



# Resolving Conflicts



**Y**ou were counting on playing your new video game with some friends this weekend, but now your parents want you to clean out the basement instead.

You and a friend made plans to watch a movie on Saturday, but your friend decided to go to someone else's house instead.

Conflicts are a normal part of life. From minor misunderstandings to major disagreements, people don't always see eye to eye. But sometimes problems escalate. People argue or even resort to violence. There are better ways to resolve conflicts. In this guide, you'll learn strategies to help you work through conflicts before they become major problems.



# Resolving Conflicts

## You can resolve conflicts

**H**ere are six ways to resolve conflicts. Each is effective in certain situations. When you're faced with a conflict, try to think about each of these alternatives and choose the one that seems most likely to work for you.

### 1. Be proactive.

When you're faced with a situation that may lead to conflict, try to plan ahead. Maybe you and your best friend are competing for the lead role in the school play. Before auditions, talk with your friend about how you'll handle it if one of you gets the part and the other doesn't.



### 2. Accommodate.

You want to go to your friend's house to watch the game. Your parents need you to clean your room before your grandparents visit.

You could argue about it—but you know your parents will probably win in the end. Or you could try to find a way to accommodate both your desires. You have to clean your room—but try asking if your friend can come over so you can watch the game at your house and clean during commercials and at halftime.



### 3. Compromise.

You may be able to solve a problem by finding a middle ground. You want to stay out until midnight. Your parents say you have to be in by 10:00. Maybe you can compromise on an 11:00 curfew. In a compromise, you won't get everything you wanted, but the other person won't either. Both of you have to be willing to give something up in order to come to an agreement.

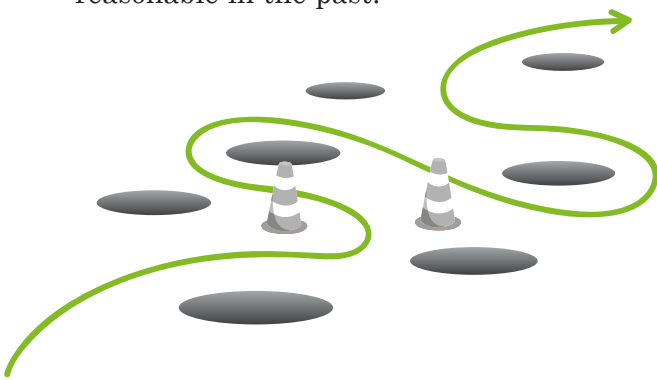
## 4. Collaborate.

Working on a problem together can sometimes make it easy to resolve conflicts. For example, if put-downs and negative comments are causing conflicts in your group of friends, try working together to solve the problem. You'll probably come up with some pretty creative solutions. And as you try the solutions, the put-downs and negative comments will stop.

## 5. Avoid it.

Sometimes you don't need to get into a conflict at all. There's no need to push ahead of someone in the lunch line. You'll get there soon enough. If you really *don't* care whether you set the table or clean up after dinner, let your sibling choose.

When an issue doesn't matter that much to you, try avoiding the conflict. Later, when there's an issue that *is* important, people will usually try to work with you because you've been reasonable in the past.



## 6. Confront it.

When the matter is very important to you and must be resolved right away, it's best to confront it directly. If your friend is suddenly not acting like your friend anymore, it's time to act. You might say, "This is the second time you've told me at the last minute that you can't come over. My feelings are hurt. What's going on?"

"Confronting" doesn't mean physical fighting. You are most effective if you can state calmly and clearly what's bothering you without resorting to anger or violence.



There are some kinds of behavior—sexual harassment, threats of violence, physical attacks—that you should *never* have to tolerate. If something like this happens to you, tell an adult right away. In school, tell a teacher, a counselor or the principal. In the community, tell a parent, another trusted adult or the police.

# A word about weapons

Sometimes, kids decide they have to get a weapon to settle a conflict.

This is an extremely dangerous decision. Schools are very serious about keeping weapons off campus. If you're caught with a weapon, you may be arrested. You will probably be expelled from school. That could put your whole future in jeopardy.

When students have weapons, there's a chance that someone could get hurt—or even killed.

Choose one of the other methods of resolving conflicts. Tell your parents or a teacher. Call the police if you're in danger. But *don't* use a weapon to settle the conflict.

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*Throughout your life, you're going to be faced with conflicts. Using these methods will help you resolve them more constructively so you can focus on things that are more important—and more fun.*

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