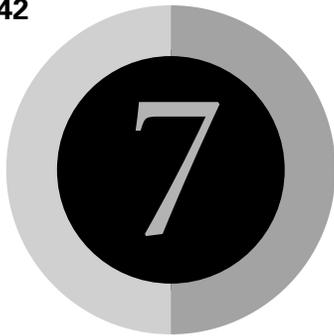


# 7 SESSION

## Your Conflict Choices

Overview of Lesson	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
<p>Students identify conflict styles and analyze different ways to manage anger and conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs (NSCG V.D.4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. (ELA 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health. (NHES 5)</li> </ul>



## SESSION

### YOUR CONFLICT CHOICES

This session helps teens examine the choices they make when they experience conflict. Learning to resolve conflicts can help prevent deadly confrontations, and it can help young people to develop interpersonal and leadership skills. Teens benefit from knowing what conflict style to use and when to use it and from learning what triggers anger and how to manage it.

**Note:** Plan to present both conflict management sessions (7 and 8) to your group if possible. These sessions were designed to work together to promote the development of important life skills among participants. These skills will come into play as the group moves through the *Community Works* program.

### TEENS WILL LEARN

- That conflict can be positive as well as negative
- How to define conflict
- About five conflict styles
- When to use each conflict style and why
- Certain words and body language that can trigger anger
- How to recognize and manage their anger

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

These teaching strategies are included and described in this session:

- Icebreaker
- Brainstorming
- Ranking
- Poster
- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion
- Drawing
- Journal Writing

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Newsprint and markers for the leader and for teens to use in small groups
- Handout 1: *Conflict Management Ideas* (need only one copy)
- Handout 2: *Conflict Styles Questionnaire*
- Handout 3: *Conflict Styles Scoring Key*
- Do-it-yourself poster: *Conflict Styles*
- Pencils for each teen
- Three- by five-inch cards for each teen
- Paper (two sheets per teen)
- Journal for Session 7
- Optional: If you do the Icebreaker in Step A, you'll need five slips of paper, five balloons, and a Koosh toy.



Invite a community resource person with special expertise in mediation, communication, interpersonal relationships, or counseling. Many communities have mediation centers where various types of disputes are handled. Local universities, social service organizations, or other teens trained in peer mediation may be good sources.

## SUMMARY OF STEPS

### PART 1

- Step A. Warm-up
- Step B. What Do You Think?
- Step C. Triggers



50 Minutes

### PART 2

- Step D. Conflict Styles



50 Minutes

### PART 3

- Step E. Managing Anger
- Step F. Reflection



45 Minutes

## BEFORE THE SESSION

1. Read the session plan and prepare for all three parts.

2. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, readers, and/or poster designers. For more information about facilitating teen involvement, consult the Introduction.
3. Make one copy of Handout 1: *Conflict Management Ideas*. You will need to cut up the list and put each idea into a balloon for this strategy. You may need to add some ideas or have teens work in pairs, depending on the size of your group.
4. Read Handout 2: *Conflict Styles Questionnaire*, and prepare to explain how to score it.
5. Make copies for all teens of Handout 2: *Conflict Styles Questionnaire* and Handout 3: *Conflict Styles Scoring Key*.
6. Make one copy of the journal for each teen.
7. Make and hang the *Conflict Styles* do-it-yourself poster.
8. Post the teen-created guidelines from Session 1 in the room.
9. Gather the materials you will need.

## P A R T

## 1

## STEP A

## TEACHING STRATEGY

## ■ Icebreaker



15 MINUTES

## Warm-up

1. Review the purpose of *Community Works*.
  - Ask teens to think for a minute about the purpose of the *Community Works* program. Ask them to tell what they remember.
  - Ask the group to update newcomers and those who missed earlier sessions. Assign this task to teens on a rotating basis. Explain that it helps build public-speaking skills.
  - Remind teens that these sessions will help them get information and develop skills to avoid being the victims of crime, as well as develop leadership skills to help others and their communities become safer.
  - Return their journals with your comments from the last session.
2. Explain the purpose of this session.
  - Tell teens, or have a teen volunteer explain, that this session will help them examine the choices they make in conflicts. Learning to resolve conflicts can help prevent deadly confrontations and help young people break down barriers and become leaders. One key to learning about conflict is to understand what conflict style to use and when to use it. Another key is learning what triggers anger and how to manage anger.



