



COLORADO
Department of Education



PEAK
PARENT
CENTER
Helping Families Helping Children

Improving IEP Teams: Skills for Resolving Conflict

Webinar 1: Understanding
Conflict and Creating
Space for Change





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and produced by Pingora Consulting, LLC.


The Curriculum

The curriculum was developed for and approved by the Colorado Department of Education. It is intended to be used in its entirety and without modification by future participants or trainers.






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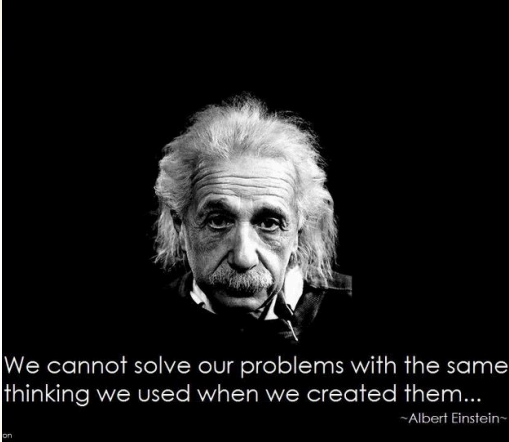
The Challenge



- Most special education conflict centers on the development of the IEP.
- A natural imbalance of power exists that results in parents feeling undervalued in the IEP process.
- School staff members, administrators, and families often become **focused** on disagreement and engaged in a relationship strained by unresolved conflict.
- School districts are spending over \$90 million per year on conflict resolution.






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We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them...

~Albert Einstein~

Our Solution: Facilitative Skills for all IEP Stakeholders

THE BEST SOLUTION FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT AND BUILDING COHESIVE TEAMS.

When are facilitative skills helpful?

- EVERY day.
- At EVERY IEP team meeting.
- Before disagreements become disputes.




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Benefits of Facilitation

According to the American Bar Association, benefits include:

- Parties get to decide:** All parties, who know the student, control the outcome.
- Fosters continuing relationships:** Facilitation does not dismantle relationships, it bolsters them.
- Facilitation deals with feelings:** It respects that a child is at the heart of every disagreement.
- Outcomes are durable:** There is a higher level of satisfaction, resulting in more durable agreements.
- Lower cost:** Informal issue resolution is ALWAYS less costly than more formal options. Cost is measured on the human and financial dimensions.




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Facilitative Skills

Conflict Resolution



Using facilitative skills to resolve IEP conflict.


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Conflict

Conflict is a signal or message that something is not working and needs to be different.

~ Talk Through Conflict Using Interest-Based Problem Solving, Education Service Center Region 4 (2011). ~


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Conflict Wheel

- When we understand the source of conflict, we can find a way to work through it.
- Different sources of conflict produce different challenges.
- **Find the source of the conflict to find a solution.**

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Conflict Wheel

Practice:
Find the source of the conflict to find a solution.

Find the right match!

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Identify the Source of Conflict:

“My daughter needs a one-on-one para professional so she can stay in the regular classroom with her friends.”

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Identify the Source of Conflict:



“How can you say my son is making progress? He is getting further and further behind his peers.”

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Identify the Source of Conflict:

“We expect parents to do their part, like helping their kids with their homework, getting kids to bed on time, responding to phone calls, etc. Your child would be more successful if you followed through at home.”




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Group Dynamics
Mindfulness

The Space of Change

How can we create it?


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Space of Change



The concept of space is both mental and physical. Be strategic in creating the space of change.



Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.
—Ambrose Bierce


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Space of Change

Creating the space of change refers to:

- Balancing power,
- Preparing the physical environment, and
- Cultural sensitivity.


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Balance of Power

- Assess the factors contributing to the impression of power.
- Balance the power with intentional, directed actions and communication.
- Explain the process, encourage participation, etc.



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Environment and Power

- Adjust for an imbalance of power or cultural factors.
- The space should emanate respect and be comfortable.
- Skilled IEP participants arrange the room and set the tone.
- Skilled IEP participants continually refocus the team to be forward facing.



