

**MODEL UNIT
BAND D
LEVEL 1**

IN CONFLICT?

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD CREATES HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

YEAR: SUGGESTED DURATION: 12–14 HOURS

DATE OF USE: FAITH STATEMENTS: ① 2 ③

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)
1. GOD CREATES PEOPLE TO LIVE IN LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER
1a compare the Christian understanding of human relationships with that of contemporary culture

1b explore Jesus' teaching on human relationships

1c examine the Christian belief that relationships are restored through the power of God's love and forgiveness

2. GOD PROVIDES SOCIAL STRUCTURES FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL PEOPLE
2a investigate the Christian understanding of the responsibilities and limitations of social structures

2b explore the Christian understanding of the tension between duty to authority and individual conscience

3. GOD WANTS PEOPLE TO LOVE AND RESPECT ALL PEOPLES OF THE WORLD
3a examine the implications of Jesus' command to be a neighbour in a world of inequality and prejudice

3b explore the Christian belief that the gospel removes barriers between people

3c examine the role of Christians in addressing social issues

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Analyse Bible stories of conflict, identifying the causes and consequences of conflict. (1a)

Illustrate the transformation that Christians believe God's forgiveness makes to the human heart. (1c)

Role-play conflicts experienced by first-century Christians, including the strategies given to Christians for dealing with broken relationships. (3a,3b)

Imagine and present the encouragement and advice a New Testament writer would give to the students' school community about relationships within the school. (1a,1c,3a,3b)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

 ⇒ group work sample
TRS D1/2a, TRS D1/2b

⇒ individual work sample

⇒ group work sample

⇒ individual or group work sample

UNIT SUMMARY

Students explore conflict by examining its causes and consequences and strategies for dealing with conflict in a variety of situations. Students compare modern psychologists' views with biblical teaching. Students reflect on the importance of forgiveness and the need of a change of heart for effective conflict resolution. In the final activity students explore the implications of living out the Christian way of love in relationships within the school community.

UNIT NOTES

God creates human beings to live in loving relationship with one another. However, conflict has been very much the experience of human beings ever since they fell out with their Creator. Christians believe that the Bible accurately identifies both the cause and the solution of conflict.

The unit can be adapted to suit existing personal development programs. It can also give teachers an opportunity to revisit school policies on issues such as bullying. The unit will give students an insight into the challenges and hopes the Bible gives to people in conflict. The unit acknowledges that many factors contribute to a conflict and that there are seldom simple, quick-fix solutions.

Select appropriate supporting Bible passages from those listed.

INTRODUCTION

1. STORIES OF CONFLICT

There are numerous ways of introducing the topic of conflict. Do at least one of these:

- Students role-play situations at home or school which cause conflicts and arguments, eg not doing chores or homework, type of music being listened to, punctuality, moving house.
- Conduct a simulation game that explores the conflicts which come from people trying to work together (see *Building Relationships* in Introductory Activities Menu or the Recommended Resources Menu).
- View segments of films or TV programs which show conflict between parents and their children, between friends, between people and authority structures, etc.
- From examples found in the newspapers, students create a collage of the nature and consequences of conflict between people on a personal, local community, national and international level.

Students identify factors that contribute to conflict, eg change, stress, selfishness, ignorance, stereotyping. They draw up lists of words to describe

- the emotions people feel during conflict
- the impact of conflict on relationships
- the different responses people have to conflict
- what causes conflict to escalate
- what defuses conflict.

Students fill out a personal evaluation sheet on how they respond to conflict (Teacher Resource Sheet [TRS] D1/1).

DEVELOPMENT

2. WHAT CREATES CONFLICT?

Students read poems *The Poison Tree*, *The Clod and the Pebble* by William Blake and *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost. Students discuss what or who the poems suggest are the main causes of conflict. They compare these causes with

- modern psychology's view that conflicts occur (1) as a result of competition for scarce resources, eg parents' attention, TV, job; (2) when there is an imbalance of power; and (3) when reality and what one desires do not mesh.
- the Bible's teaching that conflict comes from people's disregard for and disobedience of God's ways:
 Genesis 3:6–13; 4:1–12
 Romans 3:10–18 Galatians 5:19,20
 Hebrews 12:15 James 4:1–3.

