



*The following is a review of two training videos in school conflict resolution, distributed by Conflict*

*Resolution Unlimited, 845 106th Ave. NE, Suite 109 Bellevue, WA 98004*

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***Everyday Conflicts, Creative Solutions: A Conflict Manager Training Video For Elementary School Students***

1991, Northwest Mediation Service.  
(Distributed by CRU)

**T**his brief (under 8 minutes) training video, geared to the training of elementary-age students in mediation skills, presents three acted scenarios that include two siblings fighting over a toy at home, two boys fighting over a basketball at school, and a family in which the parents, in front of the children, begin to argue over a schedule. The sibling toy fighters incident is poorly handled by the parents at home, and the youngster goes to school angry.

The mediation of conflict is first modeled in the basketball incident, when two trained child mediators appear with clipboards and ask the two disputants with the basketball if they would like help in solving their problem. After some initial resistance, the disputants agree and the young mediators go through their structured routine of gaining cooperation, laying out ground rules, and proceeding to mediate the dispute to a satisfactory resolution, complete with signing of a mediated contract. One of the boys then returns home, and upon hearing his parents arguing over a schedule, kindly offers to mediate their dispute. The video ends at that point, leaving the viewer with the impression that the mediation skills learned at school are transferable to all kinds of

disputes. This video is short but effective in conveying the possibility that even young children can learn mediation skills and be effective in mediating peers and adults alike.

**Rumors, Conflicts, Resolutions: A Mediation Training Video For Middle School and High School Students**

1993, CRU: Conflict Resolution Unlimited. (Two video set)

**B**eginning with zippy, bouncy, MTV-esque music and a staccato sequence of visual-clips of a high school hallway scene, this training video presents a realistic conflict of teens in a high school. The story-line starts with two girls talking next to their lockers. One tells the other of rumors that have been spreading about her by her supposed male friend. She becomes infuriated and as the boy happens by with his friend, she proceeds to confront him. The two disputants go at it verbally, calling each other names and making accusations, until the male friend of the alleged rumoring boy suggests that they go to mediation to try to resolve their dispute. After agreeing to try it, they are referred to a teacher who arranges a student mediation team of two.

During the brief teacher interview of the potential mediators, one of the student mediators voluntarily bows out because of a conflict of interest (she dated the brother of one of the disputants), nicely illustrating the importance of mediator neutrality. Another mediator is selected and the gender-balanced team goes to work. In the next several minutes, the process of mediation is laid out, clearly and realistically. The students explain the process of mediation and proceed to set out the ground rules: Make a commitment to solve the problem; no interrupting; no name-

calling; agree to tell the truth; no physical fighting; and, confidentiality is maintained as long as there is no danger of harm.

As the mediation proceeds, the student mediators powerfully demonstrate the use of disputant empowerment techniques. They actively control the process, while encouraging the disputants to control the content. They repeatedly request, as well as model, active listening, acknowledgment of feelings, empathy, and mutual respect. They keep the disputants on track whenever they veer off. Throughout, the mediators are very thorough, professional, and effective. They end the session by having the disputants sign the mediation contract, and they get them to agree to return to mediation if there are any further disputes.

The accompanying video then presents a group discussion with school personnel and student mediators, in which they talk about the range of issues involved in starting a school mediation program. They discuss the benefits of such a program to the students, the mediators, the administration, and the community at large. They also talk about problems that have arisen from which they have learned much. The discussion is wide-ranging, realistic, and quite helpful for those starting such programs.

In summary, this video is an excellent training device for those venturing into training school mediators. The CRU group is clearly well-experienced and has put together dynamite video training tapes. The professional quality of these tapes is very high, and the script is very sophisticated and intriguingly realistic.\*

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