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CONFLICTS IN TEENAGERS' LIFE

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Introduction

Human beings have been in conflict since the very beginning of history. Conflict is defined as an irreconcilable contention between two or more parties. Human history is really that of conflict. War can be traced back to the advent of civilization. The Neolithic Revolution brought the domestication of plants and animals resulting in food surpluses. Early conflicts were a contest to control the most and best resources. Conflict through the ages has shaped us into what and who we are today.



The aim of my project is to learn some information about conflicts, different types and examples of conflicts, ways of addressing conflict and how to understand a conflict.

To achieve this aim I have learnt a great amount of information from the Internet, books and magazines and held the investigation – I asked our schoolmates (pupils of 9-10 forms) some questions connected with the topic.

The objectives of the work are:

- To develop skills of research work and their application to the solution of actual practical tasks
- To find out answers to some questions closely connected with the topic
- To give some advice how to avoid or to resolve conflicts
- To make the video about our schoolmates
- To discuss the results of our research paper with our friends at the school conference

Chapter I. What is conflict?

Conflict is actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. A conflict is a struggle between people. The struggle may be physical, or between conflicting ideas. The word comes from Latin “conflingere”. “Conflingere” means “to come together for a battle”. A conflict can be internal (within oneself) to individuals. Conflict as a concept can help explain many aspects of social life such as social disagreement, conflicts of interests, and fights between individuals, groups, or organizations. In political terms, "conflict" can refer to wars, revolutions or other struggles, which may involve the use of force as in the term armed conflict. Without proper social arrangement or resolution, conflicts in social settings can result in stress or tensions among stakeholders. When an interpersonal conflict does occur, its effect is often broader than two individuals involved, and can affect many associate individuals and relationships, in more or less adverse, and sometimes even way. Very often, conflicts lead to fights, or even wars (in the case where conflicts are solved with weapons). Conflict between ideas is usually fought with propaganda.

Conflict management refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts. It is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle grievances – standing up for what they consider to be right and against what they consider to be wrong. Those ways include such diverse phenomena as gossip, ridicule, lynching, terrorism, warfare, feuding, genocide, law, mediation, and avoidance. Which forms of conflict management will be used in any given situation can be somewhat predicted and explained by the social structure – or social geometry – of the case. [1]

How to understand a conflict? Conflict as taught for graduate and professional work in conflict resolution (which can be win-win, where both parties get what they want, win-lose where one party gets what they want, or lose-lose where both parties don't get what they want) commonly has the definition: "when

two or more parties, with perceived incompatible goals, seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capability".[2]

A clash of interests, values, actions or directions often sparks a conflict. Conflicts refer to the existence of that clash. Psychologically, a conflict exists when the reduction of one motivating stimulus involves an increase in another, so that a new adjustment is demanded. The word is applicable from the instant that the clash occurs. Even when we say that there is a potential conflict we are implying that there is already a conflict of direction even though a clash may not yet have occurred.

Five basic ways of solving conflict were identified by Thomas and Kilmann in 1976. [3]

- Accommodation – surrender one's own needs and wishes to accommodate the other party.
- Avoidance – avoid or postpone conflict by ignoring it, changing the subject, etc. Avoidance can be useful as a temporary measure to buy time or as an expedient means of dealing with very minor, non-recurring conflicts. In more severe cases, conflict avoidance can involve severing a relationship or leaving a group.
- Collaboration – work together to find a mutually beneficial solution. While the Thomas Kilman grid views collaboration as the only win-win solution to conflict, collaboration can also be time-intensive and inappropriate when there is not enough trust, respect or communication among participants for collaboration to occur.
- Compromise – bring the problem into the open and have the third person present. The aim of conflict resolution is to reach agreement and most often this will mean compromise.

- Competition – assert one's viewpoint at the potential expense of another. It can be useful when achieving one's objectives outweighs one's concern for the relationship.

Examples of conflicts. We have learned so far that a Conflict is actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. A conflict can be internal (within oneself) to individuals. In political terms, "conflict" can refer to wars, revolutions or other struggles, which may involve the use of force as in the term armed conflict. Several academical disciplines deal with conflicts, most obvious are conflict or peace science, but also political science in a more general setting and economical disciplines since conflict is often based on unequal proposition of goods. Now let's carry on: Are there particular patterns of conflicts which could help to understand these situations better? Scientists have researched conflicts for centuries and even longer. History is in essence the first approach to analyze conflicts, and historians have always been there - from ancient times.

The main types of conflicts

- Person vs. Person (problem with another character).
- Person vs. Society (problem with the laws of beliefs of a group).
- Person vs. Nature (problem with force of nature, such as a blizzard or high winds).
- Person vs. Self (problem with deciding what to do or think).
- Person vs. Fate (problem that seems to be uncontrollable).

The river Rhine at the borderline between Germany and France was always an object of pride for both sides. Setting their border to the shores of river Rhine was the aim of the French foreign policy until the founding of the European Union kind of "solved" this dispute after the second world war. The importance however of the river Rhine for the German cultural heritage can easily be understood if one

studies the German classical literature, beginning with the "Nibelungen". River Rhine is male in the German language - also an interesting point.

