

CRESST News

For Heads,
teachers and
support staff

**Conflict
Resolution
Education**
in
**Sheffield
Schools
Training**

Peer Mediators' Conference

Peer mediators from 11 Sheffield primary schools got together in June to share skills and experiences, and to encourage each other in the important work they do helping fellow pupils resolve their conflicts non-violently.

The atmosphere throughout the day was wonderful. It was the first day of the World Cup and a beautifully hot summer's day. The children quickly got to work getting to know each other and throwing themselves into the art, drama and singing workshops.

Michelle Rowen, a Teaching Assistant from Dobcroft Junior School said:

"The entire day was excellent. The children did a lot of role plays which taught them about good communication and reminded them that they are all doing a fantastic job which is appreciated and valued by all+.

Cheryl Smart, CRESST's Project Co-ordinator said: *"It was so exciting to have 57 of our mediators all together. Schools use their mediators differently, in ways that fit in with each particular school's set-up. We intended the conference to be a chance to learn from each others' experiences. We also wanted the opportunity to give these young volunteers a good time as a thank you for all their hard work."*

CRESST will be organising a similar conference next year and also hopes to hold a conference for secondary school peer mediators in the future.

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admin@cresst.org.uk**



**Does your
school
already have
a peer
mediation
service?**



**Pick up the phone and
let us know!
We can offer help,
advice and networking
opportunities.**

Conflict isn't just an issue for pupils with challenging behaviour . we can all learn new ways of managing conflict and communicating better.

Making Groupwork Work

New research by educationalists at Cambridge, London and Brighton Universities shows that groupwork can boost children's learning power. It encourages more active engagement with learning, enables deeper conceptual understanding and can be shown to improve classroom behaviour.

This isn't the experience of many classroom teachers. Many find that groupwork leads to squabbling students, increased noise-levels and work of poor quality. Some pupils see it as a free ride, allowing others to do their work for them without putting in any effort. Quiet pupils can easily remain silent and not contribute.

For groups to work properly, the research suggests, pupils need help to communicate effectively and teachers need to plan well. It points to the importance of appropriate grouping, consistent support and enough preparation time to get groups to function properly. The report acknowledges that conflicts arise in the course of this style of learning, but welcomes it as an opportunity for pupils to develop the skills to handle disagreements. Pupils need to learn and practise good listening, negotiation and problem solving skills. When this is explicitly addressed before setting up the groupwork task, learning is much more effective.

More information about this research can be found at www.spring-project.org.uk

CRESST can support your groupwork practice by teaching pupils listening and negotiation skills, giving them the tools to handle conflict constructively and learn effectively. We can also support teachers in developing their own conflict resolution, groupwork and circle time skills.

CRESST can offer:

- a comprehensive ten-hour Conflict Resolution Education course for whole classes . adapted to make it appropriate for all age-groups
- circle-time support
- staff training
- support for a whole-school approach . including training of lunch-time supervisors, governors, parents and learning mentors
- specially adapted training to suit the different needs of each school
- peer mediation and playground friends training

CRESST's work promotes the key life skills of communication, co-operation, affirmation, problem solving and critical thinking. It develops the understanding of how conflict, if handled properly, can be a positive force for change.

£Excellent training . reinforces how much we need these skills in all aspects of the school (Advisory teacher, behaviour and inclusion)

Good luck and best wishes to peer mediators at Abbeydale Grange, Ballifield, Anns Grove and Wisewood Primary who all launch their services in September.



Filming Fun

A fine time was had at Greengate Lane Primary School towards the end of last term, playing games and role-playing mediations to be featured in CRESST's new DVD. So we need to say a big

Thank you!

to the peer mediators from Arbourthorne, Firs Hill, Greengate Lane and Lound schools for their enthusiasm and acting skills. Also to staff for their essential support.

The DVD, due to be launched in the Autumn term, will be an excellent resource for schools wanting to investigate how Conflict Resolution Education and Peer Mediation can help pupils. Email us for more info.

Essential Social Skills

“Social skills are just as important as academic skills” says new research.

The National Child Development Study carried out by researchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies concludes that interpersonal skills are just as important as cognitive skills for success in school exams, avoiding teenage parenthood, staying away from crime and finding work.

The report goes on to say that social skills are particularly malleable between the ages of seven and eleven. New behaviour patterns and skills can be more easily learnt.

This is vital information for primary schools considering whether or not to take on the SEAL initiative (Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning). Cheryl Smart, a teacher of over 30 years experience with a specialism in PSHE recommends the initiative: “The materials are very good, but as with everything else it’s the quality of the teaching that will make a real difference in a child’s life.”

CRESST can offer staff training and support with the SEAL project and help to improve Circle Time Delivery throughout the school. The Headteacher at Wharnccliffe Side Primary School said: “The CRESST programme of Conflict Resolution Education and Peer Mediation enhances and complements the work done in SEAL. I’m glad we did the CRESST programme before taking on SEAL.”

Parent workshops from CRESST . call us for more info.....

“I learnt so much more than I expected. And it was good fun. I would really recommend this course to anyone” (parent from Montenev Primary School)

The ability to resolve conflict peacefully is fundamental to survival as never before ... it is difficult to argue that there are more important things that children need to learn+. Cremin, 2002

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Peer Support-essential for troubled teenagers

10 . 20 % of pupils between the ages of four and sixteen will experience emotional / behavioural difficulties that cause a significant impairment to their social and educational development. In school this might easily be seen in rule infringement, hostility towards others, defiance of authority and aggression. Withdrawal, lack of concentration and low level learning are some of the unseen consequences of poor emotional /mental health or lack of conflict resolution skills. Either way, these young people need help before leaving, or being excluded, from school.

Peer support is essential for teenagers. At this time in their lives young people become critical and argumentative with adults in their quest for independence and look for emotional fulfilment and social reinforcement from their peers.

Young people who access **peer mediation**

- generate their own solutions to problems
- explore options and realise their own potential for creative thinking
- practise basic skills to resolve damaging conflicts in their lives
- achieve significant self-awareness and empathy for others
- increase their self-esteem
- gain control over their lives.

Preventing & Managing Disruptive Behaviour

**A one-day training programme
for Secondary School staff.**

Wednesday, 27th September, 9.15 . 3.30

at Scotia Works, Leadmill Road

Cost: £30

- Learn and practise conflict resolution techniques
- Pass on key communication and problem solving skills to your pupils
- Learn how pupils can be trained as Peer Mediators

To book: call 0114 241 2745 or email admin@cresst.org.uk

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