I DEAL
Conflict and Peace
Module
of War Child’s I DEAL intervention

How to deal with conflict in my life?
War Child Holland is an independent international non-governmental organization. The organization invests in a peaceful future of children affected by armed conflict. War Child Holland is part of War Child International, a network of independent organizations.

War Child programs strengthen psychosocial development, contribute to peace-building processes and advocate for the rights of children and youth, applying the power of creative arts and sports.

War Child Holland has programs in Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo, Georgia, Israel and Palestinian Territories, Kosovo, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

Conflict and Peace
Module of War Child’s IDEAL intervention

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**THEME INTRODUCTION**

We often associate the word ‘conflict’ with large-scale armed clashes: war, rebels, and fighting. However, conflicts can also be small and less violent: quarrels with friends, parents, or teachers. Conflicts may even exist within yourself. This module addresses those smaller conflicts and helps searching ways to deal with them.

*Conflict is a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests, or concerns.*
*Peace is the absence of violence and a state of harmony within and between people or groups.*

**Conflict as a part of life**

Conflict can be regarded as a natural part of human existence. People have different values, opinions and interests. These clash from time to time. If you deal with that constructively, conflict can represent a positive dynamic – a force of change.

Peace is not only the absence of war or armed violence. When war is absent, people can still be marginalized, exploited and discriminated against. A society in peace can still be unjust, unequal and mean. This is called ‘negative peace’.

‘Positive peace’ is different. It is about social relationships, structures and a culture that enhance the capacity of human beings. When there is positive peace, groups and institutions manage conflicts non-violently and constructively.

We cannot avoid all conflicts altogether, but we have to deal with the conflicts arising. People will naturally disagree on certain matters. The challenge is to deal with the differences and find constructive solutions towards positive peace.

**Conflict analysis**

Social conflicts are complex. They involve many actors in processes that are usually complicated. Sometimes conflicts escalate in intensity and violence; in other occasions they de-escalate. Then, again, they may fall back into violence, before taking a new step towards peace.

We should try to analyze what a conflict is about to be able to contribute to peace. We can do this by looking at the stages a conflict goes through and the levels on which the conflict is taking place. Who is involved? How decisions are being made, and which are the specific issues leading to conflict? A metaphor for processes of conflict is the lifecycle of a fire:

**Stage 1: Gathering materials for the fire**

Before a fire is started, materials for the fire are being collected. Some of these materials are dry, ready to burn. Their will not be a fire before someone lits it, but the requirements are there.

This metaphorically stands for a *potential conflict*. ‘Burnable’ materials to big social conflict may be injustice, inequality or a fundamental difference in goals. In a smaller context, the same ingredients apply. One of the children may, for instance, have fostered a long jealousy toward another peer.
Stage 2: Fire is lit
In the next stage, someone lits a match. The fire starts to burn. The driest materials, collected in the first stage, ignite first.

In the conflict parallel, the start of the fire is the confrontation. This can be a confrontation between political parties, like a large public demonstration. Social unrest may explode. At the lower level, between children, a certain mean remark may be the match igniting the fight.

Stage 3: Raging fire
The fire burns as far and fast as it can, burning wildly out of control. Even the materials, that were not to dry in the beginning, may be captured by the raging fire.

In conflict terms: the confrontation reaches a bigger crisis. In the largest context, we speak of war. At the low level, one could think of a child engaging in fights at a structural level, involving more and more peers and getting angry about all kinds of other reasons that had been under the surface, before.

Stage 4: Glowing coal
At some point, the fire abates. All fuel is burned. The flames largely vanish but coals continue to glow. The fire seems to have disappeared, but new fuel would immediately bring back the flames.

In the metaphor, this stands for an unresolved conflict. The apparent signs of conflict may have died out, but the conflict is still alive. In this stage, a conflict can either continue or cool down to a peaceful level. However, new ‘fuel’ would re-ignite the old conflict.

Stage 5: Everything cool again
In the end, all fires stop. No more flames and no more coals burning. Everything is cool again. Ashes remain. What burnt is lost, but the place of the fire is safe now.

In this end stage of conflict, it is time to regenerate what has been lost, and let new things grow on the scorched earth.

Levels of conflict
Broadly speaking, we can distinguish four levels where conflict occurs:

1. Intrapersonal: within an individual, thoughts, ideas, and emotions conflict.
2. Interpersonal: a conflict between two or more individuals.
3. Intragroup: a conflict within a sports team, family, community, or class.
4. Intergroup: a conflict between communities, gangs, or ethnic groups.

Goals of this module
Children have gained insight and tools to deal with conflicts

Session 1: Types and causes of conflict
Goal: children are aware of different types of conflict and of causes of conflict

Session 2: Conflicts in your own life
Goal: children have insight in the conflicts in their own environment
Session 3: How to deal with conflict
Goal: children have learned more peaceful ways to deal with conflicts in their own environment

Session 4: Promoting a culture of peace
Goal: children have ideas and insight on how to foster a culture of peace
SESSION 1: TYPES AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Goal: Children are aware of different types of conflict and of causes of conflict

Methods: Group talk
         Exercises
         After-talk

Resources: 4 apples or small objects (like pens or stones), mystery pictures

Group talk
Welcome everybody! