

Techniques for Resolving Conflict

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Most of us have never learned techniques for resolving conflict. Here are five steps Peers can use when resolving conflicts.

- 1) The first step is to stop. Stop fighting, stop talking, stop any body language which may indicate anger, frustration or threats. Remember you, as a Peer, are fighting with someone you care about.
- 2) Evaluate. How does one feel? How does the other person feel? Try to look at the process instead of the content.
- 3) Exchange ideas. Take turns in telling each other how you view the problem. Don't confuse the problem with the other person. The problem is something separate which you both own, and each person can take part in resolving. Be sure to use "I" statements. Don't blame others. Take responsibility for your part of the conflict. See if you can reach a level of interests rather than issues.
- 4) Create. Use brainstorming to think of solutions which will meet the needs of both people. Come up with a list of solutions, whether practical or not, without evaluating the ideas or putting any judgment on them. The more time you spend brainstorming the more likely you are to reach a creative resolution which meets everyone's needs.
- 5) Resolve. Choose a resolution from your brainstorming list. The best resolution will address both interests of both people.

Some Dos and Don'ts During Conflict

Do:

- Find out what the problem is (be sure you both understand)
- Attack the problem, not the person
- Listen to each other without interrupting
- Care about each other's feelings

Don't:

- Blame the other person
- Show physical aggression
- Make excuses
- Use intimidation