

Different Values

Purpose - to learn that conflicts are caused by different values as well as by basic needs not getting met.



1. Explain that another common cause of many conflicts has to do with values. Very often, our behavior, what we say and what we do, is influenced by our values. But what are "values?" Ask the participants to try and define what values are. Elicit that values are the ideas that we think are important, that determine what we find acceptable or not, "good" or "bad," and that influence our perceptions of morality, beauty, justice, and fair play. **Values underlie our decision-making processes and our methods of reaching our goals. How committed we are to a certain values indicates how core that value is to our personality and also how difficult it will be to resolve a conflict involving that value.**
2. Ask the participants - How do we express our values? (Preferences, opinions, beliefs, principles). What factors influence how we form our values? (culture, personal experience).
3. Refer the participants to the "value cards." Ask the participants to each pick the five cards that represent their deepest held values.
4. Ask the participants to turn to their neighbor (so that they are in pairs) and to compare and discuss the values that they chose. Ask them to explain why they chose the values that they did. If there are values that both participants chose, one of them must agree to choose another value in its place (for example, if both participants chose the value "loyalty," one of them must choose another value in its place so that only one remains with the value loyalty in their top five).
5. Ask the participants to form groups of 4 and to repeat this process. Each value may only be claimed by one participant.
6. Discussion:
 - How did you choose the values that you did?

- Was there a lot of overlap in the values that the people in your group chose?
- How did it feel to have to "give up" one or more of your most deeply held values?
- What was the process of negotiating over your values like?
- Were there certain values that clashed with each other?
- How might this surface during conflicts that we are mediating?
- Is it possible to force someone to give up their values?

Students learn that everyone has different values and not reaching them may lead to conflicts.