

Chapter 1

Conflict and Violence

Understanding Conflict and Violence

Many who live with violence day in and day out assume this it is an intrinsic part of the human condition.

But this is not so. Violence can be prevented.

~ Nelson Mandela ~

Chapter Goal(s)

- To understand and distinguish between conflict and violence
- To establish basic ground rules
- To introduce how to use Take Ten to handle conflict non-violently

Vocabulary

- **Take Ten** - Talk it out, Walk it out, Wait it out!
- **Conflict** - A disagreement between people.
- **Violence** - Anything that harms (hurts) oneself or another living being, place or thing.

Description

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first establishes the ground rules for your meetings. Before you even start working with the children on Take Ten, you **have to** establish a set of ground rules. The second part establishes the terms conflict and violence as defined by Take Ten, and the final part introduces the students to Take Ten.

Part I. Ground Rules:

This is a good time to establish what the ground rules are for group meetings. Remember that each venue may have their own set of rules, so be sure to find out what these are from the adult in charge so that you are not sending the children conflicting messages. Keep the rules basic and have the children help to develop them. If they help to design the rules themselves, they will be more likely to abide by them. Be sure to include the Take Ten ground rules on how you are going to treat each other. The basic ideas that you want to teach the children when establishing the rules are **respect for the place, self, and others**. You may do this by brainstorming with the children.

Part II. Conflict and Violence:

It is important to establish common definitions of conflict and violence as each of us may understand them differently. Definitions are influenced by the communities we belong to and what we have been exposed to. Children witness conflict and violence on the streets, in the games that they play and often in their homes, schools, and playgrounds as they attempt to develop relationships with others.

Chapter 1 - Conflict and Violence

The students need to understand that conflict is not always bad, it is how we deal with conflict that matters. For the purpose of Take Ten, conflict is defined as a disagreement between people. **Conflict is a natural part of life and it can offer an opportunity to bring about positive change to a relationship.** Take Ten defines violence as “anything that harms oneself or another living being, place or thing.” The definition acknowledges violence is not only physical, but also emotional and includes the destruction of property, and self inflicted pain.

It is important to recognize that many of the children in Take Ten may live in a completely different environment than you are used to. It is also important, however, to remind the children that regardless of what happens at home, the building in which you are meeting has been declared a *Violence Free Zone* where they are expected to practice Take Ten. Acknowledge that once they leave the building their safety is first and foremost, but if the situation is such that they are able to practice Take Ten, then that is what you expect of them. Stress that violence is not an option in a violence free zone unless used in self-defense. Even in cases of self-defense, they are still required to accept responsibility for their choice.

Be sure to start every session from now on with a reminder of what the rules are, and what you expect their behavior to be during the meeting. Always set high expectations for the students – they will rise up and meet them – and be consistent. Start and end your session the same way every time and treat every child equally if they break the rules.

Part III. Introducing Take Ten:

The third section introduces students to the concept of Take Ten, its principles, philosophy, and ground rules. **Take Ten is a skills based violence prevention program that teaches children positive non-violent alternatives for solving problems, handling conflicts, and expressing feelings.** Students are encouraged to “talk it out, walk it out, wait it out” before engaging in violent behavior of any kind. Take ten deep breaths before you say something that hurts; take ten steps back before getting involved in a fight; and take ten seconds before using something as a weapon.

Take Ten aims to reduce violence, prevent violence, and to teach children positive skills for dealing with conflict. The program encourages children to think before they act, to use the positive alternatives available to them for solving problems and expressing feelings; to take ownership of their actions; and to show other children within their school/community center how they can use Take Ten to change the culture of their building and ultimately their community. You will find a list of ideas in this chapter on how to introduce Take Ten to the students. Use your own creativity – the creativity of your students and volunteers – when planning your sessions. The magic ingredient to a successful session is lots of fun!



Why Are You Fighting, Davy?

Review Take Ten Principle #1; Tell the students that a prize will be rewarded at the end of the session for remembering it.

Teaching Tip: When you begin the first lesson it is important to make the students feel comfortable and welcome to share. Be sure to get to know names and work on getting students to share. One way of doing this is sitting amongst the children in the group.

Estimated time: 40-45 minutes

Materials:

- Puppets (Available at the Robinson Center)
- Paper and pencils

Book: *Why Are You Fighting, Davy?* By Brigitte Weninger

Davy and Eddy, two young rabbit friends decide to build a dam and a boat. They get into a fight when Eddy's dam bursts and breaks Davy's boat. After insults, ear pulling and time apart they work things out by building another boat together.

Objective:

Students will be able to define, and better understand, the concepts of conflict and violence.

Activity:

1. You may want to start your session off with an icebreaker. This is a great way of getting to know your group of students and giving them the opportunity to get to know you. Icebreakers can be located in the back of the curriculum.
2. What is conflict? Ask the students if anyone knows what the word conflict means – what do they think of when they hear the word conflict?
 - Build on the students' responses by explaining that a conflict is a disagreement between people. To disagree with someone means that you feel or think differently than the other person.

- Is conflict always bad? — No, if we deal with it properly, it is an opportunity to change a relationship for the better. For example, Bobby and Tim are playing with blocks. They both want to make towers, but Bobby is using some of the blocks that Tim wants to use. Instead, Bobby suggests that they build a giant tower together.
3. Read Why Are You Fighting, Davy?. Use the conflicts in the story to clarify what conflict is.
 5. What is violence? Ask the students if there was violence in the story?
 - How would they define violence? (Violence is not merely physical violence – it is anything that harms oneself or another living being, place, or thing – and includes emotional violence, destruction of property, graffiti, self inflicted injuries and hurting animals. This Take Ten definition includes bullying, teasing and name calling.)
 - Can you explain violence in your own words?
 - How do people show their anger without being physical?
 - Why do they think that people sometimes use violence to handle conflicts?

6. Game: Puppet Play

Organize the students into pairs and tell them they will make a puppet play about two friends who get into a fight. Each pair will need a piece of paper, folded into thirds and two puppets.

Discuss how plots have a beginning, middle and end. Ask the students to recall the story, what happened in the beginning? Prompt them to draw the beginning, middle and end of their play. Help students plan their plot by asking the following questions:

- The puppets are having fun together, what are they doing?
- The puppets are having a fight, what is it about?
- The puppets solve their problem, what do they do?

Encourage the students to act out their play with the puppets. Invite volunteers to perform their play in front of the class. Discuss how they solved their conflict. Identify different ways we can resolve conflict without violence.

Activity from: (<http://www.zaner-bloser.com/media/zb/zaner-bloser/pdf/b091e4d1f3c34a56bc5c7ecb57aa25b71.pdf>)

Wrapping It Up

When wrapping up the discussion, remind the students that conflict is not always bad, rather it is how we deal with conflict that matters and that violence is more than physical violence. Tell them that the next time you meet with them, they will be learning about Take Ten, which will teach them how to deal with conflicts so that they do not result in violence.



Principle Prize Time!

Ask the students to shut their eyes and put their heads on the table. Tell them to raise their hands on the count of three if they know **Take Ten's Principle #1**. Whoever raises their hand first with the correct answer wins!

Conclude with the Take Ten Dance!

Walk it Out! Talk it Out! Wait it Out!