Sofia and Bulgaria

The history of Bulgaria is full of war and struggle for power. Having been a local superpower in medieval ages, it became occupied by the Otoman empire for four centuries. The conflict between the Christian-orthodox Bulgarians and the Muslim Turks was never really solved with many uprisings taking place. The decline of the Otoman empire in the 19.th century allowed the final Bulgarian uprising with strong support from Russia - and helped Bulgaria to gain its independence again. Like in many other Balkan countries, the architecture is a mosaic of different cultural influences. One of the best ways to study this "microcosmos" is a visit to the Bulgarian capital Sofia. The city has a Roman, an old Bulgarian, an Otoman and a communist heritage - not to forget the last 20 years with its strong economic development resulting in modern business complexes and malls.

Peace studies at Bradford university [4]

What causes conflicts and wars? How can I analyze them? What do mediators and negotiators do? Do they need to be powerful? Why are so many conflicts being resolved by professional mediators outside the courts in the UK? What skills do I need to become a mediator? These are some of the questions that concern Conflict Resolution - a distinct and growing interdisciplinary field of study with very practical applications. Conflict Resolution focuses on understanding and analyzing conflicts at different levels and exploring the various theories, methods and means for their management and resolution. A degree in Conflict Resolution will give you the skills you need to provide informed answers to the questions above and the opportunity to learn and practice applied mediation, negotiation and facilitation skills.

Conflict of interests

- Self-policing of any group is also a conflict of interest. If any organization, such as a corporation or government bureaucracy, is asked to eliminate unethical behaviour within their own group, it may be in their interest in the short run to eliminate the appearance of unethical behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself, by keeping any ethical breaches hidden, instead of exposing and correcting them. An exception occurs when the ethical breach is already known by the public. In that case, it could be in the group's interest to end the ethical problem to which the public has knowledge, but keep remaining breaches hidden.

- Insurance companies retain claims adjusters to represent their interest in adjusting claims. It is in the best interest of the insurance companies that the very smallest settlement is reached with its claimants. Based on the adjuster's experience and knowledge of the insurance policy it is very easy for the adjuster to convince an unknowing claimant to settle for less than what they may otherwise be entitled which could be a larger settlement. There is always a very good chance of a conflict of interest to exist when one adjuster tries to represent both sides of a financial transaction such as an insurance claim. This problem is exacerbated when the claimant is told, or believes, the insurance company's claims adjuster is fair and impartial enough to satisfy both theirs and the insurance company's interests. These types of conflicts could be easily be avoided by the use of disclosures.

- A person working as the equipment purchaser for a company may get a bonus proportionate to the amount he's under budget by year end. However, this becomes an incentive for him to purchase inexpensive, substandard equipment. Therefore, this is counter to the interests of those in his company who must actually use the equipment.

National conflicts. The American Revolution. (It was the political upheaval during the last half of the 18th century in which thirteen colonies in North America

joined together to break free from the British Empire, combining to become the United States of America.)

- The Haitian Revolution [5].(It was a period of brutal conflict in the French colony of Saint-Dominica , leading to the elimination of slavery and the establishment of Haiti as the first republic ruled by people of African ancestry.)
- The Spanish American wars of independence. (They were the numerous wars against Spanish rule in Spanish America that took place during the early 19th century, from 1808 until 1829, directly related to the Napoleonic French invasion of Spain.).

Chapter II. Conflicts in teenagers' life.

The age between 14 and 17 is considered to be one of the best periods in people's life. Grown-ups remind it with excitement and tenderness. But most teens don't agree with this opinion. They're sure and that's quite true that they are overwhelmed with different problems. These problems are quite serious and they can't be considered trifles.

Our grandparents say that nowadays the younger generation has a more difficult life than they had. They explain it taking into consideration the change of the economic formation from the socialist to capitalist. They are also sure that the younger generation that is youth is not sure in its future. As for me I partially agree with them but I think that nowadays there are more possibilities and ways of development, more rights than before. Of course one should remember not only his rights but also duties. When a person is young he or she perceives the problems sharper, for teenagers nearly everything becomes a tragedy. Love, friendship, conflicts - these are all the things that go hand in hand with youth. Young people who are alike become friends, they spend time in their own companies share the same opinions, have common interests. Those who are different are very often in the state of a conflict, because they cannot control their emotions. Very often such "hot" boys set one group against the other and the conflict becomes serious.

All people have problems. Some of them need to solve many problems; the others have one or two problems only. Young people have as many problems as the grown-ups. It is possible to solve some problems but sometimes we cannot solve them.

Teenagers have psychological problems which can be explained by their psychological instability. This is the reason of their strange and sometimes aggressive behaviour. Their aggression can be aimed at their friends, teachers, parents and people around them. If these conflicts aren't solved and regulated by

experienced specialists, psychologists, teachers it can lead to far more serious problems.

Youth is also the time to meet your first love. It is of course wonderful but as it is widely known that first love often has an unhappy end. This also increases young people's conflicts. Even friends cannot always stay friends when young people begin to understand themselves a little bit better. And sometimes teenagers have problems in communicating with each other and they even stay alone.

