on one side of the net. The objective is for each participant to get to the other side without touching the net. Each hole can only be used once (mark it with tape). If the net is touched, everyone has to return to the beginning and the group starts over again. There are no specific further instructions given to the group on how to do this. The participants need to work out how to achieve the task and figure out an appropriate common tactic (such as: the big ones go through the big holes; the small ones through the small holes; some can be lifted; others crawl by themselves etc.). This also helps the trainer to see how the group organizes itself, how much they cooperate and how far the group building process has proceeded



Discussion points:

This activity is suitable to discuss cooperation issues with the group: how did they cooperate to all get through the net? Did they help each other? Why? It is interesting for the trainer(s) to note how the participants handled the task in order to give the group feedback on their performance.



Attentiveness:

The Spider Web is an activity only towards the end of a workshop or for closing it.! There is a risk of reinforcing the exclusion of outsiders if conducted at an early stage of the training. The activity requires already established, positive and cooperative group relations. On this basis, there is a good chance of further developing mutual support, cooperation and appreciation. All participants join together to achieve the common goal of getting through the web, which serves to strengthen the group. The spider web is a very suitable activity to close a couple days workshop. The experience of past trainings has shown that even children, who have refused to join in on previous physical activities due to their fitness levels, will participate in this activity.



Source: Training: Youth Education Centre Kaubstrasse/Berlin, Germany

3.6 Mediation



Mediation

This manual takes a preventative approach towards conflict. Working on the overall behavior of, and the relationships and interaction between students throughout each section of Part II should help to lessen the incidence of violence. Conflicts will not disappear, but the number will decrease. The various methods introduced in this manual (“Active Listening”, “I-Messages” etc.) will help to deal with conflicts constructively in these cases. However, more severe cases will almost certainly remain. There are various transformation tools for such kinds of escalated conflicts. One of them is mediation, in which an impartial third party facilitates the resolution of a dispute between two conflicting parties, particularly if they cannot find a solution themselves. Mediation may even be successful in the event that the two sides have stopped talking to each other.

It is of key importance that the mediator is impartial and not involved in the conflict. The role of the mediator is not to render judgment between “good” and “bad.” Rather, the mediator supports the both sides in finding a solution that is acceptable to all parties. In a sense, they are both supposed to gain or “win” through this solution (“constructive conflict transformation”). The mediator listens to each side, and allows them both to present their perspective of the conflict. S/he tries to uncover the background to, and motivations behind the actions taken in the conflict. In this way, the opponents discover things that the conflict parties might not have revealed without a mediator. In this ongoing process, the mediator gradually facilitates renewed dialogue between the two sides. A crucial point in this process lies in the mediator bringing about the change of perspective, to a point where each party should be able to put him/herself in the other’s shoes. Once both parties start to understand why the other acted the way they did, they will be able to work towards a common solution.

In schools, the third party could be a fellow student: a peer mediator. The idea of peer education bases on research results showing that youth learn effectively within their age group, which is a more ‘acceptable’ way of learning for them than from adults. This finding can be made use of in a constructive way in mediation, supporting one of the key concepts of this manual: the idea that youth should take responsibility for their own conflicts.

The third party might also be a counselor. By the nature of their job, counselors already play a kind of third party role. However, this does not mean that they should serve as a ‘rapid conflict intervention force’.

Finally, a teacher or even an outside person could act as a mediator. It is important to ensure the teacher’s impartiality however, if s/he mediates a conflict in his/her class for example. Concerning an external mediator from outside the school, one needs to be aware of the possible implications this could have within the school.

The main guidelines for effective mediation are as follows:

- 1) Explore the background of all conflicting parties:
A basic characteristic of mediation is the need to explore and understand backgrounds to the conflict. Only on this basis, the conflict parties may develop resolutions to their conflict. In addition, it is important that all conflict parties are

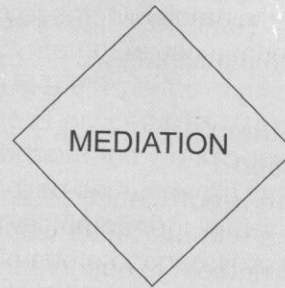
present.

- 2) Mediation through an impartial third party:
Impartiality is crucial to the mediation process. A partial mediator is involved in the conflict and likely to be biased. His/her attempt towards mediation may not be easily accepted.
- 3) Informal/non authoritarian:
When the risk of punishment is absent, this increases the possibility of achieving an atmosphere of trust. This allows the conflict parties to feel more confident and secure in revealing the background to their motivation/action. This again is an important basis for seeking a just solution to the conflict.
- 4) Voluntarily, self determined, and orientated towards consensus:
Mediation should always be voluntary. Self-determination and achieving a consensus are more likely to lead to an accepted and sustainable resolution.

