

# CRESST News

For Heads,  
teachers and  
support staff

For everyone  
interested in  
social  
transformation

Summer 2008

## Conflict Resolution Education in Sheffield Schools Training

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## Conflict and bullying can ruin young lives.

Do young people care enough about others to help?  
Can they learn skills that would make their help more valuable?



Young people at the  
Peer Mediation Conference,  
Sheffield March 2008.

To find out more about Peer  
Mediation visit the CRESST  
website. [www.cresst.org.uk](http://www.cresst.org.uk)

Whether it's a problem with schoolwork, broken relationships or a case of bullying, young people quite naturally turn to their peers for support and advice. Most young people care deeply about the well being of others and willingly offer help to their friends and fellow students. 63% of young people said in a recent survey by the Good Childhood Inquiry ([www.goodchildhood.org.uk](http://www.goodchildhood.org.uk)) that it was their friends who made them happy at school. Friendships, the report goes on to say, are not credited with the significance that they hold for emotional development and well being. In particular friendship has an important role in developing a sense of identity and social belonging and is vital in developing an "everyday morality" in the way others are treated.

Worryingly this same report quoted a study, which states that over the last 20 years the number of teenagers that reported they had no friends has increased and there has been a 50% increase in the number of 16 year olds who say they have been assaulted by a peer. Conflict escalation is often the result of gossip and goading by so called "friends". Bullying, cliques and peer exclusion can lead to poor attainment, non-attendance or worse.. Peer pressure can work both ways. All parents know that a good friend is worth his/her weight in gold.

Schools play an important part in developing the quality of friendship. PSHE, Circle Time, SEAL, Philosophy for Children and Conflict Resolution Education help to develop the qualities we value in good friends. **Peer mediators** learn how to listen and hold back from making damaging judgements. They don't take sides or tell people what to do and they definitely don't gossip. They are trained to help others problem solve and find solutions that respect everyone's needs. They can make excellent friends, they care enough to volunteer to use their skills to help others. and certainly enhance the ethos of care within a school.

## Peer Mediators at Shirecliffe Junior.

CRESST is dedicated to helping children and young people learn conflict resolution skills that can be used in their schools and communities. We work in partnership with schools, tailoring our support to meet their needs but on the understanding that a whole school approach is the most effective.



*Headteacher, Linda Kingdon, with some of her newly trained Peer Mediators.*

Shirecliffe Junior is preparing to amalgamate and will help to form the new Watercliffe Meadow. Linda and her team are hard at work developing the culture of the school community: encouraging pupils to be caring, tolerant and understanding of others and developing a sense of responsibility. This will be supported through a peer mediation scheme.

With the support of learning mentor, Kath Brailsford, and other key staff, the peer mediators at Shirecliffe are already helping fellow pupils sort out problems on the yard during playtimes. "The training has increased levels of confidence. They have successfully resolved many fall outs which might otherwise have developed into a more major incident. I'm very proud of our team," says Kath.

## A secondary school success

Dinnington Comprehensive embraces Peer Mediation

Dinnington Comprehensive School has a well established Peer Mentoring Scheme which over time has proved very valuable to individual students especially at transition. **Mediation**, however, is very solution focussed and aimed at conflict resolution and stopping disagreements and arguments developing into serious fallouts. Falling out with friends or fellow pupils can lead to serious upset effecting attainment and achievement. Fifteen Y10 students volunteered to be trained as peer mediators at Dinnington. This team and dedicated support staff are now working out how best to establish the service within the school and offer a more comprehensive **Peer Support Service**.

*The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund supported this training programme hoping to see some long term benefits for the local community.*



*Assistant headteacher, Chris Eccles and CRESST coordinator Cheryl Smart with some of the student mediators.*

"I really enjoyed the training sessions and would love to do more of them."

"I learnt some great skills I can use through out my life."

"I found the training very good, thanks. A fantastic opportunity."