Traditionally the young meet after classes with their school or university friends at a cafe or a club to get fun, relax and acquire new friends. They go to the cinemas, theatres, concert halls or disco clubs. Teenagers are very friendly and sincere. They have a lot of friends. But they also have many conflicts connected with lie, betrayal, misunderstanding, etc. Close friends often quarrel. I have best friend, we sometimes have conflicts, but she understands me greatly. I am grateful for it very much.

Some teenagers avoid conflicts. A lot of young people take the blame on themselves. Aggressive groups of boys arrange fights and beat a person which opinion is opposite that opinion of this group of teenagers. It is so bad and stupid. In opinion if you want to resolve conflict, you will make a compromise. It is position of kind and peaceful adults. And kind teenagers must imitate it.

Family conflicts. Youth is the time when a person is trying to find his place in the world. And during this search he or she comes across different problems which are as important as those of the adults. Parents and teens can live together, more or less harmoniously, if parents know what to expect and are willing to make some adjustments in the way they think and act. Grown-ups always teach the young how to live. But the latter want to live own their life. And it generates the conflict of the generations.

Sometimes we have different tastes. I like the proverb "There is no accounting for tastes". For example, I go to the shops with my mother. She likes this dress but I like that one. My mother wants me to buy this dress. But I am sure, that dress is much to my taste. My parents want me to be a teacher as they are skilled teachers but I have a taste for music, and my dream is to be a composer.

Every generation is unique in its experience. The adults always teach the young how to live. They apply old standards to the new way of life. The young think that the adults have lost touch with everything that is important in life. They are right, because what is important to the adults is the past. The young know what they want. They prefer to make their own mistakes rather than to listen to the warnings of the adults. The young want to live their own life. They want to overcome their own difficulties without turning back. The young and adults have different points of view concerning everything. And it generates the conflict of the generations. In the 19th century Ivan Turgenev in his novel "Fathers and Sons" perfectly illustrated the eternal problem of fathers and children's misunderstanding.

Every young generation has more complicated problems than previous. And maybe nowadays teenagers have more problems than other generations. And this difference awakes misunderstandings with parents. Sometimes it seems that our parents are too tiresome and dull in their demands. And also they often interfere into our life.

Parents often say that we are lazy and can't do anything except rest. Moreover they give not much money, and we hardly can find a job because in our age we cannot be responsible for money of firm or do some kinds of job. And there is a great problem: parents also always doubt in our independence.

Now we are young people and we are the future of our country. Grown up's must remember that we are the future of our country and in present moment our character is formed and that's why our parents must not assert pressure on us.

As for me, I get on with my parents all right. I know that thousands of young people run away from their homes each year, because they don't get on with their parents well. Every day I can talk with my mother about everything. And she knows my problems as well as her own. Mother always gives me necessary, correct advice. Many parents are busy, but my mother always helps me.

As you see it's very difficult to be young nowadays as indeed it always was. But you can be young ones and some wonderful things can happen to you only when you're young. So it's better to enjoy youth while it lasts.

What does society think about life being a teen? Relations play great role in teenagers' attitude towards their life during this period. Let's see how they find teenagers' existence [6].

It's great to be a teenager. They think that the teenage years are the most wonderful years in their life. At this age they start a new adult life.

It's fearful to be a teenager. The world is becoming a very scary place. More and more teens are turning to drugs and alcohol. Young people are under pressure of their mates who say it's just fun to smoke and drink beer.

Being a teenager is romantic. Teenagers fall in love for the first time. It's a real event!

It's not easy to be young. Teenagers have a lot of problems. Nowadays we have a lot of things to worry about because problems at school and problems with parents can result in violence, teen pregnancy, drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

It's fun to be a teenager. They can visit teenage clubs, parties, see my friends and enjoy my teenage years to the max. I have a lot of friends, schoolmates and classmates who are very nice to me.

You see, teenagers have their own view of life and problems in this period of life. It depends on their social position, values and, of course, relations with parents. Just like with any relationship, building a positive relationship between parent and child is one that requires work and effort to make it strong and successful. Parenting is a tough job, and maintaining close relationships and open communications helps to ensure parents and their children stay connected through all ages of their upbringing.

Chapter III. Investigation.

To achieve the aim of our project we held the investigation. We asked our schoolmates (9-10 forms) some questions connected with the topic.

Questionnaire

1. How often do you have conflicts?

- Constantly
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

2. What are the most common causes of conflicts?

- Misunderstanding
- Lie
- Betrayal
- Bad mood
- Rivalry
- Envy

3. Whom do you often have conflicts with?

- Close friend
- Friends
- Classmates

- Parents or relatives
- Teachers
- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Who else?

4. How do you resolve conflicts?

- I take the blame on myself
- I compel somebody to be sorry to me
- I undertake nothing
- I arrange a fight
- I make a compromise
- Your variant

5. Is it possible to avoid conflicts?

- Yes, always
- Yes, in most cases
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- No

Some questions about you:

1. Sex: Male/Female
2. Form: 9/10

According to the results of the questionnaire [Appendix], a lot of girls sometimes have conflicts. It is normal, because there are no teenagers living without conflicts. About 35% often have conflicts, and only 12% of girls constantly have conflicts. In my opinion these results are connected with problems at school, in a family and between friends.

