

IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS IN CONFLICTS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Under the Surface
- Scale of Emotions
- For Example
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize that many underlying feelings and emotions are involved in conflicts.

Students will recognize the relationship between emotions and behaviors.

Students will identify emotions and behaviors involved in a personal conflict.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Sometimes I Feel...” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Scale of Emotions” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students if they know who Indira Gandhi was. Explain that she was the prime minister of India from 1966 to 1977. She was elected again in 1980, but was assassinated during that term. Tell students that she once said, “You can’t shake hands with a clenched fist.”

Write Gandhi’s words on the board and invite volunteers to explain what she meant. Have students make a fist. Focus on the image of a clenched fist, and explore the feelings that this image represents.

Say, “Emotions—and the behaviors they produce—are important elements of conflicts. Today, we’re going to talk about how emotions and behaviors contribute to conflicts in negative and positive ways.”

Part I Under the Surface (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that anger is a general word that describes many different underlying feelings and emotions.

1. Students consider an analogy.

Ask a volunteer to draw a picture on the board of an iceberg floating in water. If the picture does not show the portion of the iceberg that is below the waterline, have another volunteer add it to the picture.

Through discussion and adjustments to the picture, guide students to arrive at something that looks like a large inverted V, with about 1/8 of the image above the line that represents the surface of the water. Point out that the largest part of an iceberg, about 7/8 of it, remains hidden from view beneath the water.

Explain that conflict is like an iceberg, and that we often only see the anger and the blame that follow—the smallest part of the picture. At the top of the iceberg, write the words “anger” and “blame” on the board. Point out that these two emotions are usually the most visible elements in conflicts.

2. Students expand their vocabulary of feelings.

Ask students to think about times when they felt angry and to name underlying feelings that contributed to that anger. Suggest that they think of words that could complete the following sentence: “I felt angry because I was...” Without commenting, write student responses in the portion of the iceberg below the waterline.

Comment that the picture can get more complicated than what is shown on the board. Distribute copies of the “Sometimes I Feel...” activity sheet and give students time to read through the words. Suggest that as students read, they should place a minus sign by emotions that could intensify feelings of anger.

When students have finished, invite them to add more words below the waterline on the board.

3. Students draw conclusions.

Point out that all of the feelings listed on the board may give rise to anger when one is involved in a conflict. Ask volunteers to explain why it might be important to identify the causes of anger when involved in a conflict.

Affirm responses that point out that recognizing what causes anger can help people understand why they are angry. Say, “If you take the time to think about why you are feeling angry, then you can begin to understand the conflict that you are in and work toward resolving it in a constructive manner.”

Ask students if they have ever noticed how their moods can affect their reactions. For example, explain how someone might say something that bothers them one day, but if the same person were to say the same thing another day, it wouldn’t affect them at all. Invite students to share similar experiences. Point out that it’s important to understand that mood affects our perceptions and feelings.

Part II Scale of Emotions (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the relationship between emotions and behaviors.

1. Students identify behavioral cues.

Recall the image of the clenched fist that students discussed at the beginning of class. As students answer the following questions, ask them to demonstrate their responses:

- How would you expect someone with a clenched fist to look?
- How would you expect that person to sound?
- How would you expect that person to act?

Encourage students to brainstorm other ways that people might look, sound, and act when they become involved in a conflict. Afterward, point out that these behaviors are similar to those demonstrated by people when they are feeling stressed. Ask, “Why do you think this is?” (Students might respond by saying that conflict is stressful.)

Explain that feelings and behaviors are linked, and that together, they can cause us to communicate various verbal and nonverbal messages. Point out that if someone clenches their fist, we can tell immediately that the person is either angry or tense.

Ask students the following questions:

- What clues would tell you whether a person with a clenched fist is feeling angry or tense?
- What message would be sent if the person opened their fist?

2. Students identify emotions in different situations.

Distribute copies of the “Scale of Emotions” activity sheet to students. Tell students to think of the lowest note as a time when they are relaxed and calm, and to think of the higher notes as times when they are increasingly stressed and, finally, in conflict.

Have students fill in the activity sheet with words that describe feelings they typically have when involved in each of the four situations. Suggest that students use the “Sometimes I Feel...” activity sheet to identify a variety of feelings.

3. Students learn how emotions affect conflict.

Ask students to observe how the feelings they wrote became more stressful as they worked their way up the scale of emotions. Ask volunteers to share emotions they wrote for each situation on their activity sheets.

Point out that as emotions and behaviors become more heated, conflicts become more intense. Ask students if they recall the example about taking tests and feeling stress, which they discussed in “Lesson 3: Handling Stress” of Module Four: Managing Personal Resources. Remind them how they concluded that tests themselves aren’t stressful—it’s one’s personal reaction to the test that causes the stress.