# Dates for your Diary

## An Introduction to Conflict Resolution

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

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:** 12<sup>th</sup> June or 1st Oct 2008

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

**Cost:** £50

Contact the CRESST office telephone 0114 2412745 or email [admin@cresst.org.uk](mailto:admin@cresst.org.uk)

### Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June - 12:30 to 4:00pm

Training and Networking Afternoon Session for Peer Mediation Mentors and Staff Coordinators at Scotia Works. Lunch provided.

Come and share your experiences and concerns and catch up on the latest best practice guidelines. Contact the CRESST office to secure your place 0114 241 2745 email [admin@cresst.org.uk](mailto:admin@cresst.org.uk)

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008

The United Nations General Assembly decided that, beginning in 2002, the International Day of Peace should be observed on 21 September each year. The Assembly declared that the Day be observed as a day of non-violence. It invited all Member States, regional and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate the Day in an appropriate manner, including through education and public awareness.

### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Junior Peer Mediation conference will be held at the Quaker Meeting House, 10 St James Street Sheffield.

Note the date in your school diary

Further details will be sent out in July and September.

See our website for last years conference activities <http://www.cresst.org.uk/previous-events/>

### Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008

National Training and Networking Day in London at Friends House Euston Road  
Co-ordinated by The Peer Mediation Network

Contact CRESST office for more details 0114 241 2745 email [admin@cresst.org.uk](mailto:admin@cresst.org.uk)

**CRESST** is dedicated to helping children and young people learn conflict resolution skills that can be used in their schools and communities. Please get in touch if you would like your school or youth organisation to know more about conflict resolution.

0114 2412745 [admin@cresst.org.uk](mailto:admin@cresst.org.uk)

# Youth Organisations

Government is now aware of the need to establish more opportunities for our youth to engage in positive activities.

In addition under Article 12.1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991 young people should be enabled to express their views freely in all matters that affect them.

If young people are to effectively engage in management, evaluation and delivery of youth services and activities they will need the skills to respond positively to the inevitable conflict. As a first step CRESST is pleased to be training Youth Workers from across the city in Conflict Resolution Education.

*"Many thanks for the training session that you delivered for our team on Monday. You pitched it just right and were very good at engaging the workers and bringing out their own experiences to learn from. Workers were very appreciative of this training opportunity"* Kath Wilson January 2008

## DEMOCRACY & CONFLICT

### – A Personal View – by David Seddon

One of the starting points for any discussion about democracy is to recognise that conflict is inevitable, right and proper. Conflict is not the same thing as violence which is a means by which some people attempt to resolve conflict in their favour. It is by holding conflicting views that we initiate change: if we all agreed with each other nothing different would ever come about.

For example, I try to live as a socialist, republican and humanist and I have conservatives, monarchists and believers as close friends. I am not evangelical; I do not feel it my duty to convert people to my views but it is my right to state those views and to argue and discuss with those with whom, I am in conflict. I believe it is my duty to state my case so that I might persuade others to share my views and to listen respectfully whilst others give their opinions. I do not think we should resolve our conflicts by violent means or violent threats, since this does not change opinions and probably tends to entrench them.

This all sounds very well, but it is difficult to practise. It requires mental discipline to think that people whose views are different from yours are not wrong and must be made to change their minds. And how can people with conflicting views live peacefully together and thrive? How can decisions be made and people governed?

There are some much-cherished specialised methods for resolving conflict. They range for instance from Quakers and their seeking the "sense of the Meeting", through Cardinals choosing a Pope "in Conclave", to Blackballing for golf club membership. All these solutions thrive in closed groups with clear shared value systems and traditions, and hence their success. For the rest of us in our diverse society the imperfect systems of democracy have to be good enough. Our challenge is to listen to the needs of the significant minorities whilst respecting majority opinion, being creative and wise when resolving conflict and protecting our state from corruption and crime.

In order to refine our democracy and make it as good as it can be, we need to try to create an educated electorate, skilled in conflict resolution techniques. And so we need CRESST and need to use it (and its colleague organisations across the country) to work through schools, youth groups and colleges to evolve an emotionally literate society that can resolve its differences rationally, emotionally and peacefully.

This newsletter was edited by Cheryl Smart (CRESST Coordinator). If you would like to make any comments or wish to contribute to the next newsletter please get in touch.