Misunderstanding is the main cause of conflicts in girls' life, but also 27% of girls have conflicts because they have a bad mood today. About 14% think that lie is important cause of their conflicts, and they are right. Many of my friends and relatives hate when somebody lies. And only 3% of girls say that rivalry and envy are common causes of our conflicts.

27% of girls often have conflicts with their parents and relatives. About 23% have conflicts with friends, because girls usually argue about fashion, films, music, boys and their friendship. 17% of girls have conflicts with their boyfriends. Girls are very nervous, tender and delicate, therefore they need support, attention and love. 13% also have conflicts with teachers, because girls do not agree and are upset about their marks at school. 10% of girls have conflicts with close friends; they have faith in best friends and want to know everything about them.

About 56% of girls make a compromise if they want to resolve conflict. 22% undertake nothing in conflict situation. I think it is not good, when you don't control situation. 11% of girls take the blame on their selves. Only 7% compel somebody to be sorry to them, it is bad trait of character. These girls are very artful, impudent and haughty. And 4% of girls (!) will arrange a fight if they want resolve their conflicts. Why not?! I can't denounce their actions. May be they are very sporty and brave girls.

About 54% of girls think that it is possible to avoid conflicts in most cases. It is very positive mood and this is praiseworthy. 27% say that it sometimes is possible to avoid conflicts. 12% of girls think that it seldom is possible. And about 7% of girls say that it is not possible to avoid conflicts. They are very pessimistic,

because in my opinion everybody can avoid some things. You need only want to change your life to the best.

Boys are calmer than girls. About 40% of boys seldom have conflicts. It is good, because these students spare their nerves. 27% sometimes have conflicts. But 20% of boys often have conflicts and 13% constantly have conflicts. I think these statistics are unwell. It means that teenagers are very irritable and high-strung. It is connected with modern mode of life for children and juveniles.

Misunderstanding is also the main cause of conflicts in boys' life. 20% of boys say that the most common cause of their conflicts is bad mood. About 17% think the main causes of conflicts are lie and rivalry. Boys trust their friends and hate liars. Boys compete with peers in sport, studying, minds, etc. 12% of boys think that envy is important cause of their conflicts, because envy is terrible feeling. If someone envies you, you will feel unwell, it's not great.

26% of boys often have conflicts with friends and parents or relatives. These conflicts are connected with different interests and problems of generations. About 16% of boys have conflicts with their classmates, because almost each boy wants to be a leader in his class. 10% have conflicts with girlfriends and teachers. It means that some boys are selfish and contentious. 6% of boys often have conflicts with everyone, in my opinion they are very aggressive and impertinent. One day they will become adults and will understand that it is necessary to avoid conflicts in our life.

Half of boys exactly make a compromise if they want to resolve conflicts. It is good attitude. 25% take the blame on themselves in this situation. They act in a masculine way. But 17% of boys also compel somebody to be sorry to them. Maybe, there are some boys in our school, who think just only about themselves. They say that they are always right in everything. Boys are more peaceful than our girls; nobody of boys arranges a fight in conflict situation. It means that they can resolve conflicts in a peaceful way.

About 53% of boys think that it is possible to avoid conflicts sometimes. 33% say that it is possible in most cases. 7% of boys think that it always is possible to avoid conflicts. And nobody of boys says that it is not possible. I think that it is very positive. These boys are cheerful and tactful than some girls in our school, who think that it is not possible to avoid conflicts.

Conclusions

What is conflict? It is the expression of disagreement over something important to both (or all) sides of a dispute. The first important thing to grasp is that it is entirely dependent on the people involved. It depends on their having a particular point of view, which may or may not have independent facts and evidence to support it, and on how they behave when they encounter an opposing point of view.

Young people have not only lack experience, but also often have little foresight. Parents should teach their teens to think like chess players: before they make a move, they should try to anticipate the consequences. "What will happen to me if I make this next decision or choice?" At the same time, parents should be asking themselves "What can I do in this situation to help my teen be more responsible?"

Many teenagers think that school spoils our childhood and takes a lot of time. But they make a very big mistake. In future people understand that the school time was the best in their lives, but it can't return. And we also understand it, because after two years we'll finish school, and everyone will have its own future. Sometimes I want to become an adult, because I want to see my future, but at the same time I want to be always little, to be always with my friends and parents, and never lose them, but I know – unfortunately it is impossible.