### Optional Idea

“Each One Teach One” can be used when you are introducing a subject or summarizing the key concepts and ideas learned.

3. Remind teens of the guidelines they developed for these sessions. Be sure their list is posted on the wall. One way to increase teens’ involvement and give them ownership of the session is to have them volunteer to go over the group guidelines at the start and recap the activities from the previous session.
4. Do an icebreaker: Balloons.
  - Use this icebreaker to give teens a quick overview of the conflict management ideas and concepts they will be working with over the next several sessions.
  - Separate the ideas listed in Handout 1, then roll each one up individually and stuff in a balloon. Blow the balloon up and tie it.
  - Randomly give out the balloons to teens. Give the Koosh ball to one of the teens and tell him or her to pop the balloon and read the information from the sheet inside. After the teen reads the idea, he or she tosses the Koosh ball to another person who bursts his or her balloon and reads the idea.
5. If you choose “Each One Teach One,” use the following procedure.
  - Separate each of the ideas on Handout 1 and distribute one per participant.
  - Participants should spend a few minutes reading the information and asking questions if they do not understand something.
  - Tell the participants to circulate around the room and teach their information to one person at a time, until they have spoken to five people.
  - Participants may talk with only one person at a time. The object is to share and learn from each other.
  - When they have completed the activity, ask them to tell something they learned from another participant. Write the responses on a flip chart.

## STEP B

### TEACHING STRATEGY

- Brainstorming



10 MINUTES

### What Do You Think?

1. Write the word “conflict” in the center of the newsprint.
  - Ask teens what comes to their minds when they hear this word and to write down their ideas. If they have trouble getting started or run short of ideas, ask them to think of a conflict they have been involved in, witnessed, or heard about and what images or sounds come to mind.
2. Ask teens to examine their suggestions.
  - Ask: “What words indicate that conflict is negative?” (Some possible answers may include violence, harmful fighting, war, anger, etc.)
  - Ask: “What about conflict can be positive?” These answers may be harder for teens to think of, but eventually they may mention such ideas as getting feelings out into the open, learning from disagreements, resolving a problem, gaining more respect for someone, or seeing that people are willing to stand up for themselves and what they believe in.
3. Point out that conflict is a normal, natural human process by explaining the following:
  - Conflict does not have to lead to violence.
  - Although most people think of conflict as negative, it can also provide opportunities for people to grow and improve relationships.
  - Learning to manage conflict effectively can make an important, positive difference.

4. Ask: “How would you define conflict?” and get the group’s ideas.
  - Write their ideas on the newsprint.
  - One good and short definition of conflict is *a disagreement between individuals or groups of people*.
  - Add that conflicts often start with struggles over limited resources (such as time, money, or property), unmet basic needs (such as the need to belong, have power, be free, or have fun), or different values or beliefs. Conflict can begin over such subjects as the following:
    - “What are we going to do tonight?”
    - “I like them, but you won’t let me be friends with them or even speak to them.”

**STEP C****TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Brainstorming
- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion



25 MINUTES

**Triggers**

1. Tell teens that, as they know, anger is often connected to conflict.
  - Note that anger is a normal feeling.
  - How we handle our anger and how we deal with other people who are angry can make the difference between managing conflict effectively and having conflict end in violence.
2. Write on the newsprint the definition and explanation of “triggers.” Read aloud, or ask a volunteer to help you read aloud, as you write:
  - Triggers are any verbal or nonverbal behaviors that result in anger or other negative emotional reactions.
  - Triggers are like lightning bolts. When they strike, they can interfere with the communication between people.
  - To avoid pulling others’ triggers, we have to pay particular attention to our own behavior.
3. Give each teen a piece of paper and ask teens to think about and jot down—their own—their personal triggers. Tell teens they can use their ideas in the group work.
4. Direct teens to work in groups of three to five to discuss and record what triggers their anger.
  - Distribute markers and newsprint.
  - Tell each group to brainstorm answers to these questions, then write these answers on newsprint:
    - What words trigger my anger?
    - What kind of body language is a trigger for me?
    - How do I react?
  - Each group should choose one person to take notes with a marker on a piece of newsprint and another person to report their triggers to the larger group.
5. Ask reporters from all the groups to show and discuss the words and body language that trigger their group’s anger. Point out the words and body language that are mentioned most often.

