

BUILDING BRIDGES

STANDARDS

- Standard 1: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
- Standard 2: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.
- Standard 3: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

ACTIVITY

Introduce the issue of conflicts with peers and encourage the students to talk about what types of conflicts seem to be prevalent. After talking about the different conflicts that arise at school, randomly divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group a scenario of a conflict and have the groups talk about options and what each person might do in the situation. These scenarios may be different depending on the school, context, and what types of conflicts the school faculty may notice at the time. It may be useful to talk with administrators and teachers to get more insight into what specific areas of conflict should be emphasized. It may also be useful to walk around and observe, listen, and interact with small groups to get an idea of what they may be having trouble with and what might be working well for them.

After the groups have been given enough time to discuss the situation they were given, ask each group to describe their specific scenario, how they chose to resolve the situation, and what they may have had trouble with. Having small groups report their “findings” opens up opportunity for more discussion and more input from the rest of the class. Make a list of the themes that work for these students with regard to dealing with conflict and those that do not work as the students report and discuss. After all the groups have reported their scenarios and the discussion has come to a close, ask the students to recall positive ways in which to resolve conflict with peers. Review these key points before ending this activity.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

This activity has some structure, but the students create most of the strategies for conflict resolution. This makes this activity a unique experience for each group and also empowers the students as a group to work toward a common goal in unity. It may be helpful to reframe some of the strategies that students come up with, but they may be unable to articulate exactly what they mean. Be flexible and ready to incorporate and use ideas from the students. At the same time it also may be helpful to the group, if they are struggling, to offer thoughts as suggestions without forcing them on the students. Help students to understand their own experiences and encourage discussion of differences among students due to individual differences in background, lifestyle, and culture.

ESTIMATED TIME

1 class period