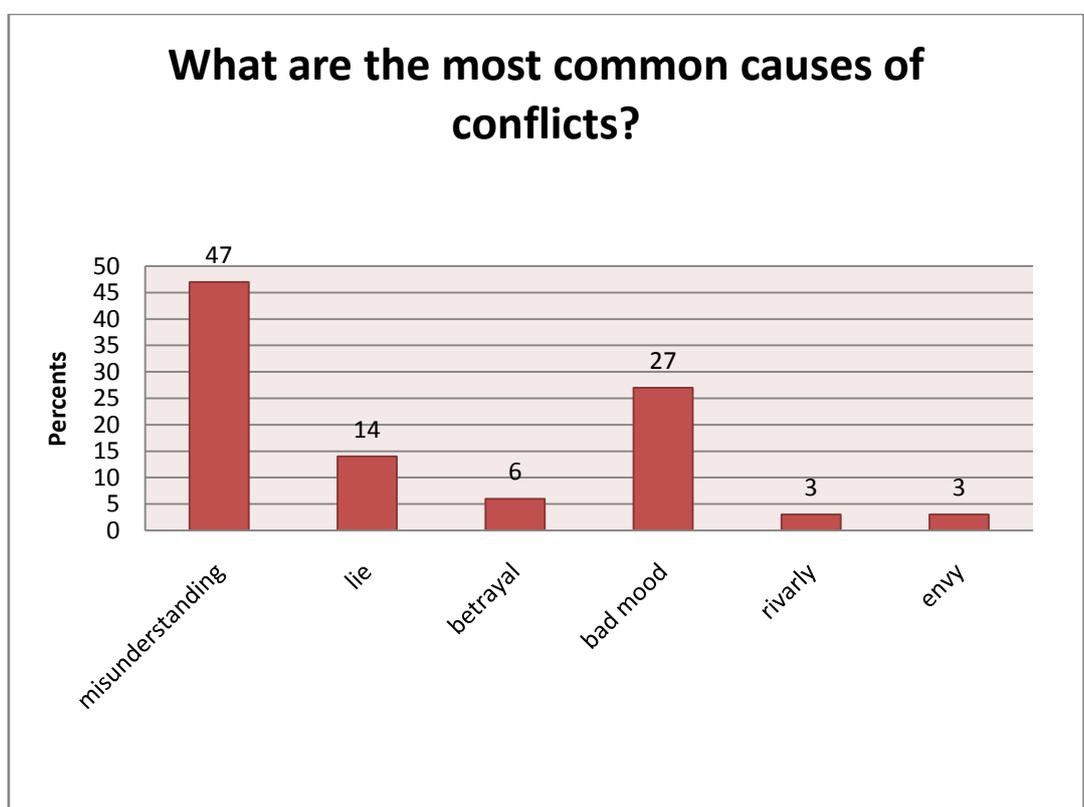
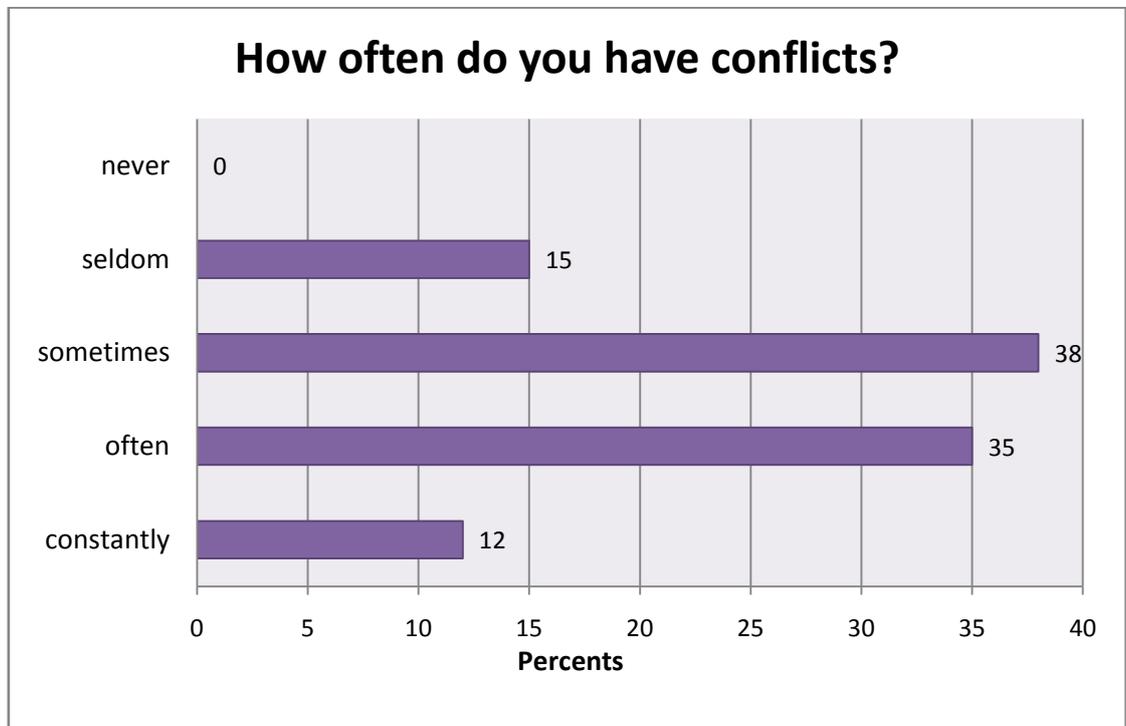
I think we should learn to be tolerant and try to understand each other and resolve conflicts in a peaceful way.