**Tip**

For creative ways to divide your teens into smaller groups, consult the Introduction.

## Wrap-up for Part 1

- Ask: “How do you know when you are angry?” This will help teens learn their own warning signs or anger cues so they can recognize when their anger is building. (Some anger warning signs include raised voices, speaking faster, sweaty palms, becoming quiet, crying, using foul language, running away, increased heart rate, and physical contact.) Ask teens to pay attention to their triggers for the next several days to see if they can detect a pattern. This will help them get some insight into their own triggers and the impact that triggers can have on conflict.

P A R T

2

## REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin this part by reviewing the previous session. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives for this session and give them an overview of what will be accomplished during this part of the session (use the objectives set out at the beginning of the session).

### STEP D

#### TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Ranking
- Poster



50 MINUTES

## Conflict Styles

1. Give teens Handout 2: *Conflict Styles Questionnaire*. Distribute pencils to teens for filling out the questionnaire.
2. Show teens how to fill out or rank their preferences on the handout.
  - Tell them that they will be filling out a questionnaire to help them see how they handle conflict.
  - Tell them to read along with you as you read aloud the first case and then explain that there are five possible ways to react in this situation. Read aloud the possible ways to react.
  - Ask teens to decide how they would handle this situation and to score each of the five possible responses, scoring their most likely reaction “5,” next most likely “4,” and so on.
  - Explain that this is called “ranking.” They are ranking their possible reactions to the situation, with “5” being the most likely reaction and “1” being an action they would not take.
  - Read aloud the second and third cases and ask teens to rank them in the same way.
  - Tell teens that filling out this questionnaire will help them to see how they handle conflict. Be sure they know they are to use rankings “5” to “1” in each case.
  - Emphasize that *this is not a test*. There are no right or wrong answers.

3. Distribute and explain how to use Handout 3: *Conflict Styles Scoring Key*.
  - Tell teens to transfer their rankings from the questionnaire to the scoring key and tally up the results for each column (I, II, etc.).
  - Be sure to point out that the letters in the scoring key (a, b, c, d, e) go *across* the page and are *not* in alphabetical order.
  - They should look at Case One on their questionnaire, take the number they chose for “a,” and put it by the “a” on the key and so on. The teens must record their rank numbers carefully. Ask if they have any questions.
  - Circulate to assist teens as needed.
4. Point out that each Roman numeral corresponds with a different style of responding to conflict.
  - Tell teens to add up the numbers under each Roman numeral.
  - The column that has the most points on their sheet shows the way that they are most likely to respond to conflicts.
  - Point out that this questionnaire gives them one view of their conflict style, but it may not be the whole story.
5. Use the *Conflict Styles* do-it-yourself poster to discuss the uses and limits for each of the five conflict styles.
6. Ask teens to raise their hands if they had the highest total under I. Explain that this conflict style is *avoiding*. Read aloud or ask for a volunteer to read its description from the poster.
  - Ask teens to suggest when they might want to use *avoiding*. Use the marker to write their suggestions in the *Uses* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - When competing is too dangerous
    - When an issue is unimportant
    - When a situation needs to be cooled down
  - Ask: “What might be some limits or disadvantages of using the *avoiding* style?” Use the marker to write teens’ suggestions in the *Limits* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - The problem might never be addressed.
    - Emotions may be “stuffed in” and explode later.
7. Have teens raise their hands if they had the highest total under II. Explain that this conflict style is *competing*. Read aloud or ask for a volunteer to read its description from the poster.
  - Ask teens to suggest when they might want to use *competing*. Use the marker to write their suggestions in the *Uses* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - When immediate action is needed for reasons of safety
    - When you believe in the absolute rightness of your action and can think of no other alternative
  - Ask: “What might be some limits or disadvantages of using the *competing* style?” Use the marker to write teens’ suggestions in the *Limits* column. Possible answers include the following:

- People become defensive quickly.
  - People have trouble being open and straightforward.
  - Emotions often heat up and conflict escalates.
8. Have teens raise their hands if they had the highest total under III. Explain that this conflict style is *accommodating*. Read aloud or ask for a volunteer to read its description from the poster.
- Ask teens to suggest when they might want to use *accommodating*. Use the marker to write their suggestions in the *Uses* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - When you think you've made a mistake
    - When calming a situation is important
  - Ask: "What might be some limits or disadvantages of using the *accommodating* style?" Use the marker to write teens' suggestions in the *Limits* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - You may work hard to please everyone else and never get your own needs met.
    - Being "nice" doesn't necessarily solve a problem.
9. Have teens raise their hands if they had the highest total under IV. Explain that this conflict style is *compromising*. Read aloud or ask for a volunteer to read its description from the poster.
- Ask teens to suggest when they might want to use *compromising*. Use the marker to write their suggestions in the *Uses* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - When all else fails
    - For fast decision making on minor issues
  - Ask: "What might be some limits or disadvantages of using the *compromising* style?" Use the marker to write teens' suggestions in the *Limits* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - You might "fix" the surface conflict but not deal with the underlying conflict.
    - Larger issues may be ignored.
10. Have teens raise their hands if they had the highest total under V. Explain that this conflict style is *collaborating*. Read aloud or ask for a volunteer to read its description from the poster.
- Ask teens to suggest when they might want to use *collaborating*. Use the marker to write their suggestions in the *Uses* column. Possible answers include the following:
    - When you care about the relationship with the other person
    - When long-term decisions must meet both parties' needs
  - Ask: "What might be some limits or disadvantages of using the *collaborating* style?" Use the marker to write teens' suggestions in the *Limits* column. Possible answers include the following:

- Collaborating requires time, good faith, mutual respect, and good communication skills.
  - It's hard work.
11. Emphasize that there is no one right or wrong conflict style.
- The choice of styles depends on the particular conflict situation and the needs and skills of the person making the choice.
  - Tell teens: "The more you learn about conflict and yourselves, the better able you will be to choose conflict styles that work for you."

## Wrap-up for Part 2

- Ask teens if they have ever thought about conflict this way. Ask if anyone remembers giving and receiving negative feedback strategies from Session 1. How does understanding triggers affect the way you give feedback to another person?

P A R T

3

## REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin this part by reviewing the previous session. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives for this session and give them an overview of what will be accomplished during this part of the session. (Use the objectives set out at the beginning of the session.)

### STEP E

#### TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Whole-group Discussion
- Drawing



30 MINUTES

## Managing Anger

1. Ask: "What do you do to get your anger under control?"
  - Help teens understand that they already use strategies to control their anger. (For example, walking away or getting out of the situation, remembering why you are in the situation in the first place, remembering your relationship with the person in question, asking yourself where this will lead.)
  - Ask teens to list "healthy ways" to calm themselves—that is, strategies that do not harm themselves or others. List these on newsprint.
  - Point out that, even though we sometimes think of ourselves as "out of control," we often choose to blow up at some times and stay calm at other times. For example, there's a difference between how we handle anger with our friends and anger with our parent or grandparent. In other words, we *are* able to control our anger when we want to.
  - Give each teen a piece of unlined paper and a pencil. Ask teens to draw a person with a "thought balloon." Inside the balloon, each teen writes the way he or she gets anger under control. (Stick figures are okay.)
2. Tell teens that calming down or cooling off is a key step in managing conflict.
  - The less "hot" the anger is, the more you can control it. Note that calming down does not mean you won't be angry or that anger is necessarily bad. It simply means that to deal effectively with a conflict, your anger must be under control.