Students list examples of conflict in their own lives and identify the causes of any one of these.

Students work as a class, in pairs or in small groups. They analyse one or more of the Bible stories listed in TRS D1/2a, identifying on the diagram (TRS D1/2b) the nature of the conflict, the context of the conflict, the root cause of the conflict and the short-term and long-term consequences of the conflict.

Explore with students conflict-related issues which can arise from a study of the biblical examples, eg how to deal with one's anger; obedience and respect for authorities that fail. Students refer to directions found in the Bible. Possible ways of developing students' issues can be found in the menu, eg *Honour Your Father and Mother* and *Freedom, Rights, Responsibilities, Fairness* in Introductory Activities; *Church and State*, *Jesus and Politics* and *Taking a Stand* in Development Activities.

3. A CHANGE OF HEART

Students work individually or in pairs to test out different approaches to conflict resolution (TRS D1/3), using their conflicts or scenarios from the introductory activity.

If appropriate, give students the option of trying out the different approaches for their personal conflicts, involving the people with whom they have conflict.

The New Testament gives some pointers to conflict management: Matthew 5:9,23,44
 Luke 6:29,31,37,38 Romans 12:17–21
 Philippians 2:1–5 James 4:12.

Students give their reactions to the instructions presented in the Bible. Students compare the biblical directions with the psychological approaches to conflict resolution. Discuss:

- the personal qualities people need to engage in effective conflict resolution
- the major obstacles to conflict resolution.

The Bible teaches that a change of heart precedes a change of behaviour and attitude:

Jeremiah 31:33,34 Ezekiel 36:25–27
Matthew 7:15–20 Matthew 15:17–20
John 3:5,6 2 Corinthians 5:17
Galatians 5:16,17,24,25 Ephesians 4:22–27.

Students draw two hearts showing the transformation that God's forgiveness makes to the human heart (refer to the Bible's teaching on the cause of conflict).

Students share what it feels like to be forgiven a wrong they have done. They explore what the Bible teaches about the role of forgiveness in building and restoring a person's relationship

- with God: Psalm 32:1,3–5
Matthew 6:12 Matthew 9:2
John 8:11 Romans 5:1,2
- with other people: Matthew 18:21–35
Luke 6:27–36 Ephesians 4:32
Colossians 3:13 1 Peter 4:8
1 John 4:19.

Using the same diagram as shown in TRS D1/2b, students show the changes possible in a person's life when a conflict situation is approached in a spirit of love and forgiveness:
Galatians 5:22,23 1 Corinthians 13:4–7
Colossians 3:12–14.

Students examine the practical ramifications of forgiveness. For example:

- Read Bible accounts of dramatic changes forgiveness brings to people's lives: eg
Joseph's brothers Genesis 45
A prostitute Luke 7:36–50
A wayward son Luke 15:11–32
Zacchaeus Luke 19:1–10.
- Invite Christians to share their stories of forgiveness.
- View examples of forgiveness in films, eg *Les Misérables*, *The Mission*.
- Explore through drama the impact of personal confession and of forgiveness in a conflict situation.

4. A NEW VISION

Jesus said his followers are 'salt' and 'light' in the community. This includes being models of relating to all people: Matthew 5:13–16
John 13:34,35 John 15:16.

Students investigate the radical approach that Christians are to bring to all their relationships. Galatians 3:28 describes first how Christians see one another. This same attitude then carries over into all their social relationships. Students brainstorm practical implications of

living out Galatians 3:28. They apply the verse to situations in the family, school, community, eg conflicts between police and youth gangs. They list stereotypes and assumptions that may have to be relinquished if the 'bond of peace' is to be a reality. They consider how stereotypes can be eliminated, eg finding facts about people which destroy the stereotypes.

The epistle writers addressed the practical implications of being the forgiven people of God (see 1 John 3:11,16–18). In groups students examine conflicts within the early Christian church alluded to in the epistles:
Romans 14 1 Corinthians 11:17–34
Philippians 2:1–16 Philippians 3:2–9
Philemon 1 Peter 5:1–7.

Alternatively, students examine the conflicts addressed in the letter from James, in particular verses: 1:9–11 2:1–13
3:1–12 3:13 – 4:12 5:1–6.