Literature

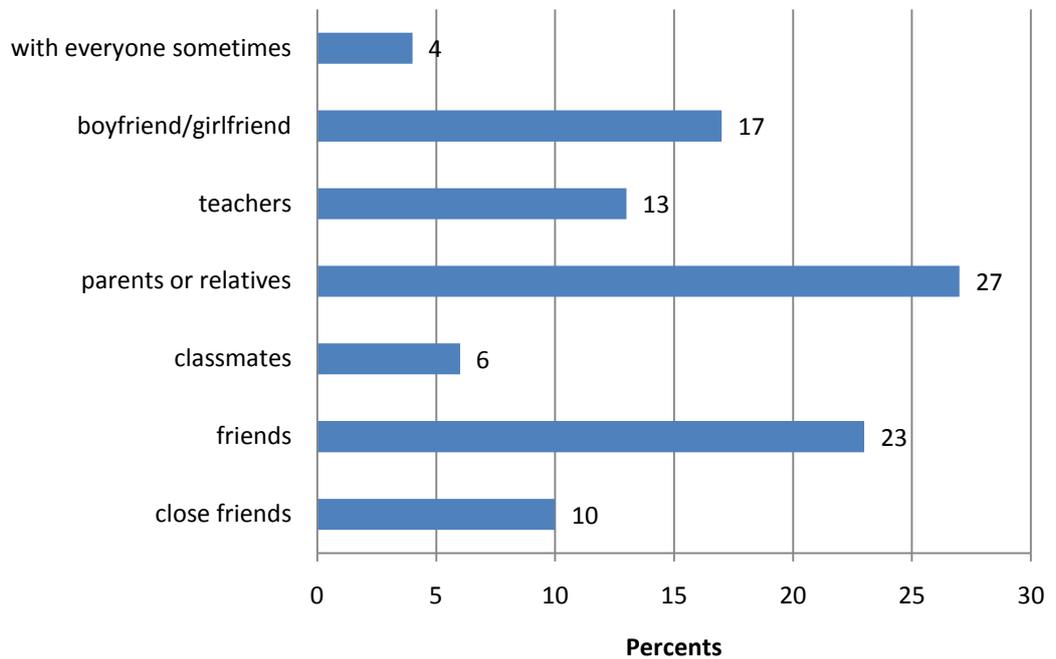
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The results of the questionnaire

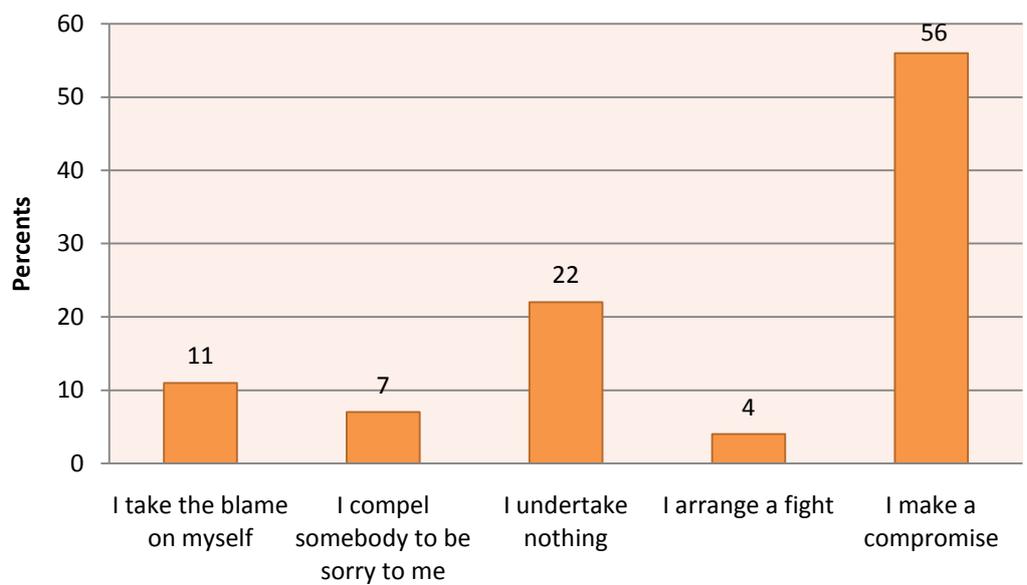
Girls, 9-10 form



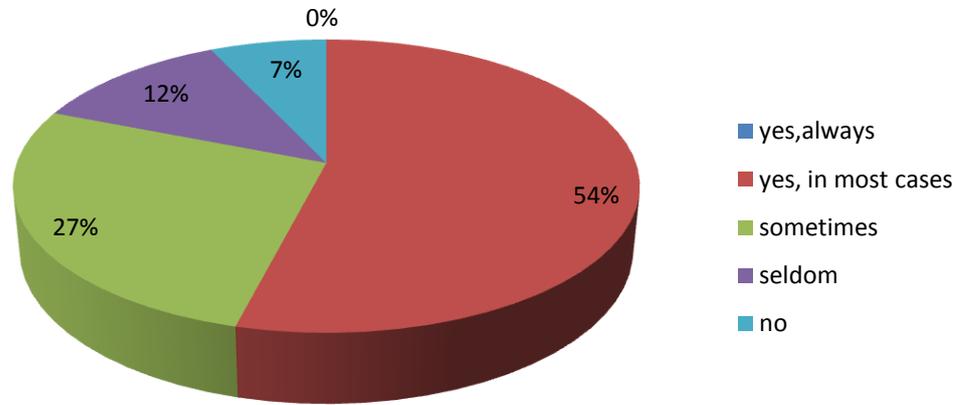
Whom do you often have conflicts with?



