



# Introduction to Conflict Management

Online



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# Learning Objectives

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1. Identify conflict as an opportunity for change and growth

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2. Explore five root causes of conflict

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3. Determine common escalation points during the interpersonal conflict



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# Lesson 1

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WHAT IS CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION?

WHY SHOULD YOU RESOLVE  
CONFLICT?

WHEN SHOULD YOU RESOLVE

CONFLICT? HOW SHOULD YOU

RESOLVE CONFLICT?



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# WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

Conflict, arguments, and change are natural parts of our lives, as well as the lives of every agency, organization, and nation.

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional.

When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

The goals of negotiation are:

To produce a solution that all parties can agree

- to To work as quickly as possible to find this
- solution

- To improve, not hurt, the relationship between the groups in conflict

**Conflict resolution through negotiation can be good for all parties involved.** Often, each side will get more by participating in negotiations than they would by walking away, and it can be a way for your group to get resources that might otherwise be out of reach.



# WHY SHOULD YOU RESOLVE CONFLICT?

The main goal of negotiation with your opposition is to **come to an agreement that benefits all parties.**

Some other good reasons to negotiate are:

- To understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and backgrounds may be different from your own. In order to resolve a conflict, you'll need to look at the conflict **from your opponent's point of view** and learn more about this person or group's perspective and motivations.
- To ensure that your relationships with opponents continue and grow. If you **make peace with your opponents**, you increase your own allies in the community. Successful negotiations pave the way for smooth relationships in the future.
- To find peaceful solutions to difficult situations. Full-blown battles use up resources -- time, energy, good reputation, and motivation. By negotiating, you avoid wasting these resources, and you may actually **make new allies** and find new resources!



# WHEN SHOULD YOU RESOLVE

**CONFLICT?** Conflict resolution is appropriate for almost any disagreement. Our daily lives offer plenty of opportunities for negotiation - between parents and children, co-workers, friends, etc., and as a result, you probably already have a variety of effective strategies for resolving minor conflicts.

But for more serious conflicts, and conflicts between groups rather than individuals, you may need some additional skills.

How, for example, should you structure a meeting between your group and your opponent?

When should you settle, and when should you fight for more?

How should you react if your opponent attacks you personally?

**Activity - Write your answers to these questions now, before you will read the materials and compare your growth at the end of the conflict management.**



# HOW SHOULD YOU RESOLVE

## CONFLICT?

There are seven steps to successfully negotiating the resolution of a conflict:

1. Understand the conflict
2. Communicate with the opposition
3. Brainstorm possible resolutions
4. Choose the best resolution
5. Use a third-party mediator
6. Explore alternatives
7. Cope with stressful situations and pressure tactics

Hint - try to remember these for the Virtual Reality :)



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# 1. Understand the

## conflict

Conflicts arise for a variety of different reasons. It is important for you to **define clearly your own position and interests in the conflict**, and to understand those of your opponent. Here are some questions to ask yourself so that you can better define the conflict.

### Legitimacy

- What third party, outside of the conflict, might convince one or both of us that a proposed agreement is a fair one?
- What objective standard might convince us that an agreement is fair? For example: a law, an expert opinion, the market value of the transaction.
- Is there a precedent that would convince us that an agreement is fair?

### Possible Outcomes

- What kinds of agreements might we reach?

### Interests

- What are my interests?
- What do I really care about in this conflict? What do I want?
- What do I need?
- What are my concerns, hopes, and fears?

VS

### Their Interests

- What are the interests of my opposition?
- If I were in their shoes, what would I really care about in this conflict? What do they want?
- What do they need?
- What are their concerns, hopes, fears?





# 1. Understand the

## conflict

Interests play an important role in better understanding conflict. Often, groups waste time "bargaining over positions." Instead of explaining what the interests of their position are, they argue about their "bottom line."

This is not a useful way to negotiate, because it forces groups to stick to one narrow position. Once they are entrenched in a particular position, it will be embarrassing for them to abandon it.

They may spend more effort on "saving face" than on actually finding a suitable resolution. It is usually more helpful to explore the group's interests, and then see what positions suit such interests.