Using commentaries, Bible handbooks and Bible study notes, students research the context of the early Christian groups.

The epistle writers were realists. They understood that Christians are a complex group of people from many backgrounds and individual perspectives and that the reconciliation process would be a struggle. Students role-play the conflicts and personal struggles people were having in living out their faith, including in the role-play the hope and strategies for Christians when their relationships break down. See Colossians 3:13 James 4:7–10 1 John 1:9.

RESPONSE

5. 21ST CENTURY COMMENTATOR

Students explore how the Christian way of love can be lived out in a Christian school community. They imagine and present the encouragement and advice about relationships that a New Testament writer would give to the students' school community. Students need to

- consider what is happening in the school. In what areas of school life do people need to be encouraged? directed? praised? corrected? challenged?
- decide on an effective way to communicate the message, eg video clip, bumper stickers, cartoon editorials, talkback show, screen saver, *60 Minutes* episode.

Invite local pastors to share how they address current issues in their sermons, or students examine excerpts from contemporary writers, eg Tim Costello's *The Streets of Hope*.

YOU WILL NEED

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> simulation games, film excerpts, newspapers (depending on what activities are selected)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bibles, Bible handbooks, concordances
<input type="checkbox"/> poems: <i>The Poison Tree</i> , <i>The Clod and the Pebble</i> by William Blake and <i>Mending Wall</i> by Robert Frost | <input type="checkbox"/> TRS D1/1, TRS D1/2a, TRS D1/2b, TRS D1/3
<input type="checkbox"/> to invite local Christians or pastor to speak on forgiveness and dealing with conflict |
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INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Find out what students are doing in other curriculum areas in relation to

Topics

- family
- social structures.....
- levels of society (including global community).....

Skills

- conflict resolution
- personal development

UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I adapt the unit to deal with the range of students' experiences of conflict?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards the Bible as a guide for living?

What would I do differently if I was teaching this unit again?

How will I use and build on knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values students have developed in this unit?



WHAT DO YOU DO?

WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A CONFLICT SITUATION

Think of three conflicts you have had in the last month. Tick the way you responded to each conflict. Add any of your responses not included in the list.

Circle the behaviours that you would *never* use.



WAYS PEOPLE RESPOND TO CONFLICT

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Blame someone or something | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Refuse to discuss the matter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Shout | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Look for a solution that you can both agree to | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Try to make a fair deal | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Sulk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Use threats | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. Forgive the other person | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Walk away | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Tell the other person how you feel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Use sarcasm | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. Go to another person to help you solve the problem | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Refuse to compromise | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. Pray about it | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Defend yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. Apologise if you are in the wrong | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Change the subject | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. Get stressed and not say anything | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Try to reason with the other person | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. Ask the other person to explain themselves | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Pretend that everything is okay | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Agree with what the person says to end the discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

As a class decide which responses will

- ◆ smooth over a conflict _____
- ◆ avoid the conflict _____
- ◆ force the issue one way or the other _____
- ◆ act as a compromise _____
- ◆ solve the problem _____

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT ABOUT HOW YOU RESPOND TO CONFLICT?

Describe and evaluate your responses.

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CONFLICT ANALYSIS (a)

TASK: Read one of the case studies. Analyse the conflict in the story and fill in the details on the tree diagram (b). Several questions are given with each story to help you get started.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO BROADEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING: Use Bible notes and a Bible concordance to find out more about the characters and situation. Read the whole story.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE BIBLE

ISAAC AND ABIMELECH

Genesis 26:1–33

- ◆ Describe the relationship between Isaac and Abimelech.
- ◆ What is the cause of the conflict between them?
- ◆ How does each respond to the conflict?
- ◆ Who wins?

REUBEN AND HIS BROTHERS

Genesis 37

- ◆ Describe the relationship between Reuben and his brothers.
- ◆ What was Reuben's responsibility as the eldest? Find out about his history (Genesis 35:22; 49:3,4)
- ◆ Focus on how Reuben deals with the 'Joseph' problem.
- ◆ What were the long term consequences of the brothers' action? (Genesis 42:22,37)

AARON AND MIRIAM

Numbers 12

- ◆ What does Numbers 12:2 reveal about Aaron and Miriam's main problem with Moses?
- ◆ How did Aaron and Miriam deal with the conflict?
- ◆ What do you learn about how Moses handled the situation? Read Exodus 2:11–15. What does the passage reveal about Moses and conflict?