Four aspects of mediation

Mediation through
impartial third person

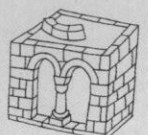
Explore background
of all conflict parties



Informal/
non-authoritarian

Voluntary/self-determined/
orientated towards consensus

Drawn from Christoph Besemer: Mediation. Vermittlung in Konflikten. Freiburg 1991.



Five Stages of Mediation



Goal(s): Present the overall conduct of a mediation session



Duration: 60 minutes



Materials needed:

Papers with the five stages of mediation (to be hung on the wall)
Papers with outline of the five stages (as handout)



Age group: 10/11 years and above (possibly already at 9)



Description:

1. Pin the papers with the five stages of mediation on a board (short version without explanation of each stage).
2. Select two participants of the group to act out role-plays with you on all of the five stages of mediation (select one of the conflict stories from the end of this section).
3. Ask the group what they have observed. The aim is for them to give you all of the steps to be taken within each stage of the mediation (according to the papers below).
4. Hand out the papers containing the outline of the five stages to participants.



Variation:

Variation 1:

If there is sufficient time and two trainers conduct the workshop, it is a good idea to do a role-play. The two trainers act a complete mediation session to the group and ask them to observe the process closely. After the role-play, the trainers note down the observations on a flipchart. At the same time, they put them in the order of the five stages, adding the missing points in the end.

Variation 2:

If there is sufficient time for a mediation workshop (4 to 5 days), it is a good idea to combine the five stages of mediation with the key competences mentioned in this manual. For example:

- 1) Group building and Self Awareness
- 2) Communication Skills (Active Listening and "I" Messages)
- 3) Role-play of stages 1 and 2 (according to the suggestion in Variation 1) and exercise)
- 4) Conflict Understanding (Orange Example, Iceberg)
- 5) Role-play of stage 3 and exercise
- 6) More Conflict Understanding (Spider Web analysis, Conflict Landscape)
- 7) Role-play of stages 4 and 5 plus exercise
- 8) Cooperation activities



Discussion points: It is important that the participants understand the steps

of mediation. Therefore, room needs to be given to questions and discussion. Additionally, it can be useful to discuss the concept of mediation as well as how mediation is applicable in schools. More time is needed in this case.



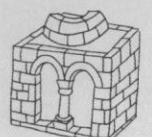
Source:

The five stages of mediation are widely used. In Germany, Christoph Besemer, a mediation expert, is a leading figure in promoting this method and the stages in Germany. The guidelines for the stages of mediation in this manual are adapted according to a version by the Youth Education Centre Kaubstrasse/Berlin.

1. Introduction



2. Points of View



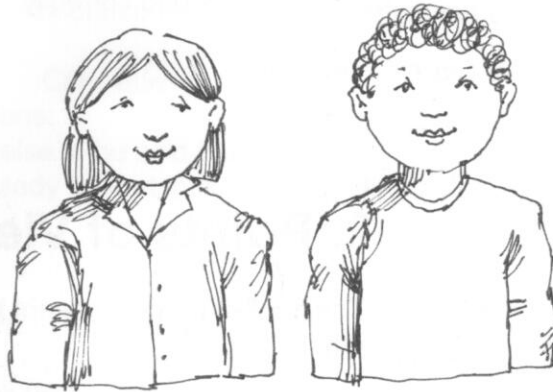
3. Background of Conflict



4. Search for Solutions



5. Agreement



1. Introduction

- ▶ Welcome
- ▶ Explain the meaning of mediation
(for example: “mediation means that an impartial person facilitates the finding of a solution to a conflict between two parties”)
- ▶ Explain the role of the mediator(s)
 - We are neutral
 - We lead the mediation talk
 - We do not find the solution and do not judge
 - We will keep everything that is said here confidential
- ▶ Ensure voluntary attendance to the mediation
- ▶ Explain rules during mediation
 - Do not interrupt
 - No insults
 - No violence
 - Stick to the truthMake sure that both parties accept all rules
- ▶ Explain upcoming steps
First, each party gets to present his/her point of view of the conflict:
A explains his/her point of view – B listens



B explains his/her point of view – A listens
 The mediator(s) summarises in own words to make sure
 having understood correctly

- ▶ Clarify who starts

2. Points of View

- ▶ The conflict parties present their points of view, one after the other
- ▶ Mirror, and find different wording if necessary;
 Point out emotions
- ▶ Ask if things are not clear
- ▶ Summarize:
 - What is the conflict about?



Point out differences and similarities in both points of view

3. Background of the Conflict



- ▶ Explore background of the conflict
 - Ask about what happened before the conflict erupted
 - Go through possible reasons why the conflict started
 - Look below the surface of the iceberg
 - Ask about feelings
 - Look for and point out emotions/interests/motives
 - Clarify misunderstandings
 - Always summarize/paraphrase the important statements made and ask for approval (mirror)
- ▶ Facilitate change of perspective
 - Paraphrase the important statements made
 - Ask the respective other conflict party if they can understand the other's actions
- ▶ Look for similarities between the conflicting parties

- Ask about positive common experiences before the conflict happened
- Point out common interests within the conflict if possible

▶ Conclude

- Final questions:
 - "Anything else to be said that is important?"
 - "Are you ready to start looking for a solution now?"

