

CRESST New

Autumn 2007

For Heads,
teachers and
support staff

For everyone
interested in
social
transformation

Conflict Resolution Education in Sheffield Schools Training

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Who is the best person to sort out an argument between children? Very likely another child, writes Cheryl Smart, Project Coordinator for CRESST

Imagine the scene: you are on playground duty and over by the fence two children are squaring up for a fight. Voices are raised and someone starts a bit of pushing but before you get a chance to intervene two other children move in.

"We can see you are both angry about something. Can we help?" they ask.

A few more quiet words are exchanged and the four move towards the school to find a quiet place to talk and sort out the problem.

This isn't fantasy! You can expect this sort of thing to happen when your school has a successful Peer Mediation Service backed by a whole school approach to conflict resolution. Securing the support of adults in the school is fundamental to success and it's a fact that staff in schools with successful Peer Mediation Schemes do report a decrease in time spent sorting out lunchtime problems.

A whole school approach to conflict resolution may even result in fewer arguments although this isn't the real issue: wherever people interact there will be disagreement and conflict and we want interaction on the playground! The real issue is can these fallouts be sorted out so that they don't escalate? And better still, can they be sorted out by the children themselves?

If adults are always stepping in and telling children what needs to be done how will young people ever learn how to resolve conflict for themselves?

Non-violent conflict resolution requires skills that have to be learned and practised. Mediators do not take sides or tell people what to do: they learn to deliver a simple process which allows the people in conflict to be heard and then come up with their own solutions.

Children and young people can turn out to be better mediators than adults, who often tend to move away from the process and use their position of power to get the solutions they want. Mediators can be drawn from across the school and not just confined to the more confident, able and responsible. Children with learning difficulties can often make excellent mediators, as can pupils more commonly associated with challenging behaviour.



Mediators from Hatfield Primary School
ready for duty

Peer mediation not only makes for safer schools by offering a different or additional form of support to students in need, it can also allow perhaps unexpected pupils to shine and make a very positive contribution.

**East Hill Secondary School have trained
peer mediators to start this Autumn.
Good Luck everyone!**

Another successful Peer Mediators' Conference!

Ten Sheffield primary schools sent representatives to this year's conference held at the Quaker Meeting House on 13th July. The lucky Y5/6 mediators and supportive staff were well entertained by poet, David Harmer, who helped them compose group performance poems in a follow up workshop session (see below). Two further workshops were offered and everyone got the opportunity to meet other peer mediators and their supportive staff from across the city.

*What you gonna do?
What you gonna do?
What you gonna do?
When it's down to you
Kids all laugh
Kids all scoff
What you gonna do
When it all kicks off?
Mediate mediate
Get this straight
Mediate!
Mediate mediate
It feels great
Mediate!*

"The poet was very funny" Mrs Suckley from Hatfield Primary

I have learned that I am not alone in being a mediator"

Helena from Dobcroft Junior

"I have realised what a great effect mediation has and how my school is a better place for it"

Michael from Lound Junior

"Being a peer mediator is fun"

Anthony from Hinde House

"It could not have been better. Thank you. We shall certainly attend again"

Lorna Culloden Ecclesall Junior



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress with young mediators from Wharncliffe Side and Greengate Lane.

A big thank you to all who supported CRESST's DVD Launch at the Showroom Cinema this May. The DVD has four chapters:

- What is conflict?
- Conflict Resolution Education
- Peer Mediation
- What CRESST offers.

Contact the CRESST office for a copy, to arrange a consultation or for information about training.

CRESST at Scotia Works, Leadmill Road, Sheffield S1 4SE

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Have you heard about Restorative Justice ?

A system of justice that helps people learn how to make amends for mistakes they have made and the grief that their actions may have given to others.

Unlike the “no blame” approach, Restorative Justice (RJ) means that the wrongdoers take responsibility for their actions and are given the opportunity to make amends. RJ can challenge more traditional retributive forms of discipline where the aim is to blame, shame and punish the wrongdoer so they won't commit the same crime again and where the punishment acts as a deterrent to others. The weaknesses of this approach is both sides end up hurt, the victims do not get compensated and the perpetrators do not make amends or deal with the underlying reasons for their behaviour.

