



# BEING A HUMAN ... that's enough

## Module 3 CONFLICTS IN OUR LIVES

The Workbook for The Programme Participants

This document was made within the project “Establishment of Social Work at Schools and the Introduction of Personal and Social Education Programmes to Schools”.  
Realization of the project is possible thanks to the financial support from the European Social Fund through Operational Programme Effective Public Administration.  
For the information about the OP EVS visit <http://www.reformuj.sk/>.



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This project is realized by the civic association PERSONA. The partner of the project is The Slovak Chamber of Social Workers and Social Work Assistants.



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***“If there is no solution to the problem,  
then don’t waste time worrying about it.  
If there is a solution to the problem,  
then don’t waste time worrying about it.”***

Dalai Lama



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## MODULE 3 CONFLICTS IN OUR LIVES

Conflicts are a natural part of everyone's life. It is good to learn how to live with them in order to be able to use their positive side and to achieve new consistency in the relationships and also in own personal development.

This workbook will help us to acquire the positive attitude towards conflict solving and to practise some effective techniques of the problem solving and deciding. You can also find here the training of communication skills needed for the problem solving – assertive communication, negotiation skills, rewording.

So let us start the path of the constructive conflict management together.



**TASK 3.1: Sources of Conflicts**

Your task is to identify the sources of the conflicts of the following situations. Think over these individual conflict situations according to the knowledge of the theoretical part of the lesson and identify what are the sources of the written conflicts, in your opinion. Is it a conflict of relations, interests, information, value, or structural conflict?

Conflict Situations	Source of the Conflict
1. There are some things on the desk. For one it's an absolute mess, for another it is normal for work. What is so strange on the fact that someone has put things all over the desk?	
2. One of the classmates still uses vulgar words in the conversation. This is annoying to another classmate and so she tells him to speak decently, not as a "pig".	
3. Two girlfriends sit side by side at school. One girl tells the same story all the day every time some mate stands near her. This crawls on the other girl's nerves, because she has heard it at least 5 times.	
4. Two mates sit together at school. One classmate is bored during the class and so he distracts and wants to talk to the other mate. However, the second one is interested in the learning and doesn't want to talk to him.	
5. Two friends are going out together. But they cannot agree where they are going. The first wants to go to the cinema and the second wants to play tennis.	
6. One of the classmates don't want to go out because he wants to learn for the test. The others tease him and call him a swot.	
7. The daughter was arguing with her mother for housework. The mother says that the daughter should do the housework without repentance because she is a girl. But the daughter is sure that this work should be divided between her and the brother.	
8. The teacher got very flurry because of the behaviour of some students. As a result, he gave the students a hard test that only a few of them could write well.	



### **TASK 3.2: Associations**

When you say e.g. word love, many of us think of associations as a couple, a pleasure, a heart, bliss, joy, tenderness and so on.

Now, try to write what come to your mind when someone says the word “conflict”.

Do not think too much about it, write everything, what you think about.

Try to write at least 25 words:

When you are ready, please, evaluate this task according to the instructions in Annex no. 1, that you find at the end of this workbook.





### TASK 3.3: Preferred Style of Conflict Solving

In the next task work out “The Questionnaire About the Preferred Style of Conflict Solving”. This questionnaire works with the theory, that if there are two sides – A and B, in the conflict, so on the basis of the presence and degree of satisfaction of participants interests, we can divide the behaviour in the conflict into the 5 basic styles:

**TURTLE** – avoiding style (avoiding the conflict solving) – *loss for A, loss for B*

**SHARK** – competing style (success of one side) – *win for A, loss for B*

**TEDDY-BEAR** – accommodating style (adaptation to the other side) – *loss for A, win for B*

**FOX** – compromising style (compromise) – *A and B both share equally profits and losses*

**OWL** – collaborating style (consensus) – *win for A, win for B*

No one from these style is suitable for all types of the conflict situations, and therefore you need to consider which behaviour style is better for each situation.

### The Questionnaire About the Preferred Style of Conflict Solving

#### Instructions:

*Imagine the situation when your interests are different from your partner. How do you use to respond to this situation?*

There are some pairs of statements below the text. They describe some possible responds to the situation. Circle in each pair the letter A or B, depending on which statement is more characteristic for your behaviour. Sometimes you don't find in option A nor B the behaviour that is typical for you. Then choose the answer that you like more.

1.	A. It sometimes happen that I let it to the others to take the responsibility for the conflict solving.	B. Rather than negotiating about the things we disagree with I try to highlight the things in which we agree.
2.	A. I seek for some compromise solution.	B. I try to take into account all the interests of both parties.

