

***The Conflict Resolution Center of Iowa  
And  
Grant Wood AEA 10  
Present***



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**RESPECT**

**Recognizing Everyone's Strengths by  
Peacebuilding, Empathizing, Communicating  
and Trustbuilding**

“The power of the group to produce results is rooted in the quality of the relationship among the participants.”

-Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman



# Goals:

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- 1. To enhance learning for students receiving special education services by respectfully and creatively building and growing relationships between educator and family members of IEP teams.**
- 2. To help IEP team members meaningfully resolve differences as early as possible in order to reduce the need for preappeals and due process hearings.**

# Objectives:

## Teach IEP team members how to:

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1. **Address and resolve differences that arise in team meetings in a way that improve, or at least doesn't further damage, relationships among team members.**
2. **Engage with each other constructively and from the heart so that differences and/or problems can be addressed and meaningfully resolved.**
3. **Move beyond the traditional approaches to conflict resolution (that are centered in problem solving and the techniques of communication) in order to achieve fundamental change in working relationships.**
4. **Think and act like facilitators or coaches even though that may not be their formal role in a given IEP meeting.**



# Day One The Relational Context of Conflict Agenda

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Introduction to the relational context of conflict

Images of conflict

Working with metaphors

Welcoming 'heart' into the process: deep listening and an ethic of caring

Parent's perspective

Building relationships

First assignment

Reflecting and journaling

Assessing the day

# Day Two - Risk Taking in Conflict Resolution Agenda



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Reconnecting in circle

Reflections on first assignment

Review day one and preview day two

New and 'dangerous' definitions: conflict and conflict resolution

Working lunch: Everyday Creativity and RESPECT

Beyond Active Listening: Resolving conflict "*dangerously*"

Role-play: Experiencing "dangerous" conflict resolution

The second assignment

Reflecting and journaling

Assessing the day

# Day Three - Thinking Like a Third Party Agenda



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Reconnecting in circle

Reflections on second assignment

Review days one and two and preview day three

Deescalating conflict from the "third side"

Role of the facilitator/coach in team meeting

Being the "third side"

Final assignment

Reflecting and journaling

Assessing the day

# **Day Four - Bridging Troubled Waters Dangerously**

## **Agenda**



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**Reconnecting in circle**

**Reflections on final assignment**

**Review first three days one and preview day four**

**Practice deescalating conflict from the third side**

**Addressing challenges to being on the third side**

**Enlightened self-interest and holonomy**

**Practice deescalating conflict from the third side**

**Reflecting and journaling**

**Training evaluation evaluations**

**Closing circle**



# Circle Values

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Safety

Equality

Heart-centered

Gratitude





# Circle Guidelines

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Listen respectfully

Honor the talking piece

Speak respectfully

Use respectful words that do not  
hurt



# Levels of Conflict and Conflict Strategies

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- *When conflict is about issues and material differences:*
- **Addressing it involves problem solving, analysis, logic and staged processes.**
- **The desired outcome is clarification of issues, closure, and collaborative solutions.**



# Levels of Conflict and Conflict Strategies

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*When conflict is about communication and social dynamics:*

**Addressing it involves improving communication, balancing power, managing strong emotions and negative interactions.**

**The desired outcome is enhanced participation, improved understanding, better social structures, and outcomes everyone can live with.**



# Levels of Conflict and Conflict Strategies

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*When conflict is about symbols, perceptions, identities and meanings:*

Addressing it involves understanding how identity is woven into conflict dynamics, exploring perceptual differences arising from cultures and world views, using creative tools like metaphor, story and ritual.

The desired outcome is meaningful participation in process design, deepened relationships and interdependence, transformative outcomes, and increased creative capacity to work and live together.



# Images of Conflict in Metaphors

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Metaphors strengthen or weaken relationships, depending on how they are used. For example, **conflict as war**:

Your claims are *indefensible*

She *shot down* all of my arguments

I **demolished** his argument

This **war metaphor** partially structures how we engage in conflict.

How would we “do conflict” if we used a different metaphor?



# Working With Metaphors

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Metaphors can help in the process of understanding and addressing differences. Attending to them can help to:

**Build safe spaces for meaningful effective dialogue and conflict resolution**

**Promote constructive communication and conflict resolution**



# Working With Metaphors

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**Building safe spaces for effective dialogue and conflict resolution:**

**The use of metaphors can help enhance relationships through acceptance and empathy for others' experiences.**

**Asking questions to uncover the meaning behind a metaphor shows: empathy, you're listening and that you care.**

**Expanding on the metaphor to take it one step further does the same.**

**See example  
pg. 10**



# Working With Metaphors

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**Building safe spaces for effective dialogue and conflict resolution:**

**The use of metaphors by a facilitator can help depersonalize a situation or deflect blame:**

**“This conflict seems to have taken on a life of its own and is causing the discomfort in the room.”**

**Has the effect of normalizing discomfort and disagreement and moving the conversation toward dealing positively with the disagreement.**





# Working With Metaphors

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## Promoting constructive communication and conflict resolution

The use of metaphors in processes (like IEP meetings) can

*Set a positive tone: "An IEP is a collaborative work of art."*

*Communicate (uncover) meaning: "What would hitting the wall look like?"*

*Clarify communication: "Does it seem like an impossible task to you?"*



# Listening Deeply to Encourage Speaking From The Heart

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Deep listening is a way of *being* and doing that helps the listener truly understand the speaker -- a prerequisite to the listener being understood.

