

Also available  
in Spanish



*Effective Substance Abuse and  
Mental Health Programs  
for Every Community*

## Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers

Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers (Peacemakers) is a program that teaches conflict resolution procedures and skills to all students, faculty, and staff members. It is based on the premises that conflicts cannot be suppressed or denied, and conflicts may have positive or negative consequences, depending on how they are managed. Students learn how to engage in problem-solving negotiations and how to mediate schoolmates' conflicts. The program aims to—

- Make the school a safe place where violence and destructive conflicts are prevented and constructive conflicts are used to improve the quality of school life.
- Teach students, faculty, and staff how to mediate schoolmates' conflicts and negotiate to solve problems and reach agreements liked by all disputants.
- Ensure all school members use the same procedures for resolving conflicts.
- Enable teachers and administrators to model constructive conflict resolution.
- Free teachers' time and energy otherwise spent on managing classroom conflicts.

Delivered through twenty 30-minute lessons, the program serves as a vital component in an overall strategy to reduce violence in schools. It also enhances academic learning and achievement. Now translated into Spanish, Peacemakers is used in the United States, Canada, and many other parts of the world.

### PROVEN RESULTS \*

- 62% of Peacemaker students reached the ideal problem-solving agreement when placed in a conflict that could have been resolved either in a problem-solving way or the less beneficial win-lose way, compared to 15% of the control group
- 29% of Peacemaker students viewed conflicts positively, compared to 16% of the control group
- 90% of Peacemaker students recalled 100% of the negotiation and mediation procedures a few days after training
- 75% of Peacemaker students recalled 100% of the negotiation and mediation procedures 1 year after training

*\* Students grades K-9*

### INTERVENTION

Universal

Selective

Indicated



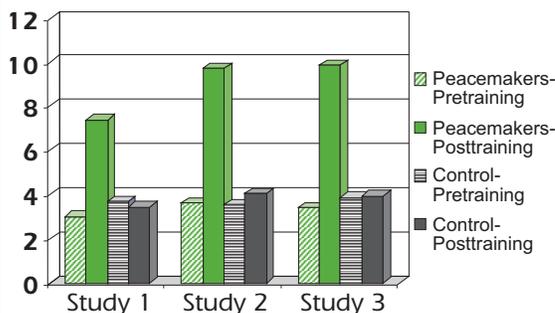
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

## Outcomes

When given Peacemakers training, students successfully learn conflict resolution procedures, retain these skills over time, and choose to use the skills to deal with conflicts within and outside the school setting. Given a choice, they choose a problem-solving approach over a win-lose approach to resolve conflicts. The Peacemaker training enhances academic learning and achievement and can be initiated with children as young as kindergartners.

In addition, 38 percent of students scored above the "A" criterion (i.e., excellent use of the negotiation and mediation procedures) when the Peacemaker training was integrated into academic units. Students learned the Peacemaker negotiation and mediation procedures by applying them in academic learning activities, while only 8 percent of the students who studied the academic material without Peacemakers scored above the "A" criterion.

**Comparison of mean scores for conflict training from high school students receiving Peacemakers and control groups, pre- and post-training**



The *Constructive Conflict Scale* is a 12-point scale that arranges responses to conflict on a hierarchical continuum, from most destructive (1) to most constructive (12). See the accompanying table for an explanation of the scale.

### Constructive Conflict Scale

Response to Conflict	Points
No response (blank, don't know)	0
Physical aggression	1
Verbal threats	2
Unsatisfactory withdrawal	3
Tell the teacher	4
Command other to give in	5
Satisfactory withdrawal	6
Invoke socially accepted norms	7
Propose alternatives for other to do	8
Express intent to negotiate	9
Negotiate (1 or 2 steps)	10
Negotiate (3–5 steps)	11
Negotiate (all 6 steps)	12

See accompanying chart for application of this scale.

## INTENDED POPULATION

Research on Peacemakers has been conducted with students from kindergarten through grade 9. Different program elements target students, teachers, and administrators. Parents may also be taught the program through their Parents-Teacher Association. The program has been used in urban, suburban, and rural schools, in schools where almost all students were from lower socioeconomic levels, in schools where almost all students were African American, and in schools with a variety of minority students including Hispanics/Latinos and American Indians. The program has also been tested at every level in elementary and high schools, with college students, and with adults such as married couples in counseling and adults in various types of training programs.