**Activity** - Think of an example where you have had a conflict with your colleague or a friend.



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# 2. COMMUNICATE WITH THE OPPOSITION

Now that you have thought through your own interests and those of the other party, you can begin to communicate directly with your opposition. Here are some tips for productive talks:

- 1. Listen.** Their opinions are important to you because their opinions are the source of your conflict. If something is important to them, you need to recognize this. Recognizing does not mean agreeing, of course!
- 2. Let everyone participate who wants to.** People who participate will have a stake in a resolution. They will want to find a good compromise.
- 3. Talk about your strong emotions.** Let the other side let off steam.
- 4. Don't, however, react to emotional outbursts!** Try an apology instead of yelling back. Apologizing is not costly, and is often a rewarding technique.
- 5. Be an active listener.** Rephrase what you're hearing as a question: "Let me see if I'm following you. You're saying that... Have I got that right?"  
You can still be firm when you're listening.
- 6. Speak about yourself, not the other party.** In the textbook example, you might say, "I feel angry to know that my children are reading this old-fashioned textbook," rather than, "How could you choose such a racist book?"
- 7. Be concrete, but flexible.** Speak about your interests, not about your position.
- 8. Avoid early judgments.** Keep asking questions and gathering information.
9. Don't tell the opposition, "It's up to you to solve your problems." **Work to find a solution for everyone.**



# 3. BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

Now that you know what the interests of both parties are, and how to better communicate with the opposition, you can **start thinking about solutions**. Look at all of the interests you have listed, for you and for your opponents, and look for common interests. Often both parties share many interests -- for example, both groups may want stability and public respect.

Before you hold a brainstorming meeting, think carefully about **how you'll set up the meeting**.

Write a **clear purpose** statement for the meeting.

Try to choose a **small group** of 5-8 people total.

Hold the meeting in a different environment from your usual setting.

Make sure the **setting is an informal** one where people feel comfortable and safe.

Find an **unbiased facilitator**, someone who can structure the meeting without sharing his or her own feelings about the conflict.

To begin brainstorming, decide whether you want to brainstorm with your opposition, or with only your group. In either case, you will want to establish some ground rules.

Activity- If you are alone reading this material, try to have this brainstorming with your friend, spouse, child etc. Practice makes perfect!



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# 3. BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

- Work on coming up with as many ideas as possible. Don't judge or criticize the ideas yet -- that might prevent people from thinking creatively.
- Try to maximize (not minimize) your options.  
Look for win-win solutions, or compromises, in which both parties get something they want.
- Find a way to make their decision easy
- During the meeting, seat people side by side, facing the "problem"-- a blank chalkboard or large pad of paper for writing down ideas. The facilitator will remind people of the purpose of the meeting, review the ground rules, and ask participants to agree to those rules.
- During the brainstorming session, the facilitator will write down all ideas on the chalkboard or pad.



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# 4. CHOOSE THE BEST RESOLUTION

After the meeting, you will need to decide **which resolution is best**. Review your brainstorming ideas. Star the best ideas - these are what you will work with during the conflict resolution process.

Set a time to discuss them and determine which idea is the best.

The goal here is to use both groups' skills and resources to get the best result for everyone. Which resolution gives both groups the most? That resolution is probably the best one.



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Activity - If you are alone, prepare the "other side". After you are done, compare the resolutions.

# 5. USE A THIRD PARTY

## MEDIATOR

As you are brainstorming and choosing a good resolution, you may want to use a third-party mediator.

This is a person who is not from your group or your opponent's group, but whom you both trust to be fair.

Your mediator can help both sides agree upon a standard by which you'll judge your resolution.

Standards are a way to measure your agreement. They include expert opinions, law, precedent (how things have been done in the past), and accepted principles.

### **Example for a conflict role/play**

Sarah regularly cleans out the shared refrigerator in the break room. One day, she unknowingly throws out Martin's leftovers.

The next day, Martin discovers his food is missing and erupts at Sarah. She responds by saying he should have clearly marked his food.

They both leave this exchange feeling angry:

Sarah feels underappreciated for the work she does to clean the office while Martin feels that no one respects his personal belongings.



# 5. USE A THIRD PARTY

## MEDIATOR

Your mediator could also, for example, run your brainstorming session.

Here are some other possible jobs for a mediator:

- Setting ground rules for you and your opponent to agree upon (for example, you might both agree not to publicly discuss the dispute)
- Creating an appropriate setting for meetings
- Suggesting possible ways to compromise
- Being an "ear" for both side's anger and fear
- Listening to both sides and explaining their positions to one another
- Finding the interests behind each side's positions
- Looking for win-win alternatives
- Keeping both parties focused, reasonable, and respectful
- Preventing any party from feeling that it's "losing face"
- Writing the draft of your agreement with the opposition



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# 6. EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES

There may be times when, despite your hard work and goodwill, **you cannot find an acceptable resolution** to your conflict. You need to think about this possibility before you begin negotiations. At what point will you decide to walk away from negotiations? What are your alternatives if you cannot reach an agreement with your opponent?

