

Conflict Situations

Instructions: In the situations below, select the letter of the choice that you would recommend for intervening.

Situation 1: Your 10-year-old brother keeps his room immaculate and organized. When your dad comes home from work today, he notices that the room is a mess. Your dad should

- a. tell your brother to straighten his room as quickly as possible. Your father should be clear and specific about how to do this.
- b. explain to your brother why it is important to keep his room neat. Involve him in a discussion about how to do it, and ask him to straighten it up as quickly as possible.
- c. ask your brother why his room is such a mess today and when he plans on straightening it. Encourage him to clean it as soon as possible.
- d. choose to not bother your brother. He will probably take care of it himself.

Situation 2: You are a 17-year-old daughter/son living at home. You are an excellent driver and are responsible in general. You have not been late in the past. This evening, you borrowed the family car and were 45 minutes late returning from a movie that you attended with one of your good friends. Your parents should

- a. tell you that you are late, restate the rules, and take away your use of the car for a week.
- b. tell you that they were worried and convince you of the importance of letting them know when you are going to be late. Listen to your side of the story, but see that you understand the expectations.
- c. have a friendly discussion with you about why you were late. Explore what you can do in the future if it looks like you will be late.
- d. let you know that they are happy that you are home. Explain that because you were late and had not called, they thought something might have happened to you. They should not make a big deal out of the issue.

Situation 3. The cast coordinator of your school's upcoming musical variety show is not getting along with the backstage crew leader. In the past, they have not demonstrated the interpersonal skills necessary to work together. They seem to be spending more time trying to catch one another doing something wrong, rather than working out their differences. The conflict is drastically affecting the performance of cast members at rehearsals. As leader of this effort you would

- a. listen to each of the team members, and then decide what they need to do to work together more effectively. Make it clear that they must solve this problem.
- b. discuss the situation with both of them, but not take control or impose your solution on them. Help them to explore their solutions to the problem. Make it clear that the problem must be solved.

- c. tell the team members the problem as you see it. Outline the steps that need to be followed in order to alleviate the problem, and follow up to see that those steps are implemented.
- d. let the team members know that you are aware of the situation. Ask them to take care of it. Observe and follow up after a while to see if the problem is resolved.

Situation 4: A new student has just been assigned to one of your classes. He does not understand how to do much of the work, but he tries hard to complete all of his assignments. He goes to the teacher and asks for advice. The teacher should

- a. ask the student to put his concerns on paper and then come back to her.
- b. tell the student how to accomplish his work, but ask for and consider his suggestions and input also. Explain the rationale for procedures, while emphasizing how he should handle assignments.
- c. give the student specific guidelines on what to do and how to do it.
- d. listen to the student's concerns, discuss the problems he has, and explain that this struggle is a natural process of learning new material. Praise his work ethic.

Rationale for Choices

Situation 1: Item d. Your brother is capable and committed to keeping his room in order. He will likely resolve this single incident of disorderliness on his own.

Situation 2: Item b. It appears that you are an excellent driver and highly responsible person. A "hands-off" approach is best. You will likely tell your parents why you were late, knowing they would be worried.

Situation 3: Item c. This duo lacks the motivation and interpersonal skills to work well together. Their personality conflicts have resulted in a lack of commitment to working out these problems. A controlled form of negotiation is needed to get them on track.

Situation 4: Item d. This individual does not appear to have competence to be successful at this point. He is asking for advice and exhibits motivation and commitment to the situation. An immediate intervention to help him succeed is needed.