Explain that conflict works the same way. Then, share the following information with students:

- In a conflict, we don’t necessarily oppose another person. Rather, we oppose something that has been said or done and then have an emotional reaction to it.
- Our emotional reactions are ours; only we can own them and only we can deal with them.
- We have the power to deal with our emotions and behaviors in a conflict, just as we can deal with emotions and behaviors in stressful situations.
- We have the power to get control of our emotions before a conflict escalates.

Assure students that they will be exploring ways to control their emotions and behaviors and ways to keep conflicts from getting out of control in later lessons.

Part III For Example (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify emotions and behaviors involved in a personal conflict.

1. Students accept an assignment.

Explain that students are to complete the following assignment as homework. Ask them to make a note of this assignment in their notebooks or folders for this class. Give them the following directions:

- Think about a conflict that you have recently been involved in or witnessed.
- Write about the conflict, briefly explaining what it was about and who was involved. You may change the names of the people involved.
- Identify the emotions involved and how the people sounded, looked, and acted. Remember that anger and blame are often the most obvious emotions involved in conflict situations. Look beyond the anger and blame, and identify feelings that may have been beneath the surface and contributed to the conflict.
- If you would like to, include illustrations.
- You may work on this assignment alone or with a partner.

Tell students that you will not be sharing their work with others, nor will you be asking them to share it. Answer any questions that students may have about the assignment, and then remind them that it is due for the next lesson. Suggest that students use the two handouts from this lesson to help them with their writing.

2. Students work on the assignment.

Allow students the remainder of the class period to begin the assignment. As students are working, circulate through the classroom to ensure that everyone knows the requirements of this assignment.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Invite volunteers to explain why the picture of the iceberg represents conflict. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Emotions and behaviors contribute to the intensity of conflicts.
- Our emotions and behaviors belong to us; only we can control them.
- Anger, along with the blame it produces, is only the tip of the iceberg in many conflicts; the feelings under the surface are the ones that really affect behavior.
- Recognizing the feelings that cause anger can help us understand why we are angry.

Student Assessment

1. How can recognizing the feelings that cause anger help you when you are involved in a conflict?
2. What are some emotions that might lie beneath the surface during a conflict?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Write the words “ignored,” “yelled at,” “scolded,” and “insulted” on the board. Ask students to describe their reactions to each of these actions. Discuss how certain reactions can impact the intensity of a conflict.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Select a brief clip from a movie or TV show portraying a conflict between two people. Play this clip in class with the sound turned off.

Have students guess the emotions that the people in the scene might be experiencing. Then, play the scene again with the sound turned on.

Writing in Your Journal

Ask students to keep a daily chart for the duration of this module. Students will note each day’s weather (e.g., sunny, cloudy, rainy) and the general mood they experienced that day.

At the end of each day, students should note what their overall attitudes were for that day. They should assess if the weather affected their moods.

Using Technology

Divide students into groups. Have each group brainstorm songs to include on a short playlist that expresses one of these emotions: anger, love, conflict, joy, happiness, or sadness. Remind students that the lyrics of the songs they choose should be appropriate for school.

Have groups share their playlists with the class, or plan a day when students can play selections from their playlists.

Homework

Have students write about a recent disagreement they had with someone else.

Have students discuss the emotions they experienced before the conflict, during the conflict, and after the conflict.

Additional Resources

Display photos of some of Van Gogh's paintings, particularly the *Wheat Field* series, *Starry Night*, and *Cypresses*. Point out Van Gogh's bold and swirling brush strokes.

Ask students what they think Van Gogh was feeling when he painted these pictures. Ask, "How did Van Gogh's paintings make you feel?"

SOMETIMES I FEEL...

A

adventurous
affectionate
afraid
aggressive
amazed
annoyed
anxious
apologetic
apprehensive
ashamed

B

bashful
betrayed
bold
bored
brave

C

calm
cautious
cheerful
comfortable
competent
confident
confused
curious

D

decisive
depressed
determined
disappointed
disgusted
distressed

E

ecstatic
embarrassed
energetic
enraged
enthusiastic
envious
excited
exhausted

F

friendly
frightened
frustrated

G

grateful
greedy
guilty

H

happy
helpless
hopeful
horrified

I

impatient
incompetent
indecisive
indifferent
insecure
inspired
insulted
intimidated
irritated

J

jealous
joyful

L

lazy
listless
lonely

M

marvelous
mischievous
miserable
moody

N

negative
nervous

O

optimistic
overwhelmed

P

peaceful
perplexed
petrified
positive
proud
puzzled

R

regretful
relaxed
resentful
restless

S

sad
satisfied
secure
serene
shocked
shy
silly
skeptical
sleepy
sluggish
sullen
surprised
suspicious
sympathetic

T

tense
timid
tranquil
trusting

U

uncomfortable
undecided

W

wary
whimsical
worried

Z

zealous

SCALE OF EMOTIONS