- Point out to teens that even though we are legitimately angry, it usually doesn't help the situation to show our anger to the other person. Sometimes it is more helpful to show our anger in a calm and courteous way that the other person can understand and take seriously.
3. Present several strategies to control anger and calm down.
- One is to *physically relax* the body. Write *physically relax* on the newsprint. Ask for examples of ways to do this, such as deep breathing and muscle relaxing.
  - Another way is to *calm the mind* by thinking of something else or distracting yourself from the anger. Write *calm the mind* on the newsprint. Ask for examples of ways to do this, such as walking away, taking time out, imagining a peaceful place, taking a walk, or counting backwards from ten.
  - The third way is to *talk to yourself*, such as telling yourself you're in control of your emotions. Write *talk to yourself* on the newsprint. Ask for examples of ways to do this, such as telling yourself that you *are* in control and that you need to put the situation in perspective.
  - An easy way to remember these techniques is with the "Chill Drill."
    - Chill.
    - Blow. (Take a deep breath and exhale.)
    - Relax your face.
    - Get some space.
  - Ask teens to add to the anger management strategies that have been discussed and make a longer list of good ways to manage anger.
  - Write this list on the chalkboard or newsprint.
  - Give each teen a three- by five-inch card to write their own list of what works—or could work—for them.
  - Tell teens to keep the card in their room or carry it with them.

## STEP F

### TEACHING STRATEGY

- Journal Writing



15 MINUTES

### Reflection

1. Relate the session to teens' lives.
  - Ask teens to think of someone they know who handles conflict well, can get angry without becoming abusive or violent, and communicates his or her wants and needs effectively without threatening others. Why is this person successful at handling conflict? Then ask them to think about someone who does not handle conflict well. (Ask the participants not to give names.) What is the impact on that person's life, and on the lives of those around him or her?
2. Turn learning into action.
  - To encourage teens to think about possible service-learning projects related to this session, ask what they think would be the most effective ways of sharing this information. Possible suggestions for service-learning projects might include visits to groups of younger children with the poster and/or the triggers strategy or informal discussions with other teens and adults during which they fill out the *Conflict Styles Questionnaire*.

- If this session has sparked some special interest among teens, and they are interested in doing a short service-learning project (approximately two hours or less) related to this session, consult the Introduction, “Easy Steps to a Service-learning Project.”
  - Ask for volunteers for the next session’s tasks, such as making posters, contacting community resource people, and setting up the room.
3. Distribute journal for Session 7.
- Explain, remind, or ask teens the purpose of the journal. Be sure they know it is to help them reflect on what they learned and for you to read and respond to what they write. Be clear that you will not be correcting what they write—just reading and responding.
  - Ask teens to write their answers to the journal questions.
  - Ask teens if they are willing to share their thoughts with the group.
  - Collect their journals to review them after the session and write short comments. Tell them you will return their journals with your comments at the next session. This gives the teens something tangible and provides them with a connection to previous sessions.
  - Have teens think of one thing—or the main thing—they learned from this session, and ask for volunteers to share this with the group.





## HANDOUT 1

### **Conflict Management Ideas** Balloon Icebreaker

- The word conflict comes from the Latin word *conflictus*, meaning “striking together.”
- Conflict is a normal part of everyday life. The key question is, “How should I handle this conflict?”
- There are a variety of conflict styles, and we might want to use specific styles for certain things happening in our lives.
- There are words and body language that trigger anger in each of us.
- We can recognize and control our anger.
- Conflict can provide an opportunity to learn.
- Good listening requires concentration.
- Understanding your triggers is an important part of managing conflict.
- Handling conflict requires recognizing and managing anger.



## HANDOUT 2

### Conflict Styles Questionnaire

Rank the five possible ways to act in each of these three cases. Rank the way you would be most likely to react “5,” the next most likely “4,” and so on, ranking the least likely action “1.” Enter your rank for each item in the blank provided.

#### Case One

You are working on an important group project at school that is due this week. Everyone in your group is doing their part, except your good friend. He has missed most group meetings and has not yet completed his part of the project. What would you do?

