

<b>Activity Name</b>	Facilitating difficult discussions.
<b>Goals</b>	Introducing difficult and/or challenging subject matters with an aim to finding balance and resolution between differing views.
<b>Description</b>	<p>Decide upon a given subject matter that can have resonance within the working group and may well produce conflicting views. A good exercise for this is “Where do you stand” where you draw an invisible line across the room with one extreme being positive and one being negative. Then ask provocative questions and the participants do not comment but place themselves in the line to show where they stand. For example, you could ask where do you stand on McDonalds? Some will stand in the middle because they don’t care either way whilst some will stand at the positive end because they like it and some at the other end because they don’t. You can also note that the line produces a measure of extreme reaction and the further down the line you stand the more extreme your response. From here you can escalate to other subject matters such as views on immigration or legislation for example. From this exercise will emerge points of opposing views which will generate subject matters for ongoing exercises. It is essential that this is a silent exercise where there is no judgement. Participants simply make their thoughts clear by their placement within the invisible line and there is no debate and no need for justification.</p> <p>Once you have a chosen subject matter choose two individuals or groups who make the case for opposing views and a third individual or group to be the mediators. Yourself as the activity leader can either be passive or the arbitrator of facts when untruths are spoken. Opinion, however, is always respected.</p> <p>Each of the opposing groups place forward their argument and the mediators apply the principles of conflict resolution (see learning outcomes below) to find resolution where possible.</p> <p>Please note: This is not an exercise to seek complete agreement but rather to teach the ability to hear and understand opposing views in a safe space and where possible find agreements palatable to as wide a group as possible.</p>

<b>Type of activity</b>	Group discussion, facilitation techniques and where appropriate, role play.
<b>Duration</b>	A rolling delivery. One subject matter with discussion then facilitation should last between 90-150mins. Multiple sessions would be possible with differing subject matters and would allow participants to hone conflict resolution skills.
<b>Space &amp; Materials</b>	A working space for specified number of participants plus supporting materials advising facts/data/legislation on given subject matter.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An understanding of the five steps of conflict resolution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. define the source of the conflict</li> <li>ii look beyond the incident.</li> <li>iii. request solutions</li> <li>iv. identify solutions all disputants can support</li> <li>v. agreement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Ability to manage difficult discussions with resolution strategies.</li> <li>- Ability to generate a safe space with mutual respect. Ability to De-escalate conflict through discussion and maintain respect with empathy of opposing views.</li> </ul> <p>A desire to ensure that everyone is “heard” despite tone or views. To not impose personal sensibilities on opposing viewpoints.</p>
<b>Module</b>	Conflict Resolution.
<b>Source</b>	Steve Medlin, Artistic director of Collage Arts Voices programme. This exercise was drawn from a weekly drama class for 18+ olds but could be applied to any age group.