



# ANTI SOCIAL MEDIA



## BANTERROYALE

A story of everyday online  
conflict between friends

# Antisocial media

A story of everyday online conflict between friends

Banter Royale Group Chat  
Online

Our story is about conflict between two friends, created when 'banter' is misunderstood and leads to offence. We've also included the solution to de-escalate the situation.

All the way through this story are little snippets of information from the group explaining what happens when you are in conflict, how it affects you and some strategies and solutions to handle conflict well.

## Mr Moran says...

Tim, Simon, Sian and Rachel often game online together, our story starts with Simon and Tim making arrangements for that evening...



## Tim's banter gets out of hand and the disagreement begins

and the tension rises because Simon can't tell Tim is joking because he can't see Tim's wink...

Tim likes a bit of banter but Simon is his best friend so he's only playing

Simon has been having a tough time recently so is feeling pretty sensitive. He doesn't realise that Tim is joking and gets angry and upset...

Yo Simon, you joining us online later for the tournament? We're going **full send** tonight so make sure you don't get **Harry Pottered**! We want to win!

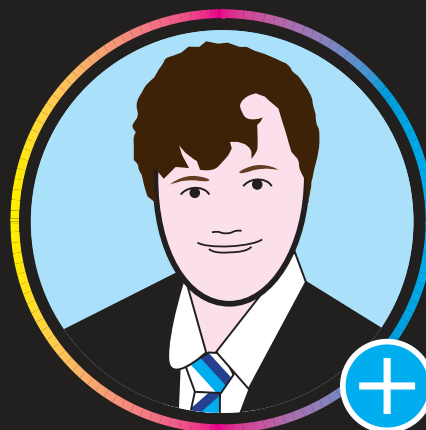
09:34

Why's he even being like this? I don't get why he's being rude to me, I thought he was my mate...

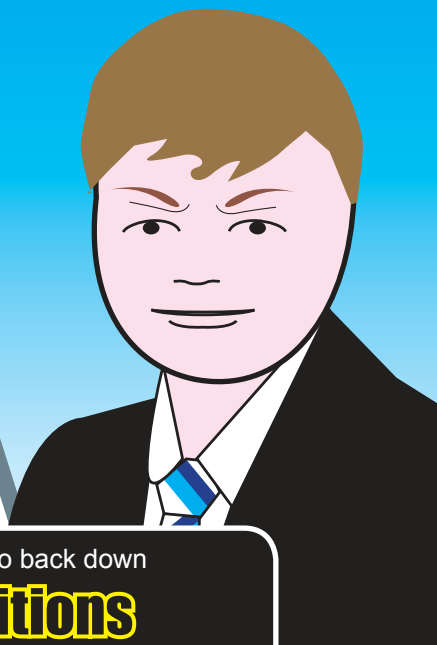
## Dave says...

'Conflict is a disagreement where there's tension'. Disagreements happen all the time, but don't lead to conflict, e.g. over taste in music, food or clothes. It becomes a conflict when the two people take positions: i.e. start to argue over who is right and who is wrong, then tension arises.

Conflict Signal Strength



Simon is angry now so he throws some abuse back at Tim...

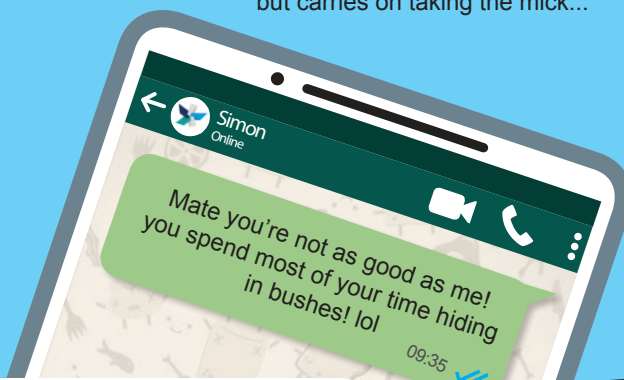


Neither of them is prepared to back down

**they take positions**

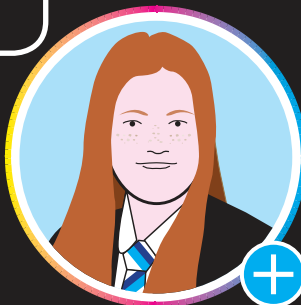
and the tension rises...

Tim is a bit surprised by Simon's reply but carries on taking the mick...



**Liz says...**

**Positions** are what causes tension to rise. When people start saying 'I want, you can't' or 'I'm right, you're wrong' and they hold on tighter and tighter to that view. This is called taking a position.



Simon is so upset with Tim who he thought was his best friend he starts thinking about leaving the group...



Neither of them is prepared to back down

**the problem expands**

and the tension rises...



# Conflict Escalator

## 7. Breakdown (Fall out)

"We are NOT mates!"

