



Tools to Build African Australian & CaLD Men as Leaders in the Prevention of Domestic Violence Project

RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

(65 minutes)

Participants: Mixed or single sex

Total time: 60 minutes in total

Materials:

- Large pieces of paper and felt pens.
- Paper and pens for each participant.
- A flip chart or white board

Introduce members of the group to each other and provide an overview of the workshop.

Remember it is not conflict itself that is the problem, it is the way people respond to conflict that can lead to difficulties and abuse in relationships.

Conflict is necessary for real intimacy, making good decisions and for learning and change.

- Ask participants to think about situations when communication in a relationship breaks down or when boundaries are crossed and how this can cause conflict in a relationship.
- Ask the group to share some of the common conflict issues they experience or see in the community and list them on the board/flipchart.
- Now share with them the simple conflict resolution process below. This is a model to help people to handle conflict constructively in relationships.

Conflict Resolution Exercise.

Give everyone a printed copy of the next page and go through it with them.

HANDOUT: A SIMPLE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

GROUND RULES FOR THE EXERCISE

- **Speak one at a time and do not interrupt.**
- **Listen when the other person is speaking.**
- **Speak for yourself and not the other person – we only know what we think or feel, we do not know what the other person thinks or feels.**
- **Treat each other with respect – e.g. don't call each other names, use judgemental or abusive language, or put each other down.**

a. Try to understand the problem from the other person's perspective. ASK:

- a. What is the conflict about?
- b. Who is involved?
- c. How do each of us each see the problem?
- d. How are each of us affected by the problem?

Each person should have a chance to explain their side of the story, while the other person really listens, without interruptions, so they can fully understand the other person's experience of the problem (as if they are the other person and standing in their shoes).

b. Explore the problem together. ASK:

- a. What do each of us think caused the problem?
- b. When did it start?
- c. How did the problem get worse?
- d. What have we tried to do to solve the problem?
- e. Do we really want to find a solution?
- f. Can we talk about it openly with each other?

c. Set goals. ASK:

- a. What do each of us want or need?
- b. What do we have in common?
- c. What do we need to do to meet our mutual interests and needs?
- d. What is our end goal?
- e. Are we prepared to discuss this and try to find a range of options so we can find a win-win solution or a compromise so that we can get to our end goal?

d. List possible solutions or options. ASK:

- a. What am I prepared to do differently to help the other person to agree to what I want?
- b. What would I like the other person to do differently in order for me to agree to what they want?

- c. Ask the observer to write down as many options as you can think of, without discussion. It's important to have as many options as possible before making a decision.
- d. Are we prepared to ask others, such as the observer, to help us find solutions?
- e. **Choose a solution.** Together choose some options or one solution that each person is prepared to try out.

Step 4. Ask the participants to work in small group of three (one to be an observer) to role-play one of the conflict situations previously discussed with two people taking opposing views or positions in the conflict. The role-plays should go beyond the conflict and suggest way to overcome and resolve it.

After the role-plays have finished, ask the small groups to share their learning with the larger group:

- Was the conflict resolved? If so, how?
- What else can you do to resolve the conflict in a respectful way?
- Could YOU use the steps to try to resolve conflicts in your relationship, home and community?