3.	A. I usually pursue my intentions.	B. I sometimes try to calm the other side and thus maintain our relationship.
4.	A. I seek for some compromise solution .	B. I sometimes give up my own interests in favour of the other's interests.
5.	A. I always look for the help from someone when solving the problem.	B. I try to do everything to avoid unnecessary tension.
6.	A. I try to avoid unnecessary inconveniences.	B. I try to push my opinion.
7.	A. I try to "postpone the problem" until I have more time for thinking about it.	B. I can give up my opinion and get another.
8.	A. I use to keep following my intentions.	B. I try to discuss all my interests and problems immediately and openly.
9.	A. I think that we do not have to worry because of different opinions.	B. I do my best to reach my goals.
10.	A. I usually keep following my goals.	B. I seek for some compromise solution.
11.	A. I try to discuss all my interests and problems immediately and openly.	B. I sometimes try to calm the other side and thus maintain our relationship.
12.	A. Sometimes I avoid a view that could provoke controversy.	B. I am willing to retreat if the other side retreats, too.
13.	A. I suggest an appropriate balance.	B. I insist on my opinion.
14.	A. I say my opinion and I wait for the opinion of the other side.	B. I try to show the other side the logicity and advantage of my attitude.
15.	A. I sometimes try to calm the others and thus maintain our mutual relationships.	B. I try to do everything to avoid tension.
16.	A. I try not to hurt the feelings of the other people.	B. I try to persuade the other people about benefits of my attitude.
17.	A. I usually keep following my goals.	B. I try to do everything to avoid unnecessary tension.
18.	A. I do not contradict the other's opinion if it makes her/him happy.	B. I am willing to acknowledge the other's truth partially if the other acknowledges my truth partially.

19.	A. I try to play with “exposed cards”.	B. I try to “postpone the problem” until I have more time for thinking about it.
20.	A. I try to deal with the differences between us immediately.	B. I try to keep an open balance of profits and losses for both of us.
21.	A. I try to take into account also the requests of the other people in the negotiating.	B. I use to tend to the direct discussion about the problem.
22.	A. I try to find a compromise which is in the middle of mine and his/her opinion.	B. I pursue my interests.
23.	A. I often try to satisfy the interests of all sides.	B. It sometimes happen that I let it to the others to take the responsibility for the conflict solving.
24.	A. If the partner’s opinion is very important for him/her, I’m trying to meet it.	B. I try to solve the conflict with compromise.
25.	A. I try to show the other side the logicity and advantage of my attitude.	B. I try to take into account also the interests of the other person in the negotiating.
26.	A. I suggest an appropriate balance.	B. I almost always try to satisfy the interests of all participants.
27.	A. Sometimes I avoid a view that could provoke controversy.	B. I do not contradict the other’s opinion if it makes her/him happy.
28.	A. I usually keep following my goals.	B. I usually look for the help from someone when solving the problem.
29.	A. I suggest an appropriate balance.	B. I think that we do not have to worry because of different opinions.
30.	A. I try not to hurt the feelings of the other people.	B. I always talk about the problem with the other person so we can solve it.

*The source: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*

Write the results in the following answer sheet and then count your points in each column.

	1	2	3	4	5
1.				A.	B.
2.		B.	A.		
3.	A.				B.
4.			A.		B.
5.		A.		B.	
6.	B.			A.	
7.			B.	A.	
8.	A.	B.			
9.	B.			A.	
10.	A.		B.		
11.		A.			B.
12.			B.	A.	
13.	B.		A.		
14.	B.	A.			
15.				B.	A.
16.	B.				A.
17.	A.			B.	
18.			B.		A.
19.		A.		B.	
20.		A.	B.		
21.		B.			A.
22.	B.		A.		
23.		A.		B.	
24.			B.		A.
25.	A.				B.
26.		B.	A.		
27.				A.	B.
28.	A.	B.			
29.			A.	B.	
30.		B.			A.

Column 1: SHARK – competing style	score:
Column 2: OWL – collaborating style	score:
Column 3: FOX– compromising style	score:
Column 4: TURTLE – avoiding style	score:
Column 5: TEDDY- BEAR – accommodating style	score:

**Self-reflexion:** Please read the more detailed description of the individual styles of the conflict solving. According to you results in the questionnaire assess if the description is equal to the way you solve the conflicts in the real life.

***TURTLE – avoiding style***

Turtles are hiding into their shells to avoid the conflict. They avoid not only their goals but also the relationships. They try to stay out of conflict at all costs. They think it is hopeless to solve the conflict. They feel helpless so they mask into the protection of their shell. They suppose that it is easier to avoid the conflict than face up to it.

*When is it good to use the avoiding style?*

- If the all conflict situation is trivial or there are more important and more urgent matters.
- If we perceive the situation as not a chance for satisfying our interests.
- If we want to let people “cool down” and regain the perspective of the negotiating.
- If we need to get more information for the effective conflict solving.
- If the others can solve the problem more effective.