Notes:

- Give the mirror perspective
- Always ask both parties
- Make sure that each of the conflicting parties talks about her/himself
- Do not judge

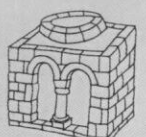
4. Search for Solutions

- ▶ Both parties brainstorm possible solutions on a sheet of paper (each sheet with one proposed solution only)
 - What can you contribute to the solution?
 - What would you like the other to do?
 - What could you do together to reach a solution?
- ▶ Collect sheets with proposed solutions and read them out
Place the sheets with the proposed solutions of one party in front of the other
- ▶ The parties select the solutions they agree to
- ▶ Ask the parties: "Do you think the solutions are fair? Do you think the solutions are realistic?"
- ▶ Proposed solutions need to be concrete and realistic. Paraphrase them if necessary:



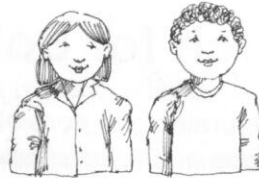
Note:

- Do not propose solutions to the conflicting parties



5. Agreement

- ▶ Read out the agreement form and the solutions the parties agreed upon
- ▶ Staple the solutions sheets to the agreement form and have the parties sign it
- ▶ Make an appointment for a follow up talk (in order to make sure that everything went the way it was agreed upon)
- ▶ Write down date on the form
- ▶ Put the form in an envelope
- ▶ Write the names of the mediators and the date on the envelope
- ▶ Say goodbye



Role-Play Mediation



Goal(s): Practice the process of mediation



Duration: 60 minutes



Age group: 10/11 years and above



Materials needed: Five papers with guidelines on the mediation process



Description:

- 1) Hand out the five pages with the detailed description of each stage.
- 2) Form a group of four participants: Two people in conflict, and two mediators.
- 3) Hand out the paper with a conflict scenario (see the end of this section).
- 4) The group acts out the role-play in front of the other participants (15 minutes).



Discussion points:

An evaluation of the role-play by the whole group should serve as a topic of discussion. The trainer should limit her/himself to giving the guidelines for the evaluation, leaving as much as possible to the group in order to maximize the learning experience. The trainer should only add to the evaluation if the trainees have forgotten something.

Before the evaluation, the trainer should clarify the following to the group:

- The acting abilities of the group members that acted out the role play is not an issue for evaluation!
- Any feedback given should be constructive (compare activity log for “constructive feedback” in communication).
- The participants who are concerned with the feedback should be addressed, not the trainer.
- The people address the members of the role-play directly and personally. Avoid saying something like “the mediator was impartial” for example. Instead, the feedback is to be communicated directly: “You were impartial and did not judge us, which gave me confidence.”

The evaluation proceeds in three steps:

- 1) First the trainer asks the “actors” about the role-play. During this first stage of the evaluation, they remain within their roles as mediators and conflicting parties. Start with the mediators. How did they do their job and how did they feel in the role of mediator? Then move on to the conflicting parties. They should discuss how they experienced the mediation and how they saw the mediators.



- 2) Before moving to the next stage, make sure that the “actors” get out of their roles. This is very important! Otherwise, they might be stuck in this role. Now ask them to comment on the activity, and to evaluate the role-play according to what they have learnt about mediation.
- 3) Ask the audience for comments/to evaluate.

The trainer should guide the evaluation. S/he could ask questions such as:

Addressing the mediator:

“What did you feel like?”

“How do you think it went?”

“Were you satisfied with yourself? Why or why not?”

“Where is there room for improvement?”

Encourage the mediators to get feedback directly from the conflicting parties.

Addressing the conflicting parties:

“What did you feel like during the mediation?”

“What did you particularly like?”

“In what way were the mediators helpful?”

“How do you think the mediators can improve?”

“How did you view your opponent? Did a change occur during the course of the mediation? If so, at what point did it happen?”

In terms of the overall evaluation, the trainer might ask the following questions:

“Was it helpful to have a person mediating the conflict?”

“Did the mediator forget anything? If so, what did s/he forget? Did this have an effect, and if so, what?”

“Which interventions were helpful, and which were not?”

“What escalated or deescalated the conflict?”

“What recommendations would you make to the mediator?”



Source:

The evaluation process has largely been inspired by the guidelines given in “Alltagskonflikte durchspielen. Rollenspiele für den Mediationsprozess. Mühlheim an der Ruhr, 2001“.