It is important that you **brainstorm your alternatives** to resolution early on in the negotiation process, and that you always have your best alternative somewhere in the back of your mind. As you consider possible agreements with your opponent, compare them to this "best" alternative. If you don't know what the alternative is, you'll be negotiating without all the necessary information!

In order to come up with an alternative, **start by brainstorming**. Then, **consider the pros and cons** of each alternative. Think about which alternative is **realistic and practical**. Also, think about how you can make it even better.

At the same time, **don't forget to put yourself in the shoes of your opposition**. What alternatives might they have? Why might they choose them? What can you do to make your choice better than their alternative?





# 7. COPE WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS AND PRESSURE TACTICS

So far, we've talked about how to negotiate with a fairly reasonable opponent.

However, you need to be prepared to negotiate with all kinds of opponents, both reasonable and unreasonable.

What if your opponent is more powerful and influential than you are? What if they refuse to meet or talk with you?

All of these situations are stressful and intended to put extra pressure on you to make a quick decision in the opposition's favour.

When a situation like this takes place, stay calm and go slow. Don't get angry or make a rushed decision. Instead, talk about the pressure tactic without judging.



# 7. COPE WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS AND PRESSURE TACTICS

HERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE SITUATIONS:

## **My opponent is more powerful**

If you have already decided on your best alternative, you have nothing to fear. You can walk away at any time, and go that route instead. Think about everything that you can do, and that your mediator can do. Although you may be less powerful, at least you will be negotiating with all the available information.

## **My opponent won't budge**

In a situation like this, you may be tempted to do the same thing: "If you won't change your mind, neither will I!" However, you will fail if you insist on sticking to your position. Instead, treat your opponent's position as a real possibility. Ask lots of questions. Listen to their logic. Understand what their interests are, and what it is that they really want. Learn what their criticisms of your idea are. The more you know about where they're coming from, the better a resolution you can create.



# ONLINE QUIZZ

## material

You know you have understood the materials when... you answer below!

As a summary try to answer these two questions, write down your answers and compare them with the next slide.

**What is conflict resolution?**

**Why should you use conflict resolution?**



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# ONLINE QUIZZ

## ~~What is conflict~~ **material** resolution?

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them

## **Why should you use conflict resolution?**

You want to come to an agreement that benefits all parties

You want to understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and backgrounds may be different from your own.



# Lesson 2

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## CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Information

conflicts Values

conflicts Interest

conflicts

Relationship

conflicts

Structural

conflicts.




# Causes of conflict

There are five main causes of conflict: information conflicts, values conflicts, interest conflicts, relationship conflicts, and structural conflicts.

## Information conflicts

arise when people have **different or insufficient information**, or disagree over **what data is relevant**.

 Allowing sufficient time to be heard, in a respectful environment facilitated by a neutral person can allow parties to clear up information disparities.

## Values conflicts

are created when people have perceived or actual **incompatible belief systems**. When a person or group tries to **impose its values on others** or claims an exclusive right to a set of values, disputes arise. While values may be non-negotiable, they can be discussed and people can learn to live peacefully and coherently alongside each other.



# Causes of

## conflict

3

### Interest conflicts

are caused by **competition over** perceived or actual incompatible **needs**. Such conflicts may occur over **issues of money, resources, or time**. Parties often mistakenly believe that in order to satisfy their own needs, those of their opponent must be sacrificed. A mediator can help identify ways to dovetail interests and create opportunities for mutual gain.

### Relationship conflicts

occur when there are **misperceptions**, strong **negative emotions**, or **poor communication**. One person may **distrust** the other and believe that the other person's actions are motivated by malice or an intent to harm the other. Relationship conflicts may be addressed by allowing each person uninterrupted time to talk through the issues and respond to the other person's concerns.

4

5

### Structural conflicts

are caused by **oppressive behaviours** exerted on others. Limited resources or opportunities as well as organisational structures often promote conflict behaviour. The parties may well benefit from mediation since the forum will help neutralize the power imbalance.



# ONLINE QUIZZ material

## Example of conflict

Sarah regularly cleans out the shared refrigerator in the break room. One day, she unknowingly throws out Martin's leftovers.

The next day, Martin discovers his food is missing and erupts at Sarah. She responds by saying he should have clearly marked his food.

They both leave this exchange feeling angry: Sarah feels underappreciated for the work she does to clean the office while Martin feels that no one respects his personal belongings.