- a. \_\_\_ Do your friend’s work to smooth things over for everyone.
- b. \_\_\_ Do half of your friend’s work if he—or someone else—will agree to do the rest.
- c. \_\_\_ Tell your friend in strong language that he had better shape up or else leave the group.
- d. \_\_\_ Do nothing now, and let the others in the group handle this problem.
- e. \_\_\_ Ask your friend why he isn’t doing his share of the project and work with all group members to find a way to get the project done on time.

#### Case Two

You lent a friend your whole week’s allowance to help her buy a new CD. She said she would pay you back the next day, but she has been putting you off for two weeks now. You could really use the money for a concert that is coming up. What would you do?

- a. \_\_\_ Tell her that if she doesn’t pay you back today, you will beat her up.
- b. \_\_\_ Arrange to meet with her during lunch to discuss a payback plan.
- c. \_\_\_ Ask if she can pay half.
- d. \_\_\_ Figure that she’s lost a friend and you’ve lost some money.
- e. \_\_\_ Tell her it’s okay to pay you whenever she can, it’s the friendship that counts.

#### Case Three

You and your brothers and sisters share one bathroom. On weekday mornings, before school or work, everyone wants to get into the shower first and get ready at the same time. Often, one person gets in and stays there while the others bang on the door. What would you do?

- a. \_\_\_ Sit down with your siblings to find out when each person has to leave, how much time each person needs to shower and get ready, and when each person should get up to take his or her turn, and then make a schedule so everyone can use the bathroom each day.
- b. \_\_\_ Get into the bathroom first each morning, and stay there as long as you want—tough luck for everyone else who wants to use it.
- c. \_\_\_ Tell everyone to take turns: on some days, some people will get to shower in the morning and on other days, they won’t.
- d. \_\_\_ Create more time for the others by showering the night before.
- e. \_\_\_ Put off dealing with the bathroom problem and figure that it will all blow over eventually.



## HANDOUT 3

### Conflict Styles Scoring Key

Enter the numbers you wrote for the three cases in the questionnaire in the blanks below. For example, in Case One, if option "a" was what you were most likely to do, find "a" in Case One—under III—and write "5" on that blank, then write "4" in Case One for the option you're next most likely to do, and so on to writing "1" for the option in Case One that you are least likely to choose. When you have done this for all of your choices, and all the blanks on the key are filled in, total your answers in each column under I, II, III, IV, and V. Note: The letters are not in alphabetical order.

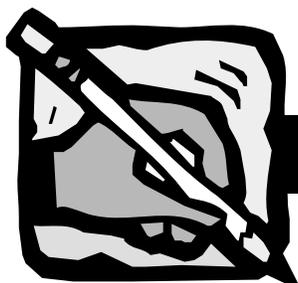
	I	II	III	IV	V
<b>Case One</b>	d.____	c.____	a.____	b.____	e.____
<b>Case Two</b>	d.____	a.____	e.____	c.____	b.____
<b>Case Three</b>	e.____	b.____	d.____	c.____	a.____
<b>Total</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



## DO-IT-YOURSELF POSTER

### Conflict Styles

Conflict Style	Uses	Limits
I. Avoiding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ denying there's a problem</li> <li>■ leaving well enough alone</li> <li>■ pretending nothing is wrong</li> </ul>		
II. Competing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ hard bargaining</li> <li>■ might makes right</li> <li>■ getting what you want at another's expense</li> </ul>		
III. Accommodating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ yielding to another's point of view</li> <li>■ paying attention to others' concerns while neglecting your own</li> </ul>		
IV. Compromising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ splitting the difference</li> <li>■ each person wins some and loses some</li> </ul>		
V. Collaborating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ exploring sources of conflict</li> <li>■ finding a mutually satisfactory solution</li> </ul>		

**JOURNAL****Session 7**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

I was surprised

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What works about the way I deal with conflict is

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What doesn't work about the way I deal with conflict is

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I think the most important idea I learned about conflict management was

---

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Because

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One idea I have for a project built around conflict management is

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