

TEACHER RESOURCE SHEET: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Understanding Individual Perspectives
- Identifying Areas of Mutual Interest
- Developing Win-Win Solutions

The ability to see things from another person's perspective is a very important skill and one that facilitates arriving at win-win solutions. Understanding another's perspective is more than being able to identify with his or her feelings or right to have an opinion. It involves being able to see *why* that individual might feel as he or she does. The ability to understand that two people may process the same experience in totally different ways and arrive at very different, but equally valid, conclusions is the first step to peaceful conflict resolution.

The ability to identify areas of common interest is also an integral part of arriving at win-win solutions to conflict situations. For example, the parties in a conflict might agree on the following areas of common interest:

1. They both value and want to preserve their friendship.
2. They both value and want to preserve their status as responsible students.
3. They both wish to avoid sanctions, such as calls to parents, parent conferences, detentions, or suspensions.
4. They both wish to preserve privileges, such as free time, ability to choose assignments or activities, and high levels of individual responsibility.

The ability to brainstorm, understand individual perspectives, and identify areas of common interest will help us in our endeavor to solve conflict peacefully through the development of win-win solutions.