You know you have understood the materials when...

You can identify which of the 5 main causes of conflict fit the example above. Write a sentence for each of the 5 main causes explaining why you think it is (or it is not) the cause for the scenario above. Share and discuss.





# Lesson

## 3

**STAGE 1: HARDENING**

**STAGE 2: DEBATES AND POLEMICS**

**STAGE 3: ACTIONS, NOT WORDS**

**STAGE 4: IMAGES AND COALITIONS**

**STAGE 5: LOSS OF FACE**

**STAGE 6: STRATEGIES OF THREATS**

**STAGE 7: LIMITED DESTRUCTIVE BLOWS**

**STAGE 8: FRAGMENTATION OF THE**

**ENEMY STAGE 9: TOGETHER INTO THE**

**ABYSS**



# Glasl's Nine-Stage Model Of Conflict Escalation

Glasl's escalation model is a very useful diagnostic tool for the conflict facilitator, but also valuable as a means for **sensitizing people to the mechanisms of conflict escalation**. Such sensitizing may lead to a **greater awareness of the steps one should take care to avoid if one wants to prevent a conflict from escalating out of control**. From a more academic perspective, the model also **provides a theory of conflict escalation** that emphasizes the situational pressures acting upon people involved in a conflict.

This conflict escalation model is presented in Friedrich Glasl's book *Konfliktmanagement. Ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater*, (Bern: Paul Haupt Verlag, 1997. See also the endnotes). Glasl's original analysis of the stages comprises over 70 pages, and THOMAS JORDAN's summary does not in any way make full justice to his model. However, this summary has been scrutinized and approved (with some corrections) by Friedrich Glasl.

This material will also provide you with a little more in-depth knowledge about conflict escalation and show you how you can avoid the escalation.

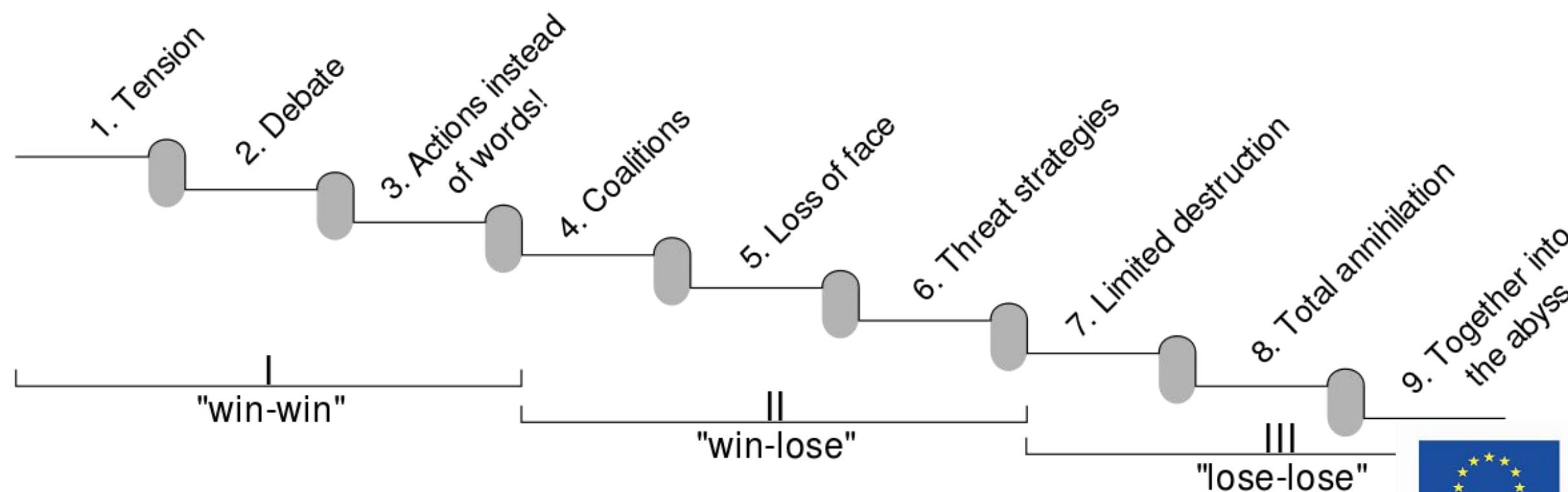


# Glasl's Nine-Stage Model Of Conflict Escalation

3 levels and 9 stages of conflict escalation

Glasl divides the nine stages of conflict escalation into three levels. On the first three levels, it is still possible for both parties to drop out without damage or even with profit (win-win). On the second level, one of the two must be the loser (win-lose) and on the third level, there are only losses on both sides until mutual annihilation (lose-lose).