ABSALOM AND AMNON

2 Samuel 13

- ◆ Think of each character in the story. What were their conflicts and what should they have done about them? (You will need to refer to study notes to find out about the customs of the day.)
- ◆ Who is to blame?

MORDECAI AND HAMAN

Esther 3 – 8

- ◆ The story of the relationship between Mordecai and Haman is a web of intrigue. On a separate page draw the development of the conflict, identifying the issues and the people who became embroiled in the conflict. Identify the different responses to the conflict.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

Luke 11:14–54

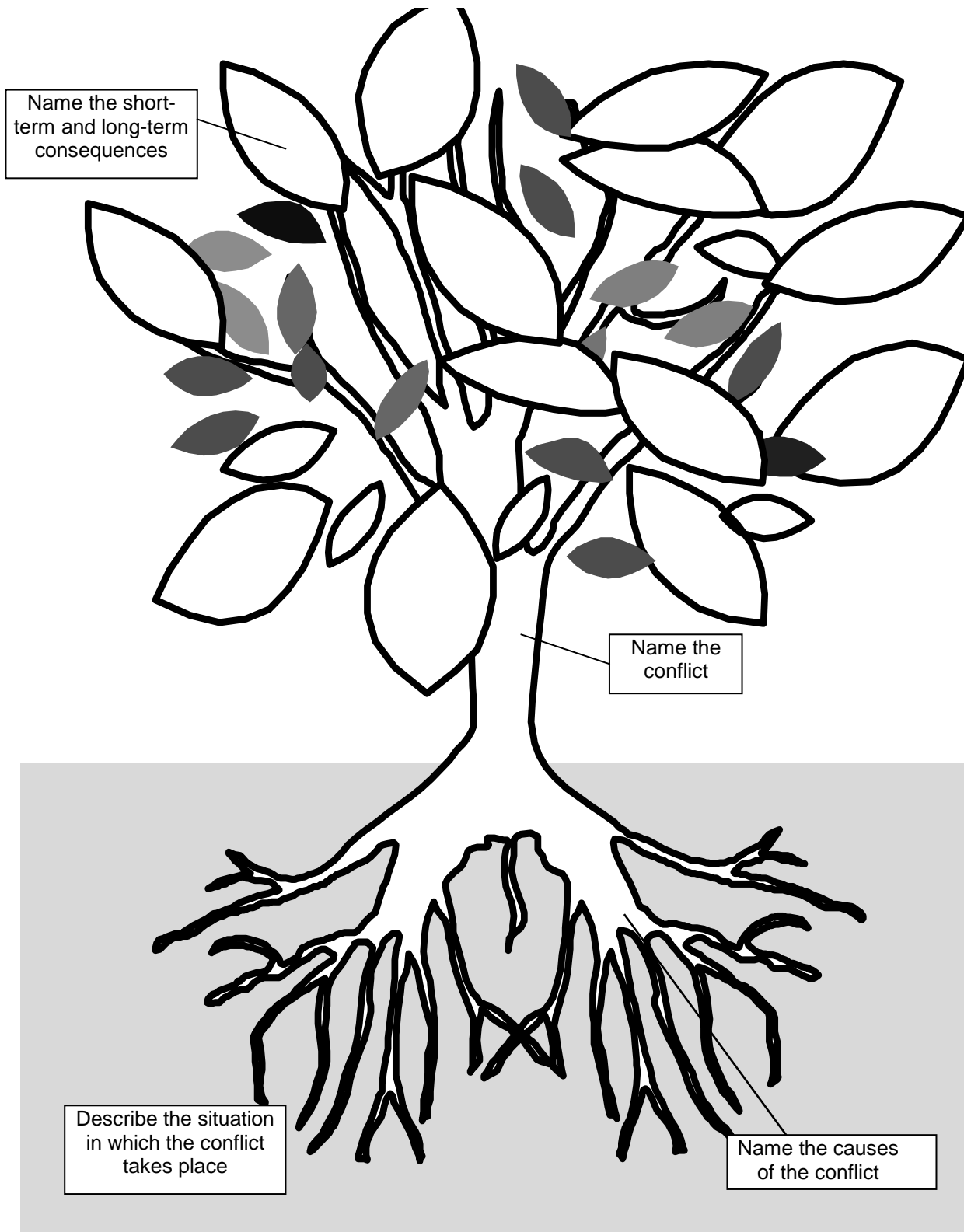
- ◆ What were the Pharisees' feelings about Jesus?
- ◆ How does Jesus contribute to the conflict?
- ◆ Jesus told his disciples to turn the other cheek and love their enemies. Why does Jesus not take his own advice with the Pharisees?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The above stories about conflict may raise questions that you can discuss and investigate. You may want to hold a class discussion on some of the following questions. Find out what guidelines the Bible offers.