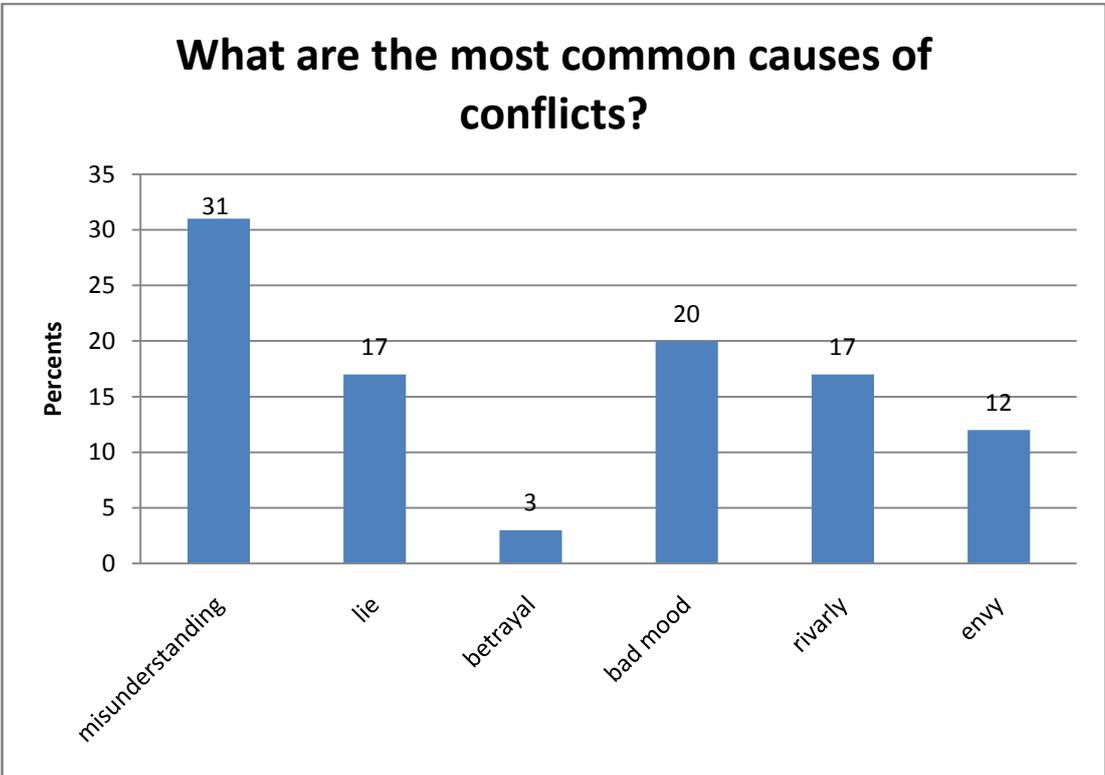
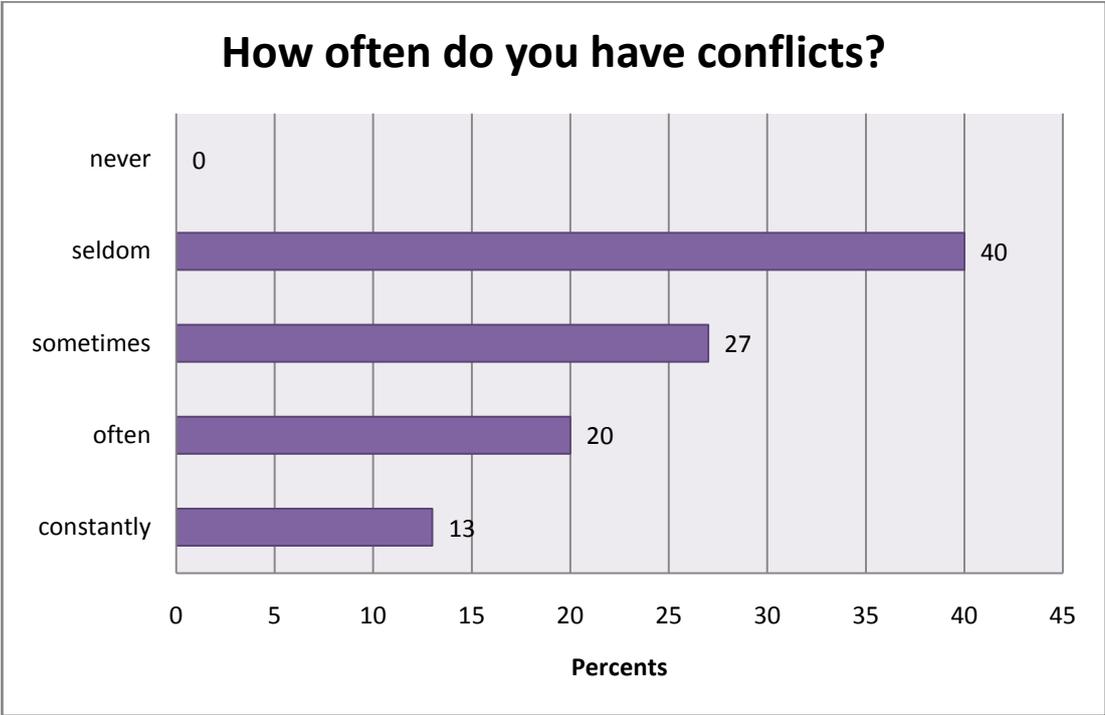
How do you resolve conflicts?