The deeper you go towards the last level, the more primitive and inhuman the methods become by which the opponents try to win. Therefore, Glasl does not present his model as an ascent to the higher levels of escalation, but as a descending staircase that literally leads further and further into the depths of human morality.



# Level 1 - Win-Win case

## **Stage 1: Tension**

First tensions are noticeable and become conscious, different opinions collide, and the fronts can harden and cramp. The situation is still harmless, differences of opinion are commonplace and can be resolved through discussion. No camp or party formation yet.

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## **Stage 2: Debate**

The disagreement becomes more fundamental, the opponents try to convince each other through rational arguments and are put them under pressure. Everybody insists on his point of view, uncompromising black-and-white thinking and verbal violence.

## **Stage 3: Actions instead of words!**

The pressure on the conflict partner is increased, talking no longer helps, and actions are necessary! The verbal communication steps into the background and possible conversations are frustrated and broken off without result. The opponent is confronted with accomplished facts. The empathy for each other gives way to distrust and negative expectations, which intensifies the conflict even more.



# Level 2 - Lose-Win case

## **Stage 4: Coalitions**

The first stage, where there can only be one winner left. The opponents search for supporters and allies, parties are formed and manoeuvred against each other. Image campaigns are released and bad rumours about the other party are spread. It is no longer about the original thing, but about winning the conflict.

## **Stage 5: Loss of face**

The mutual attacks will begin directly and personally, immoral "blows below the belt". Wherever you can, you want to expose your opponent. The loss of morality and mutual trust goes hand in hand with the loss of face. The sight of the opponent alone creates negative feelings, even disgust.

## **Stage 6: Threat Strategies**

Through threats and counter threats, the conflict parties try to win the upper water. A demand is intensified with a punishment and supported with the proof of the punishment possibility (Example: A kidnapper demands money and threatens with the murder of the daughter, as proof he sends a video message that he actually has her in his power). The more credible the possibility of punishment, the more effective the threat and the sooner the demand will be met. This is about who has more power and can enforce the worst punishments. The disgusting threats on both sides gape like scissors, the conflict continues to get worse and worse.

# Level 3 - Lose-Lose case

## **Stage 7: Limited destruction**

The first stage, where one's own damage is accepted if only the other's damage is greater. Humanity is over now, all tricks are used to harm the opponent. The opponent is no longer perceived as a human being, but as a thing without feelings. Values and virtues take a back seat.

## **Stage 8: Total annihilation**

The ultimate goal is the collapse of the enemy system. The front fighters are cut off from their allies and supplies, vital functions are attacked to the point of physical-material, mental-social or spiritual destruction.

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## **Stage 9: Together into the abyss**

There is no going back, there is a total confrontation between the two parties. If you can drag your opponent into the abyss with you, then you jump. Self-destruction is accepted. Damage to the environment or to descendants no longer prevents the opponents from destroying each other.

# Model of

**de-escalation**  
The conflicts of levels 1-3 are still to be solved peacefully among each other, possibly someone intervenes mediating (e.g.: the parents ask their children to reconcile again).

**At level 4,** the affected parties need outside help to solve their conflict. Glasl envisages the following model to de-escalate the conflict:

- Stage 1-3: Self-help is still possible
- Stage 2-3: Help through friends, family or professional moderation
- Stage 3-5: Help through external professional process support
- Stage 4-6: Help through external socio-therapeutic process support
- Stage 5-7: Help through external professional mediation
- Stage 6-8: Assistance through voluntary or mandatory arbitration
- Stage 7-9: Help is only possible through a power intervention from above

Leaders in particular should be aware of the 9 stages of conflict escalation. Conflicts can thus be viewed from a neutral point of view and, if necessary, external help can be requested in good time. Also with conflicts, in which one is not involved, the value-free recognition of the conflict stages can lead to a faster solution to the conflict.

# Conflict escalation from

**Hollywood**  
The perfect, almost textbook example of how to go through all the stages is the American film "The War of the Roses" by director Danny DeVito starring Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner.

In this dramatic comedy, Barbara Rose wants to divorce her husband Oliver. An amicable settlement is strived for, but this is the first time that she encounters difficulties with the house she shares.

The conflict escalates deeper and deeper into absurd acts such as the deliberate destruction of the facility and downright mutual hatred.