**Relationships are central to addressing and meaningfully resolving conflict. Deep listening is central to helping people engage constructively so that conflicts can be meaningfully resolved.**

It is a way of connecting with another. As such it is much more than a mere technique.



# Deep Listening Defined

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A person listens deeply when she connects with the speaker on an emotional level. When she is receptive to the emotions being expressed with both her heart and her brain, and when she is appropriately responsive to the feelings, in and behind the words being said, she is listening deeply.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: With every fiber of our beings.*

We let the words touch us - we *experience and feel* them as we hear them. We listen *to be of service* and our response is an *authentic expression of who we are*. We are *being* listeners rather than just *doing* listening.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening:* by blocking everything else out and being totally attentive to the speaker.

We have “tunnel listening.” As appropriate, lean in toward the speaker and make eye contact or at least visualize doing so.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: for connection, not agreement.*

We listen to bond with the speaker in a way that we feel the energy between us. We don't listen just for things we agree with. We listen to connect with the speaker in the moment.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: with compassion (we “suffer with” the speaker).*

We try as best we can to feel the same emotion the speaker is expressing. We do this so we can help ease the pain of conflict through our listening and by the way we respond.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: for the human qualities behind the words.*

We listen to see with the mind's eye the qualities or characteristics that all human beings have as well, e.g. a need for respect, as well as the distinctive qualities of the particular speaker. We listen for the expression of basic human needs-- a request that underlies the speaker's words, such as "I want to be respected and appreciated."





# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: without ego and without judging.*

We listen to fully *understand* the speaker's story. We do not listen to judge or to compare what is said with what we think ought to be said.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening: with appreciation and respect for the speaker.*

We would listen as above and respond with words of appreciation for what the speaker said and/or the risk she has taken in telling her story. We would act in a thoughtful and considerate way toward the speaker.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening:* with our hearts as well as with our heads.

We listen with our feeling self and our thinking self.



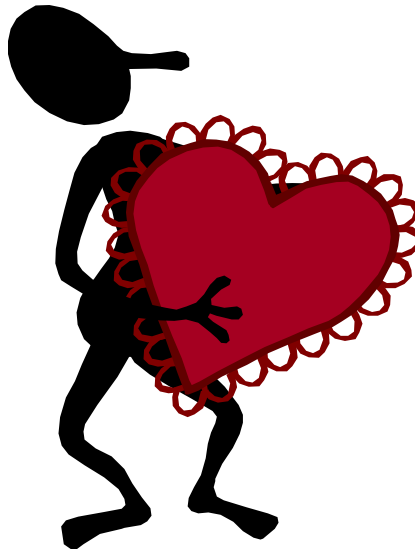


# Listening Deeply: the Keys

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*Deep listening means listening:* with our hearts as well as with our heads.

When we listen with our hearts we we listen in a way that shows we really care about the speaker.



# Listening Deeply: the Keys

*Deep listening means listening:* inside our hearts as well as with our heads.



**Imagine that your heart has ears and that the words being said go straight to your heart so that you are feeling and experiencing what is said rather than just hearing it. When the words go straight to your heart, your response can't help but be authentic!**

# Listening Deeply: the Keys

*Deep listening means listening:* with our hearts as well as with our heads.

We also listen for intellectual understanding as a *committed listener* as though our lives, or perhaps more importantly, another's life depended on our understanding what was being said.





# Deep Listening Checklist

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1. *Be a listener.* Experience and feel the words. Respond authentically in a way that reveals what you are feeling and that shows the speaker that you “get it.”
2. *Tunnel listening.* Be totally attentive to the speaker and respond in terms of one or more of the characteristics of deep listening.
3. *Listen to connect and bond.* Hear everything not just those things you agree with. Respond by connecting with the speaker.



# Deep Listening Checklist

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4. *Listen with compassion.* Feel what the speaker has endured because of this conflict. Respond with words that will ease the pain of conflict
  
5. *See the human qualities.* Listen for the request behind the speaker's words: what basic human need is she expressing? Respond in a way that shows you heard that request.
  
6. *Put your own ego aside.* Listen to understand not to judge. Respond in a non-judgmental way: perhaps by acknowledging or validating what the speaker said.