## 6. Extends to others

(Others get involved)

"She is saying this and that, you're on my side"

## 5. De-humanise (See them as non-human)

"She is a...(name/insult)"

## 4. Personal Attacks (Hurtful insults)

"You're horrible!"

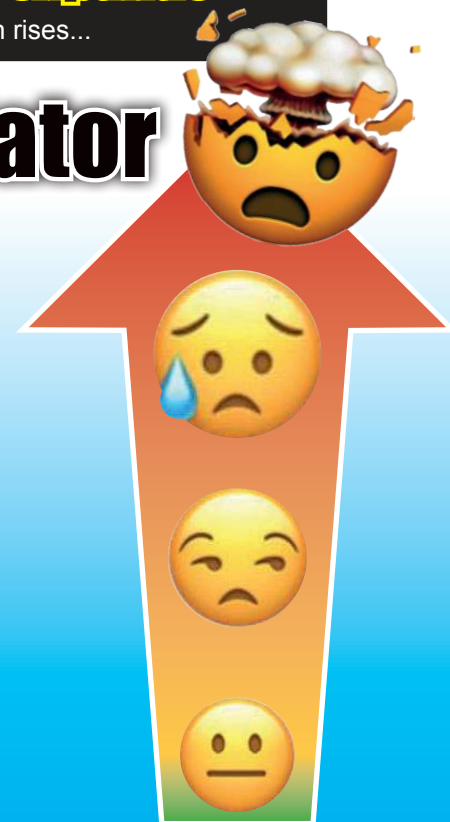
## 3. Problem Expands (Brings other things in)

"This isn't the first time"

## 2. Positions ("I'm right you're wrong!")

## 1. Disagreement (Different values or likes)

"I want this, you want that!"





# It's about to kick off...!!

## Personal attacks

(Hurtful insults)  
"You're horrible!"

## De-humanise

(See them as non-human)  
"He is a...(name/insult)"



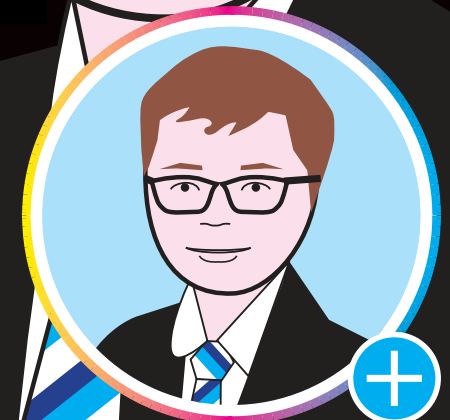
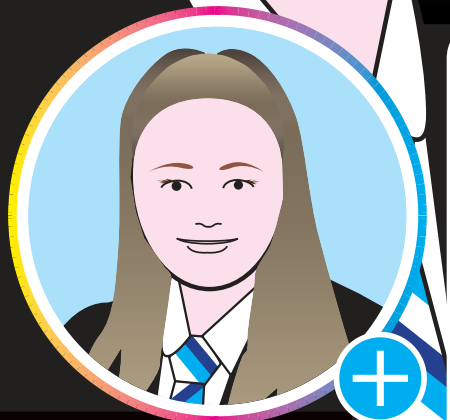
## Extends to others

(Others get involved)  
"He is saying this and that, you're on my side"

**we have reached a critical point...**

Tim and Simon are very close to the point where their friendship is going to break down. The situation is being made worse by friends getting involved. The conflict has moved on from the original disagreement to both parties making personal attacks on each other. This makes it harder to resolve the original problem because it's now lost under layers of other disagreements and emotions.

So, Tim and Simon have some choices to make. They're both beginning to have really strong feelings, including anger. They each have friends backing them up. If they carry on up the escalator, they'll soon be saying 'I'm not your friend any more' or 'I don't ever want to go to game with you again'. But, can Tim find a way to let Simon know he was only joking? Can Simon think straight enough to make good decisions rather than ending the friendship?



## Maya says...

In response to conflict, the brain floods the body with a sudden release of hormones, which include adrenaline. This results in an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate.

ADRENALINE



Image by Elisa Riva from Pixabay

The body increases heartbeat and respiration rate in order to provide the energy and oxygen to the body that will be needed to fuel a rapid response to the danger.

This rapid response is called the **Fight, Flight and Freeze**

**FIGHT**

to protect yourself



Fight, flight and freeze response is the body's response to danger

**FLIGHT**

to run away



LEADS TO THIS

### Fight, flight and freeze response

Google

About 2,350,000,000 results (0.61 seconds)

The hormones released produce the fear or anger needed to keep animals (you) safe when they're under threat. These are only temporary feelings. They are part of our brains 'hard-wiring' for survival that have been part of creatures' brains for tens of thousands of years.

What makes humans different from animals is that we have a part of our brain that regulates our initial emotional responses. This can be trained to calm us down, when we get wound up, if there is no immediate threat. Humans can control their responses if they choose to. We can just PAUSE for a few seconds to allow the 'rush' to subside and enable us to think straight again.