CONFLICT STORIES

For the mediation role-play, you may either ask the participants to draw upon conflicts they experienced in school or elsewhere. Another possibility is to hand out the following role-play instructions with typical conflict situations that youth have to deal with. There are conflicts that might take longer to mediate, and others do not require as much time.

Cut out the boxes. Each one contains instructions for one character in the mediation role-play. It is important that participants see their own instructions only.

These conflict stories are inspired by and adapted from "Alltagskonflikte durchspielen. Rollenspiele für den Mediationsprozess. Mühlheim an der Ruhr, 2001"

Falling Over

INFO For the mediators

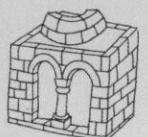
A teacher has sent Rami and Munir to mediation because they almost had a fight in class.

INFO For Rami

While you are approaching the teacher's desk you trip over something. You are a little bit puzzled but carry on walking towards the teacher's desk. However, as you go back to your seat, you trip again and almost fall over. You are getting angry and you are sure that Munir has purposely tripped you up. That's why you get hold of Munir by his neck. The teacher has to separate you and sends you to mediation.

INFO For Munir

You are comfortably sitting at your desk in class stretching out your legs in the aisle. The desk just does not provide enough space for your long legs. Suddenly, Rami trips over your legs and you feel some pain. Well, it's no big deal. Yet, as Rami comes back, he again steps on your feet again but this time it really hurts. After that, you hear someone falling over behind you. Suddenly you feel Rami taking hold of you by the neck.... The teacher has to separate you and sends you to mediation.



The Physics Homework

INFO For the mediators

Mira has asked for mediation with Samara who his sitting next to her in class but does not talk to her any longer.

INFO For Samara

You are sitting next to Mira. You are not very close friends but you are getting along okay. It used to be quite usual and normal to copy homework from someone else. Recently, you asked Mira to copy her physics homework because you did not know how to do them. Mira told you that she did not understand it either, and therefore, she had not done it. In class, the teacher asked to collect your and Mira's homework. That's when you found out that she had done it. You received a bad mark because you did not do your homework. You are really disappointed in Mira and now you do not talk to her any longer. Mira asked you for mediation. First you, hesitate but then you agree.

INFO For Mira

You are sitting next to Samara. You are not very close friends but you are getting along okay. Before, it was quite usual and normal to copy homework from one another. Recently, Samara wanted to copy your physics homework again but you told her that you were not able to do it. As the teacher asked for your and Samara's homework it emerged that you had done it. You did not want to give Samara your homework because you feel that she has been relying on you excessively much recently. Always you do the homework while she simply copies it. You feel like she is taking advantage of you. Since this incident, Samara does not talk to you any longer. Further, she tells people in your class that you are a nerd and a liar. You find this upsetting and ask her for mediation.

The Siblings

INFO For the mediators

Samir and Abeer are brother and sister. Their parents suggest that they come to you for mediation.

INFO For Abeer (two years older than Samir)

You are siblings. Every time you are alone at home, you get into a fight. One problem is that you can never agree about who has the right to be in the living room and who gets to choose what to watch on TV. Last time, you even started hitting each other, and that's when you realized that it couldn't go on like this.

You believe that your parents let your brother twist them around his finger far too often.

They always think that they have to take special care of him because he is younger.

That's why you want to get your own way when your parents are away at least. After all, it is you who is older and knows better. It was your parents' idea for the two of you to see a peer mediator.

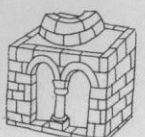
You liked the idea and you both went.

INFO For Samir (two years younger than Abeer)

You are siblings. Every time you are alone at home, you get into a fight. One problem is that you can never agree about who has the right to be in the living room and who gets to choose what to watch on TV. Last time, you even started hitting each other, and that's when you realized that it couldn't go on like this. Actually, you really like your big sister.

In addition, you are always looking forward to being alone with her. Nevertheless, the fact that she is always asks for trouble and you don't know why gets on your nerves. It was your parents' idea for the two of you to see a peer mediator.

You liked the idea and you both went.



A Present?

INFO For the mediators

Rami and Tarek, two friends, got in a fight over a CD. Rami had the idea solve it through mediation.

INFO For Rami

You are upset with Tarek. First, he kept on bugging you to give him the latest CD by Nancy Ashram and now he does not bother giving it back to you. Now he even says that you gave it to him as a present. You are not going to take this...

You do not know how to get your CD back so you have asked him to go to a mediation talk. He has agreed.

INFO For Tarek

Two weeks ago, you listened to the new CD by Nancy Ashram at Rami's place. You really liked it and wanted it as well, and so Rami gave you his as a present, or so you thought. Now you are surprised because all of a sudden he wants it back. It wouldn't be so bad if you hadn't lost it...

Now, Rami has asked you to go to mediation. You're not actually that keen on the idea, but you agree to go along.