1. Is it wrong to get angry during a conflict? Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 29:11,22; John 2:13–16; Ephesians 4:26,27
2. Are children responsible for the problems that exist among themselves if the parents have failed to be responsible parents? Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:20,21. Find out what Martin Luther says about families in his explanation of the fourth commandment.
3. Should you always obey the people in power over you, eg governments? See Jesus' attitude to an oppressive government Matthew 5:43–48; Matthew 26:47–56; Luke 7:1–10; Luke 20:19–26; Acts 5:29. See the instruction Paul gives in Romans 13:1–7.
4. Other issues? _____

CONFLICT ANALYSIS (b)



CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Work through each one of the approaches to conflict resolution, using a range of different conflict situations.

SELF-TALK

Self-talk is talking to yourself about what is happening in a conflict and what your responses might be. Self-talk can help you understand your feelings and your behaviour. Your behaviour and emotions are triggered by the way you think about yourself. Changing your thoughts is one way of improving your self-esteem.

Here is a negative example of how self-talk works:

Event: You do badly in a test.

>>Self-talk: You think: 'I'm hopeless. I should have done this'. You feel rotten.

>>Action: You give up, drop the subject.

What action would different self-talk lead to?

A. Fill in your own example as you would normally think, feel, act.

Event _____

>>Self-talk _____

>>Action _____

B. Redo A by changing your thoughts. What changes will this bring to how you feel and act?

>>Self-talk _____

>>Action _____

'I' STATEMENTS

You communicate more openly and honestly in relationships if you speak for yourself.

1. You take responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
2. You understand the other person has different needs and fears and ways of seeing than you.
3. You are not blaming the other person.

Here are some examples of 'I' statements:

'I am annoyed when you leave wet towels on my bed because I don't want my bedclothes to go mouldy.'

'I get cross and frustrated when I am accused of not doing my homework. I often do not understand what I am supposed to be doing.'

Choose two different feelings and complete the sentences below:

I feel _____

when/because _____

I feel _____

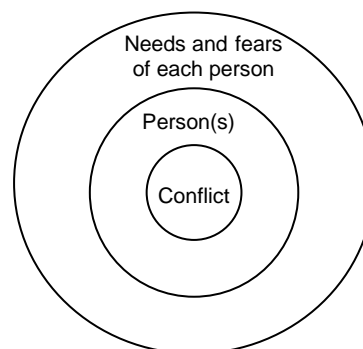
when/because _____

WIN/WIN

Win/win is a strategy where people negotiate a mutually acceptable solution. The negotiations are based on respect for and acknowledgment of the other's needs. It is based on cooperation, not competition. It involves several steps:

1. **Define the problem** in terms of each person's needs.
2. **Brainstorm solutions:** Together come up with as many alternative solutions as you can think of. Allow no criticising, no evaluation. Everything is acceptable for now.
3. **Choose a solution:** Together weigh up each of the possible solutions, eliminating solutions that are unacceptable or unworkable. You can change and combine solutions that will meet everyone's needs.
4. **Implement the solution:** Both decide who will do what by when.
5. **Follow-up:** At some later date review the outcome. Did the solution meet everyone's needs? If not, go back to Step 1.

MAPPING THE CONFLICT



1. What's the problem, issue, conflict? Fill in the centre circle.
2. How many people are involved? Put the name of the person(s) next to *Person(s)*.
3. Write down each person's needs.
4. Write down each person's fears.

When this has been completed, you see what needs/fears are common. Then decide on the options.

