

5 Steps to Help ~~Kids~~ ^{people} Resolve Conflicts

1. CALM DOWN

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

2. STATE & UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

"I felt left out and hurt because he wouldn't let me play the card game, so I threw his towel to annoy him."

3. APOLOGIZE WELL

Regret

Remedy

A good apology will communicate three things

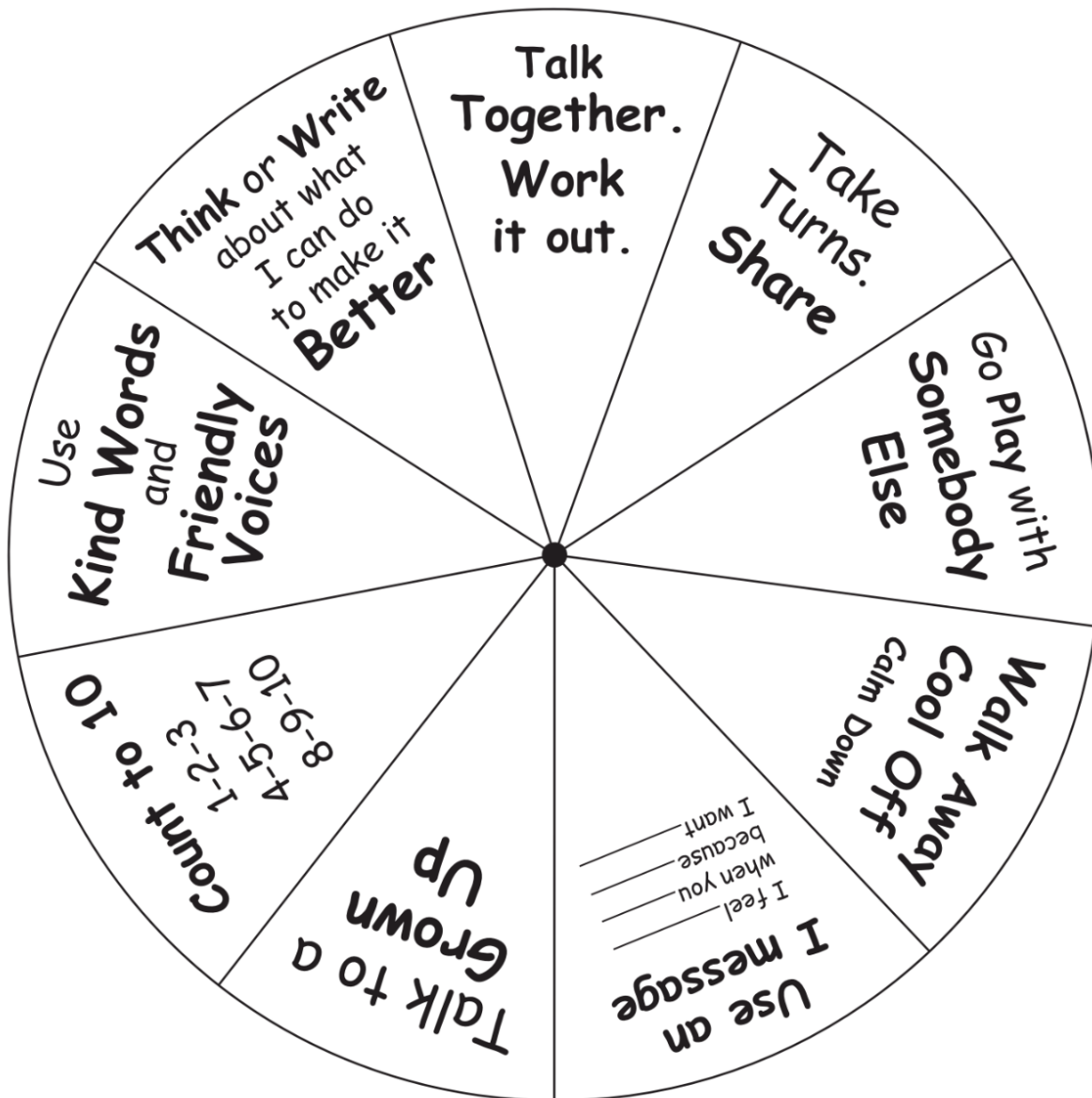
Responsibility

4. PROMOTE SOLUTION FINDING



5. FOLLOW UP





5 Steps to Help Resolve Conflicts

1. Find the calm

Give everyone a chance to take a breather from each other. Ask them each what they need to do to calm down. The “wheel” offers some good choices, like walking away and taking a break for a few minutes, counting to 10 (or 100!), or writing down some feelings. In any case, nothing coherent will come from trying to lead a discussion with upset, emotionally fragile people. So ask them to figure out the best way to calm down before attempting to solve the problem.

2. State and understand the problem

Once calm has prevailed, talk to each person (either together or separately, depending on the circumstances) and help them state their problem. Stress the importance of being honest and admitting their role in the conflict (most problems are shared). Encourage them to use “I” statements to express their feelings. For example, “I felt left out and hurt because he wouldn’t let me play the card game, so I threw his towel to annoy him.”

3. Apologize well

“A good apology will communicate three things: regret, responsibility, and remedy. Apologizing for a mistake might seem difficult, but it will help you repair and



improve your relationships with others.” Encourage each person (or only one, depending on the circumstances) to come up with a good apology. Writing it down before they say it can be a good start, and that letter can be given to the person with whom they’re in conflict. Or, for someone not writing yet, take some notes or draw pictures that they can then use as they apologize.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Apologize>

<https://sunshine-parenting.com/more-than-im-sorry/>

I found a [great list](#) of what makes a “good apology,” so it’s best if the person can include all of these parts:

- ✓ *Use the words, “I’m sorry.”*
- ✓ *Acknowledge exactly how you messed up. (As in, “I used unkind words that hurt you.”)*
- ✓ *Tell the person how you’ll fix the situation.*
- ✓ *Ask for forgiveness.*

Bad apologies, on the other hand, tend to suffer from these four shortcomings:

- ✗ Justifying words or behavior
- ✗ Blaming the victim
- ✗ Making excuses
- ✗ Minimizing the consequences. (“It was just a joke!”)

4. Promote solution finding

Empower people to brainstorm solutions to their conflict. It’s so tempting as an all-knowing adult to generate solutions, but something the people think up and agree upon on their own will more likely work. Encourage each person to listen carefully and to accurately paraphrase each other. Encourage them to speak to each other (not you) and to speak honestly and kindly.



5. Follow up

Follow up with the people to see how they are getting along and if the solution they came up with is working. But if the “talk together/work it out” strategy isn’t working for this pair, it’s best to suggest my go-to strategy: find someone else to hang out with. Even if the people appear to need a prolonged break from one another, they will still be required to speak in a kind and respectful way when they are interacting.