***SHARK – competing style***

Sharks try to overcome their opponents by persuading them to accept their solution. Their goals are the most important while the relationships are usually less important for them. They strive to win at any cost. These people do not care about the others’ interests or needs nor they accept them much. The sharks perceive the conflicts in the way that one always wins and the other loses. The victory gives them the satisfaction feeling but the losing the feeling of weakness. They often behave unfairly, they try to win with inveighing, predominance or intimidation.

*When is it good to use the competing style?*

- If a swift and decisive action is important.
- With “vital” matters.
- Against people who abuse non-competitive dealing.

***TEDDY-BEAR – accommodating style***

For Teddy-bears the relationships are enormously important, more than their own goals. They wish the others accept and like them. They think it is better to avoid the conflict in the favour of harmony. These people give up their goals to “protect” the relationships.

*When is it good to use the accommodating style?*

- If we find out that we were wrong – thus we can prove our decency and rationality.

- If the matters are very important for the others, when they lead to the satisfaction of others and gaining cooperation.
- If we want to make a social basis for future matters.
- If it is extremely important to maintain stability and harmony.

### ***FOX – compromising style***

Foxes are interested in their own goals and relationships with the others only to some extent. They seek some compromise, give up their goals partly and persuade the others to do the same. These people look for the solution where the both sides gain something and lose something. They are willing to give up something to create space for mutual benefit.

*When is it good to use the compromising style?*

- If the goals are important but are not worth the effort or possible disruption when using more self-promoting ways.
- If the opponents in the same positions pursue the opposite goals.
- For reaching provisional goals in some complex problems.
- To achieve an effective solution in time pressure.
- As a compensation if the cooperation nor competitiveness is not possible.

### ***OWL – collaborating style***

Owls highly value their goals and so the relationships with the others. They watch the conflicts as the problems that need to be managed. They seek the solutions with which they reach the same own and the other participants' goals, too. Owls see the conflict as the tool for improving the relationships between the people, because of reducing the tension between them. They try for a discussion that would satisfy all conflict participants. These people maintain good relationships. They are not satisfied till they find a suitable solution and at the same till they eliminate all negative emotions.

*When to use the collaborating style?*

- If the interests of both sides are so important that the compromise is not enough.
- When the solution should have a long-time character.
- For unifying the points of view of the people with different perspectives.
- When “processing” feelings and revealing the true nature, if the previous ignorance was breaking the relationships.



### TASK 3.4: Conflicts in My Life

Think about what conflicts you usually live and how you use to solve them. It is not about whether you think you solve them right or wrong way but the purpose of the task is to make “an inventory” of your conflicts and an overview of how it really is.

Answer by truth and remember everything you can consider as the conflict. Then assign each conflict to one of the categories described below. Except that you mention how often you have been in that conflict, or if you even have been in that conflict, please write how you have solved that problem.

**A) Defamation** – Someone has defamed me, talked anything about me that I did not like – it was offensive, false or taunting.

**B) Word quarrels** – I have had misunderstandings, different opinions, I have disagreed with the other and we could not agree.

**C) Harassment** – Someone has gaped at me, verbally assaulted, sworn, taunted me, showed rude gestures, bullied me, touched me on intimate parts and so on.

**D) Jealousness** – I was jealous of classmates, friends when they succeed at school or out at school, that they are better friends with the others than me, or someone was jealous of me.

**E) *Beating or threatening beating*** – Someone has beaten me, slapped me, hit me or threatened me with beating.

**F) *Privacy violation*** – Somebody has stolen me anything, lent without permission or has given my phone number without asking, has eaten my snack, etc.

**G) *Relationships of girls and boys***– Somebody has taken over my girlfriend/boyfriend, we have had a fight over her/him, had an argument because he/she is jealously, or I have been jealously and so on.

**H) *Other*** – Please write what it was:

**Self-reflection:** Think about your ways of the conflict solving. How are you satisfied with their solutions? If necessary, have you got anybody you can consult how to solve the conflict in your life? Do you know where/who you can ask for help?



**TASK 3.5: Turning Complaints into Neutral Statements**

The ways, which the conflict often escalates, are offensive expressions, blaming and complaining. While we can say some statement not to attack and at the same to express clearly our interests.

Identify in each described complaint the interests of speaking person and then reformulate it into the neutral, non-offensive language that contains the interests of the complaining side.

For a better understanding of the task, here is an example:

**Statement 1:** “Do not always bother me with your awkward comments.”

**Interests:** I want to be quiet, to concentrate for work, I do not want to be bothered...

**Neutral statement:** “I’d like you not to talk to me now because I need to concentrate to what I am doing now”– or – “What you are saying doesn’t seem funny to me, could you stop it?”