## BENEFITS

### Students:

- Enjoy safer schools as a result of reduced violence and fewer destructive conflicts.
- Improve academic achievement and long-term retention of academic learning.
- Become committed to others' well-being as well as their own.
- Learn to apply negotiation and mediation procedures taught in the program to everyday settings.
- Learn that conflicts can have positive outcomes.

### Teachers:

- Have fewer discipline problems to deal with.
- Have more time to teach, with less time needed for classroom management.
- Have a more positive learning environment.

### Schools:

- Have happier, cooperative students.
- Have a more positive school culture.

## HOW IT WORKS

Peacemakers is based directly on the theory of and research on constructive conflict resolution. It teaches constructive management of conflict rather than suppression and avoidance of conflict. Teachers deliver the program to classes using lessons that include case studies, role-playing activities, and simulations. Three units are presented in twenty 30-minute lessons. Four lessons focus on the nature of conflict and its potential constructive outcomes; eight lessons teach students how to engage in problem-solving negotiations; and eight lessons focus on how to mediate schoolmates' conflicts. Two mediators are chosen for each lesson, and the aim is to have all students serve as mediator an equal amount of time.

Among many lessons, students learn to assume a stake in each other's well-being and the future of their relationships with others. They see that there is value in not just being interested in achieving personal goals for a "win," which can damage a relationship. Students also engage in intellectual conflicts, researching and preparing positions to make persuasive arguments for their positions. This promotes student achievement and higher-level reasoning.

After the initial 20 training lessons are completed, the peer mediation procedures are implemented in the class and school. Weekly followup lessons are delivered throughout the school year to further refine and improve students' negotiation and mediation skills. Mediation procedures may be integrated into academic lessons in literature, social studies, and science class. Each year, as students proceed to the next grade, the program is retaught at an appropriately more complex and sophisticated level.

## IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

Although usually delivered in schools, the program has been implemented in after-school programs, scout groups, churches, and other community-based settings.

### Training and Materials

Teachers need at least 30 hours of training to implement the program. During training, they learn to use the manual *Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers*, which contains theory, underlying research, and exercises for use in training students, extra activities, implementation instructions, and information on implementation fidelity. Trainees also view the 10-minute video "Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers," which provides an overview of the program, the steps for training students to negotiate and mediate, and a model of skillful negotiation and mediation. The student workbook (*Our Mediation Notebook*) contains the basic lessons for the training program plus new materials. Young students also enjoy "Peacemakers: Songs About Conflict Resolution," an audiotape containing 15 songs about constructive conflict that facilitate training.

### Evaluation

Evaluation tools are available to assess program effectiveness.

## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Peacemakers' origins are in research on constructive conflict that began in the 1960s. The results were used to develop a set of practical procedures to train students and faculty in constructive conflict resolution. There was a parallel development of the research and training programs throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. In the mid-1980s, the training manual was written based on the authors' research on perspective-taking in conflicts, communication in conflicts, integrative negotiations, and the positive outcomes of conflict. Only the training program was directly developed out of a long-term research program.

The Constructive Conflict Scale demonstrated in the accompanying chart and table was initially developed by consensus among two professors and two graduate students in social psychology, guided by Deutsch (1973), Johnson and Johnson (1994), and Pruitt (1981). The continuum was then field tested, refined, and extended by Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) and Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Acikgoz (1994).

### EVALUATION DESIGN

Research validating the effectiveness of Peacemakers (for grades K through 9) was conducted through a field-experimental design where students were assigned to a training (Peacemakers) or non-training (control group) condition. Pre- and posttraining measures were taken regarding conflict management, willingness to use constructive procedures, attitudes, and the impact on academic learning. More than 18 studies have validated positive outcomes.

### PROGRAM DEVELOPERS

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David W. Johnson, Ed.D., is a professor of educational psychology and codeveloper of the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota. He held the Emma M. Birkmaier Professorship in Educational Leadership at the University of Minnesota from 1994 to 1997. Dr. Johnson has authored more than 40 books and more than 400 research articles and book chapters. He is past editor of the *American Educational Research Journal* and the recipient of numerous awards for outstanding research and teaching. He has served as an organizational consultant to schools and businesses in North, Central, and South America, Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific region. Dr. Johnson is a psychotherapist.

Roger T. Johnson, Ed.D., is a professor of curriculum and instruction and codirector of the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota. His doctoral degree is from the University of California in Berkeley. Dr. Johnson is the author of numerous research articles, book chapters, and books. He has consulted with schools throughout the world and has been honored with numerous national awards for his teaching and research.

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### RECOGNITION

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Health Services Administration, U.S.  
Department of Health and Human Services