Quite simply the old systems don't appear to be working! Isn't it time we tried something different?

Of course many conflicts are not clear cut with an easily defined perpetrator and victim. Schools and youth organisations often have to act as detective, judge and jury. Staff using mediation techniques may initially adopt a “no blame strategy” to enable both parties to explore all the issues until it is possible for any wrongdoers to take responsibility for their actions and a decision made on a way forward. Schools that are trying the RJ approach say this isn't an easy option: it takes longer than dishing out a suspension or exclusion but it is effective in getting people to change their behaviour and become better young citizens.

Calling all secondary schools and youth clubs!!

Are you interested in

- educating young people in active citizenship and building self esteem
 - helping teenagers choose non-violent solutions to their problems
 - helping them say no to bullying and fighting
 - giving them alternative role-models

????

If so you might be interested in PeaceJam

PeaceJam is an international organisation that aims to inspire a new generation of peacemakers

What does PeaceJam offer?

- A free full programme of activities
- A free PeaceJam DVD which explains exactly what it's all about
- A PeaceJam Youth weekend attended by a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

PeaceJam is an independent peace education programme and does not have any political or religious affiliation.

Check it out at <http://www.peacejam.org> and/or

Contact the CRESST office ...we can offer information and support

Dates for your diary

21st September is International Day of Peace

2nd October is International day of Non-violence

Introduce your young people to some Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, such as the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Betty Williams, Adolfo Perez Esquivel.

Or better still – get them to do some research.

Tell them about Gandhi and Martin Luther King and give your own “prize for peace” for the best peacemaker in the school/community.

Training Days for the year ahead

"An introduction to Conflict Resolution"

For Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools, Learning Mentors, PSHE/Citizenship co-ordinators, Behaviour Support staff, **all adults that work with children and young people**

This one day course explores the nature of conflict, the key skills of self expression, empathy, cooperation, problem solving and mediation (including peer mediation).

The day will address conflict resolution awareness, develop the skills needed to successfully manage your own conflict and also provide ideas and activities to educate and support young people.

Dates: 15th October 2007, 4th March 12th June 2008

Venue: Scotia Works, Leadmill Road (near the station)

Cost: £50

To book a place contact the CRESST office

**Conflict
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Sheffield
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Training**

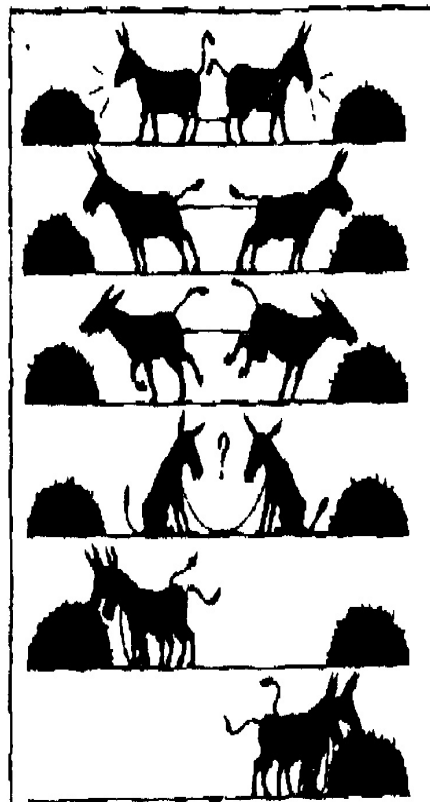
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Would you like your school to receive a full sized Two Mules poster?

We are launching our new website to coincide with Anti-bullying week (19th to 23rd November) and are giving away these posters to schools that send us interesting comments, photos, children's pictures etc about Conflict Resolution or Peer Mediation that can be included.

Want to know more?
Want your work picking up from school?
Give us a ring!

Would you like to support work which helps children and young people deal with conflict in their lives?

We are looking for new trustees with experience of conflict resolution, education, youth work, fundraising, publicity and networking, charity administration or finance.

CRESST is also looking to increase its use of volunteers and free-lance trainers

INTERESTED?

For more information contact the CRESST office.

We welcome responses and contributions to this newsletter.