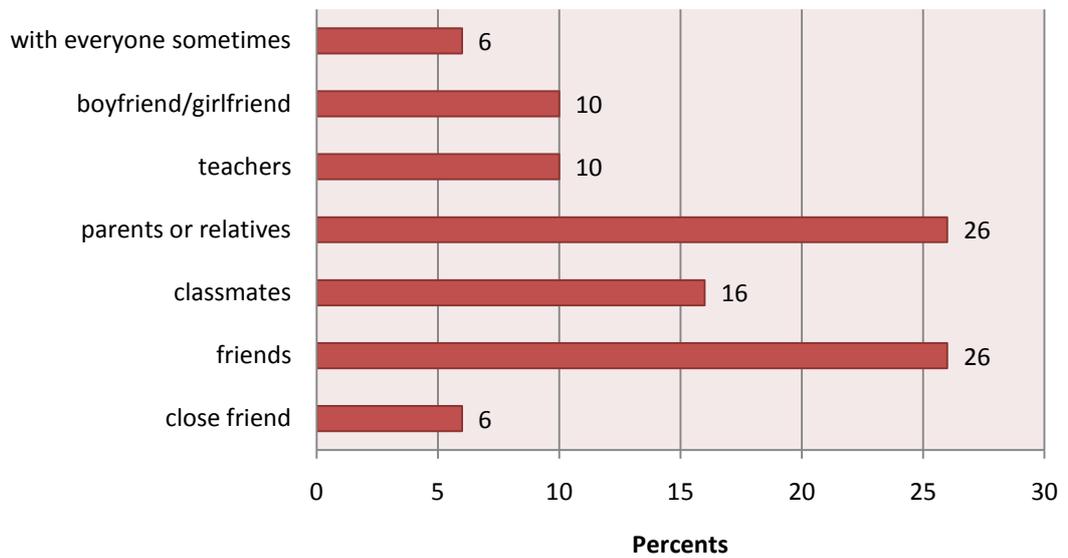
Is it possible to avoid conflicts?



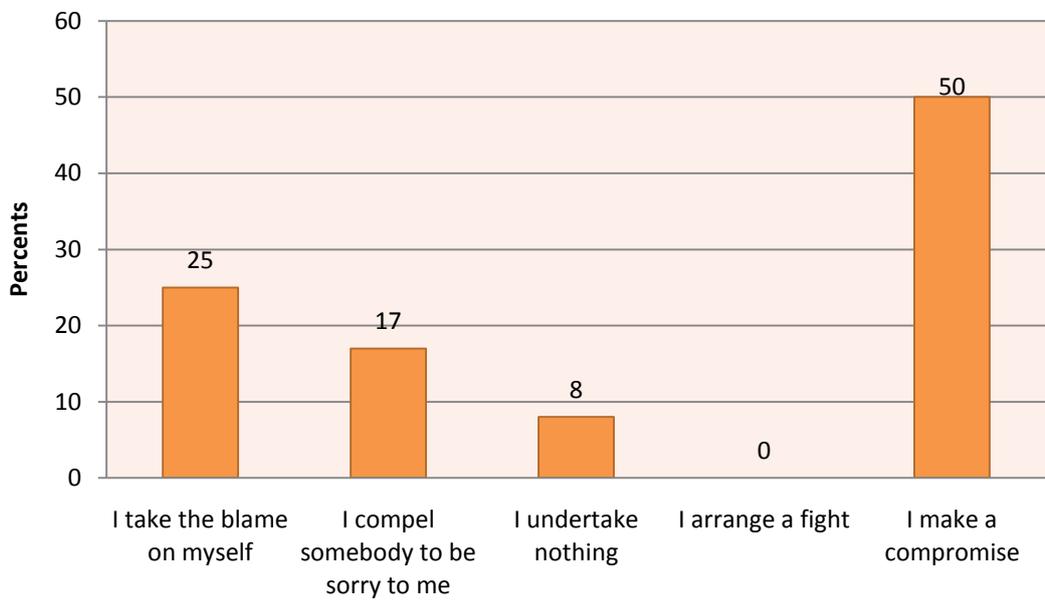
Boys, 9-10 form



Whom do you often have conflicts with?



How do you resolve conflicts?



Is it possible to avoid conflicts?