**Statement 2:** “You still talk to him/her only!”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 3:** “I have graduation next week and that stupid radio is still shouting here. How can I learn anything?”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 4:** “You put your things like this desk was only yours. Can you tell me where should I put my things now?”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 5:** “I did it just like she did, however, she got mark one but I got mark three.”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 6:** “You never fulfil what you promise, I wonder what excuse you’re coming up with this time.”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 7:** “If you come late again, I won’t wait for you anymore.”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 8:** “Stop doing those stupid grimaces on me.”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 9:** “You are saying something different every moment, of course, nobody trusts you anymore!”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**

**Statement 10:** “Do not steal my things still, say at least “moo” when you are taking them.”

**Interests:**

**Neutral statement:**



### TASK 3.6: Negotiation Skills

This task is focused on practising of negotiation skills – especially for the preparatory phase of negotiation.

Answer these individual tasks:

**1. Think about a specific interpersonal problem you have.**

*Example: You share a common room with your sibling who is very untidy and if you want to have your room tidy you must do it on your own, of course also his/her things. Since you have a small flat, you cannot have your own room.*

Describe the problem:

**2. Define your space for negotiating** – think, what your borders are, where you are still willing to agree. This negotiating space needs to be defined separately for each negotiated matter.

*Example: Tidy room – my borders: maximum is permanent order, i.e. always put your things aside, put clothes in the wardrobe, dirty clothes in the laundry basket eating in the kitchen ...; minimum is possibility to eat in the room but after eating put the things aside, the possibility to tidy the room after party next day.*

Define the negotiating space for your problem:

**3. Name and give out your goals, interests and needs** – Clarify what you want to achieve and what interests you need to fulfil to be satisfied. Give out these your interests then, so you take the necessary steps to work together with the other side.

*Example: I need to have the tidy room because I cannot concentrate to learning and work if there is mess – then I'm thinking only about this mess still. I feel uncomfortable when I have a visit and there are your dirty socks and other clothes on the floor, etc.*

Name your goals, interests and needs. Give them out – tell about them the other side:

**4. Take care of goals, interests and needs of the other side and name them** – Detection and naming the goals, interests and needs of the other side is the key to the successful conflict solving. But focus always on the problem which you solve. It is very likely that the other side will mind something completely different, so it is necessary to agree that this new matter you will solve the same way but later. Meanwhile find out and name the goals, interests and needs of the other side about the negotiating matter:

Then set priorities (yours and the other side's) and order the importance of each interest:

**5. Think about it and suggest possible solutions** – Offering proposals of the solutions is the base for creating the common agreement. It is necessary to discuss about, which solutions satisfy your interests, and to look for the parts of the solution which are acceptable for the both sides. If you find in the proposal something acceptable for the both sides, agree to accept it. If you find something unacceptable, find out why it is so, and look for a more acceptable solution.

*Example: I am willing to vacuum the floor in our room 3times a week if you wipe the dust and take out rubbish.*

Describe the proposals of your problem solutions.

**6. Be friendly to the other side** – It is a good sign of constructive conflict solving while creating the good basis for the negotiating of next disputed matters.

*Describe the other side's solution:*

*Describe the common solutions you have come to:*

### MODULE 3 FINAL TASK: Constructive Quarrel

Our everyday conflicts often result in a quarrel. Sometimes these quarrels go away as quickly as they arrived, sometimes it lasts even for few days.

The quarrels are not bad. They are even good as psychologists say, because they relieve tension, and as they say: the quarrels “clean the air”. But not all of them.

Sometimes the quarrels do not end with this “clean air” as we like it after the storm. It often happens that our exchange of views on an important topic ends with tears or a door bang. How to argue to make it sense finally?

This final task about the conflict solving is aimed at creating “the ten commandments” of the constructive quarrel – the set of rules that, when followed, will solve the problem and make the mutual understanding of quarrelling people. Based on the acquired knowledge from this module and also on your own experiences, define the rules of the constructive quarrel.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



## NOTES





## Annex: Associations

Your task was to write at least 25 words that come to mind when you say the word “conflict”.

Now please, to each your association (each written word) give +, -, 0, +/- sign according to the fact whether it is rather by meaning positive (then give + sign), negative (then give - sign), or neutral (then give “0” sign), or ambivalent (positive and also negative) word (then give +/- sign).

Then evaluate your results – calculate how many percent of the associations were positive, negative and how many neutral or ambivalent.

What are your results? How do you usually perceive the conflicts?

In practise it turns out that nearly at all cases people have mixed a similar ratio of negative and positive associations. The ratio we usually get is 70% negative, 20% ambivalent and neutral, 10% positive associations. Do you think that such negative setting can affect the people in how they solve the conflicts?





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