**FREEZE**

hide from danger



## Tim is upset by how the situation has developed...

What's actually happening here? Simon is my best mate, I was only joking originally, I can't believe it's got to this!

What could I have done to prevent this from happening?

All I had to do was put a smiley face or wink after my first message and maybe he would have realised I was joking!!



## Cordy says...

Just taking 'time-out' and leaving the person you are in conflict with for a short period allows the levels of adrenaline flowing around your body to subside. Put your phone down or leave the game for a bit and once the adrenaline has subsided you are able to think clearly and will be less likely to be fixed in your position.

There are more strategies on the next page

## Next day at school...

Hey mate, I'm really sorry about yesterday. I honestly didn't mean to upset you I was just playing about. I realised later that it could have been taken the wrong way

No worries, I read your messages again later and realised you were probably messing about. I've had stuff going on recently and maybe I was a bit over sensitive

Friends?

Friends!

## FRIENDS AGAIN!!

When Tim thought about the falling out he realised that his message might not have been read as a joke. By simply adding a winking emoticon or smiley face this might not have happened. Simon realised because of the way he was feeling he misinterpreted what his friend meant.

When communicating online it can be very easy to be misunderstood. Take time to write your message clearly, try to make sure it can't be misunderstood. If you're feeling tired or grumpy it might be best to read and write texts when you feel in a better mood. And if it's something really important it might be best to wait until you can speak face-to-face.

This booklet contains principles, techniques and strategies from our Curious about conflict PSHE lessons

The series of six lessons introduces students to the essential skills and valuable understanding needed to effectively de-escalate and resolve conflicts. The concepts, attributes and skills addressed by the lessons are relevant to many aspects of the PSHE curriculum, and can be returned to throughout KS3 and KS4 when teaching about health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world.

These are skills and concepts that are returned to at several points in a spiral PSHE curriculum, allowing teachers to build on the input delivered in the sessions.

## THANK YOU

This booklet has been co-written and designed by students from Shirebrook Academy and the charity CRESST.

## MR D. SAYS...

## DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

here's some simple techniques you could try at home or at school.



### Sleep on it!

When you feel hurt or angry about an email or post, it's best not to respond right away.

You may want to write a response immediately, to get it off your chest, but don't hit send! Sleep on it and then reread and rewrite your response the next day.



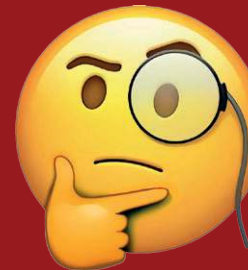
### Read the post again later

Sometimes, your first reaction to a post is a lot about how you're feeling at the time. Reading it later, and sometimes a few times, can help you see it differently.

### Clarify what was meant

We all misinterpret what we hear and read, particularly when we feel hurt or upset.

It's a good idea to check out that you understood them correctly. For example, you could ask, "When you said...did you mean...?" or, "what did you mean by...?" Often, what we think someone said is not even close to what they meant to say.



### Use emoticons to express your tone

In online communication, facial expressions, tone of voice and body language are replaced by emoticons, for example, smiles, winks, and laughter. It helps to use emoticons to convey your tone. Additionally, if you like the person, tell them! Having a conflict or misunderstanding doesn't mean you don't like the person any more.



## WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU USED?

If you can develop some of your own techniques to help calm you down, this will help you build resilience to life's challenges as you get older.

# A STORY OF ONLINE CONFLICT

and how it can be resolved...

Conflict is an inevitable part of life, both in our face-to-face and our online interactions. CRESST does not aim to reduce conflict, but instead acknowledges that it is a natural and frequent part of daily life.

If conflict is managed well, you can reduce the hurt and harm it causes, and the learning can lead to deeper understanding, greater tolerance and more creative outcomes.

This booklet has been co-produced with members of the school to help give you quick and simple information on how conflict starts, the stages it goes through and some simple de-escalation strategies you could use if you find yourself in a situation which you feel is heading towards conflict.

**MR D.**

CRESST Programme Manager

I am really pleased that Shirebrook Academy is participating in this project. Education is all about empowerment.

We want our young people to be empowered to make their own decisions, to choose their own direction in life, to grow into active citizens who can make a positive contribution to their local community.

To be able to do this successfully they need to understand themselves and how to work well with others and what to do when things go wrong. Conflict cannot be avoided but by learning to manage situations and avoid escalating the problem young people can learn to work cooperatively and resolve tensions, making everyone's life more pleasant and productive.

**MR GOTTINGHAM**

Principal

empowering achievement  
**SHIREBROOK  
ACADEMY**  
striving for excellence



Foundation  
Derbyshire



Produced by  
[www.cresst.org.uk](http://www.cresst.org.uk)

Conflict resolution **for** young people **by** young people