At the end of the total escalation, the ex-husbands lie dying in the entrance hall after having fallen down with their chandelier after a preceding fight. The absolute lose-lose is reached.



# Summar

## Win-Win

1. Hardening Opinions collide. It is not perceived as a conflict.
2. Polarization and Debate Disagreements lead to disputes. You want to convince the other.
3. Actions instead of words Conversations stop. Compassion for the other party is lost.



## Win-Lose

4. Concern for image and coalition You are looking for comrades-in-arms. Feels legitimized to denounce the opponent.
5. Loss of face The opponent is to be destroyed in his identity. Changes. Loss of trust.
6. Strategies of threat Threats represent one's own power

## Lose-Lose

7. Limited destruction strikes The opponent, no longer experienced as a human being, wants to harm by all means.
8. Fragmentation Everything that supports the opponent is to be destroyed.
9. Together into the abyss Their own destruction is accepted in order to defeat the opponent.

# Face to Face - Preparation

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## Preparation - VET EDUCATOR

1. Read through the online all lesson Materials
2. A presentation summarizing what is in the materials will be made for the VET educator to use with notes/materials.

## Preparation - STUDENT

Watch a video or read through the materials available in Online lesson 1

# Face to Face - Presentation

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VET educator goes through the material in ONLINE Lesson 1.  
Use of available Presentation with open-ended questions.

END OF PRESENTATION includes a summary of terms

Material - Printable Summary for students

DURATION - 20 Minutes (Includes all Online lessons!)

# Face to Face - Brainstorming

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Duration - 10 minutes (25 minutes total) - Self Work/Individual work

Presentation Slide - Brainstorming

Task: How would handle?

What is the recent conflict (home or at work) which you have had?

1. Define the problem.
2. Identify which type of conflict. (Information, Values, Interest, Relationship, Structural)
3. What are your Interests? (What are my interests? What do I really care about in this conflict? What do I want? What do I need? What are my concerns, hopes, fears?)
4. What are their interests? (What are the interests of my opposition? If I were in their shoes, what would I really care about in this conflict? What do they want? What do they need? What are their concerns, hopes, fears?)
5. How would you handle the conflict now?

# Face to Face - Demonstration/Role play

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Duration: 10 minutes (35 minutes total)

Pick 2 participants and give them a scenario for the conflict role play

Situation 1

Bus driver - You are leaving a bus stop, you are behind 5 minutes with your schedule. Suddenly someone is slamming your door open and starts yelling at you.

Civilian - You are waiting for a bus. The bus arrives and closes the door before you can enter. The bus is going away. You have to catch this bus or you will miss your loved ones goodbye at the station. **YOU HAVE TO GET** on the bus. You are angry as the bus driver almost left beside you waiting for the bus for 10 minutes.

Role-play the situation and argue why you are right.

After two minutes ask participants, who were in the right, ask to explain both sides, ask how the conflict should have been handled... (A list of questions will be created to aid the educator).

# Face to Face -

## Evaluation

Evaluation will be done electronically while being in the class.

QUESTION - Should all modules have the same style or tool for gathering feedback? We should be uniform in this.

Suggestion - <https://mopinion.com/free-user-feedback-tools-digital-marketers-budget/>

Contributor  
Rebecca  
Wolff Jenette  
Nagy

# Resource Page

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## Print Resources

Altman, D. et al. (1994). Public health advocacy: Creating community change to improve health. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention.

Bisno, H. (1988). Managing Conflict. Newbury Park, MA: Sage Publications.

Evarts, W. et al. (1983). Winning through accommodation: The mediator's handbook. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Fisher, R., & Ertel, D. (1995). Getting ready to negotiate: The getting to yes workbook. New York, NY: Penguin.

Fisher, R., & William U. (1991). Getting to Yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in. New York, NY: Penguin.

Sun, T, (1988). The Art of war, trans. Thomas Cleary Boston: Shamhala (550 B.C.)

Ury, W. (1993). Getting past No: Negotiating your way from confrontation to cooperation. New York, NY: Bantam.

- Glasl's Escalation Model  
<https://www.mediate.com/glasls-nine-stage-model-of-conflict-escalation/>  
<https://www.law.uh.edu/blakely/advocacy-survey/Conflict%20Escalation%20Glasl.pdf>  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Glasls-escalation-model-and-different-forms-of-conflict-capabilities\\_fig4\\_40105224](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Glasls-escalation-model-and-different-forms-of-conflict-capabilities_fig4_40105224)

# Resource Page