# Deep Listening Checklist

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7. *Show appreciation and respect. Be considerate and thoughtful in responding directly to what the speaker said.*
  
8. *Listen with your heart as well as with your brain. In your response show that you honestly care and that you are committed to a solution that is best for the student and that improves the situation for everyone involved.*
  
9. *Do more than simply hearing and responding with a technique. Strive to understand and focus on giving an authentic response that helps the speaker create his or her own ideas for changing the situation.*



# Deep Listening Checklist

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10. *Do not focus on how to respond with a technique. Focusing on how to respond might cause you to slip into the role of fixer or problem solver.*



# Welcoming Heart into Our Processes

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Addressing and resolving conflict from the heart means approaching conflict with:

Compassion or a desire to help people work through any suffering associated with conflict.

A sense of caring for **everyone** involved -- being “omni-partial.”

An ethic of *caring* not of “fixing” the problem or the person.

Authenticity - acknowledging our biases and connections, being fair, being emotionally attuned and understanding.



# Welcoming Heart into Our Processes

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Addressing and resolving conflict from the heart means approaching conflict with:

A sense of what conflict resolution *really* means:

Having *intimacy* with our relationships, recognizing interconnectedness, relating on a person-to-person basis - *especially facilitators*.

Seeking to: understand not condone; empathize not agree; achieve mutual respect.

Recognizing the higher purpose of conflict resolution: understanding and change.



# Welcoming Heart into the Processes

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A person who brings heart into the process:

Enters into a genuine relationship with others - no facade of disinterested neutrality.

Is comfortable exploring 'dangerous' feelings without knowing where it will lead.

Recognizes that people need to trust that what will happen if they get into dangerous territory is better than what would happen if they don't.



# Welcoming Heart into the Processes

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A person who brings heart into the process:

Unconditionally accepts the others as persons worth dealing with.

Is genuine and unafraid to express the feelings he or she is experiencing.

As facilitator, is satisfied with providing a safe environment where others will be free to express themselves



# Educators and Parents Working Collaboratively

## Some thoughts on building trusting relationships:

- Trust is an attitude that allows one to rely on, have confidence in and feel sure about others.
- Trust is the essential currency in relationships.
- Key questions:
  - Does one assume trust or must it be earned?
  - How does one make deposits in the trust account?
- A high level of distrust both creates problems and makes them difficult to solve.
- Damaged trust is difficult to rebuild no matter what one does, AND...



# Educators and Parents Working Collaboratively

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**The key to building trust is to give people a reason to trust you by:**

- **Being authentic and behaving consistently**
- **Communicating clearly, carefully and from the heart**
- **Keeping promises**
- **Being reliable**
- **Maintaining confidentiality**
- **Being approachable and accessible**
- **Revealing feelings**





# Educators and Parents Working Collaboratively

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**The key to building trust is to give people a reason to trust you by:**

- **Sharing personal information as appropriate**
- **Expressing personal interest in others**
- **Showing that you care**
- **Listening and acting without judgment**
- **Admitting mistakes**
- **Being respectful**
- **Practicing RESPECT**



# Educators and Parents Working Collaboratively

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## Some thoughts on working together and expressing concerns constructively

- Parents, students and educators are a team.
- Set the tone for sharing positives about students.
- Accept that conflict just is.
- Avoid blame or anything that could be construed as blame.
- Be attuned to team members' emotions.



# Educators and Parents Working Collaboratively

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**Some thoughts on working together and expressing concerns constructively**

- **Show empathy.**
- **Be flexible.**
- **Use the word 'try'.**
- **A little laughter can ease tension.**

# Some Ideas for Educators

## Show that you care:

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- **Get to know parents beyond labels.**
- **Remind parents they are experts about their children.**
- **Express appreciation.**
- **Create opportunities to interact.**
- **Invite input.**
- **If families don't respond right away, don't make assumptions.**
- **Remember 'overwhelmed' can look like 'disinterested'.**

# Some Ideas for Educators

## Keep in regular contact:

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- **Initiate face-to-face meetings beyond IFSPs and IEPs.**
- **Follow-up with parents, not just at progress report times.**
- **Utilize voice mail and email as a supplement to face-to-face contact.**

# Some Ideas for Parents

## Show that you care:

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- **Get to know teachers and administrators beyond labels.**
- **Give positive feedback to educators in addition to expressing concerns.**
- **Express appreciation on a regular basis.**
- **Create opportunities to interact.**

# Some Ideas for Parents

## Show that you care:

- Give input as often as you can.
- Allow for time for educators to respond - don't make assumptions.
- Remember 'overwhelmed' can look like 'disinterested'.

# Some Ideas for Parents

**Keep in regular contact:**

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- **Initiate face-to-face meetings especially with new teachers.**
- **Communication among all parties throughout the year is key.**