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Cultural Sensitivity

- Guard against *reactive devaluation*, or the tendency to dismiss or devalue the content of a message based on negative feelings about the person delivering the message. *Meierding (2012)*.
- Be mindful of language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and cultural barriers.
- Avoid assumptions.



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Mind Chatter

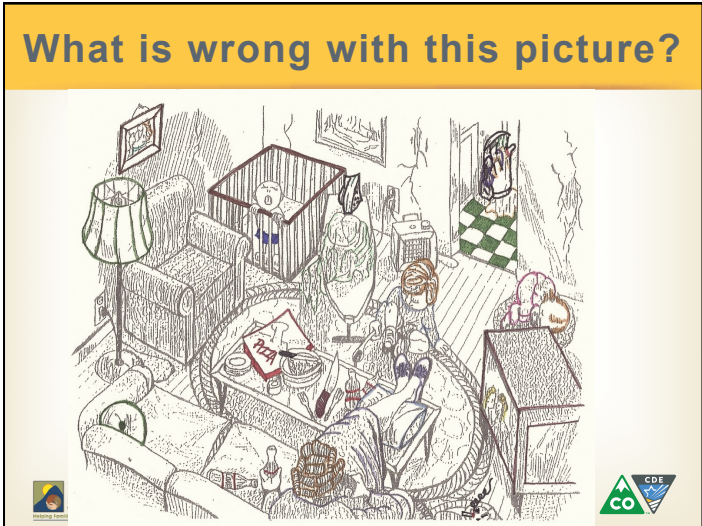
The mindset of change.



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Be Intentional

- Eliminate the *mind chatter* regarding your preconceived negative beliefs or assumptions.
- Model respectful, culturally neutral behavior to the parties.
- Be intentional in your quest for an open mind.


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Group Dynamics
Process of Change



Disagreement

Can be the catalyst of change.


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Conflict is just energy in the system – nothing more, nothing less.

- Garmston & Wellman -





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Conflict is Necessary


- Disagreement or conflict is a necessary ingredient in the growth and development of individuals, families, communities, and societies.
- Conflict can help build community, define and balance needs, and make difficult choices.
- Working through conflict can be an important bonding experience.

Mayer (2012).





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Stretch Yourself



Timing: 2 Minutes



**Think about conflict differently.
Normalize, don't awfulize.**



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In Closing



- Resolving team conflict:**
 - Helps IEP teams stay positive;
 - Improves working relationships;
 - Is invaluable to resolving disagreements long before they turn into disputes;
 - Improves outcomes for students with disabilities.
- INTEGRATING conflict resolution skills is a WIN-WIN for all team members, but especially the child.



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Additional Resources


- CADRE: A Tale of 2 Conversations Study guide & Videos:
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/TaleStudyGuide.cfm>

- Nature vs Nurture: Our Brain's Response to Conflict:
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/fowlercookwebinar.cfm>
- CADRE Resources on IEP Facilitation:
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/ctu/processdefs14.cfm?thisid=12>


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Learn Skills and Practice Driven Content


- Define critical IDEA terminology
- Plan effective agendas
- Understand how and why conflict naturally occurs
- Practice key communication and people skills to build relationships
- Identify interests versus positions
- Strengthen your strategic questioning and active listening techniques
- Identify resistance points and find resources to build consensus



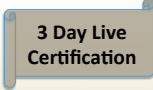
2 Hour Live Modules





6 Hour Live Class




1 Hour Webinars




3 Day Live Certification

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THANK YOU!


Your input is very important to us! Please complete the evaluation survey that you will get so we can continue to improve our services to you!



If you would like a certificate of completion, please email pchristy@peakparent.org

Identify the Source of Conflict:


“You don’t care about my child. It was the same way when I went to this high school. No one respects students.”








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Identify the Source of Conflict:






“The high school is on a block schedule, and there is not enough time for your child to retake the two classes he failed before graduation.”



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Identify the Source of Conflict:

“I’m the Principal. I’m in charge of student safety. Don’t bring the student back until we can be sure it is safe.”



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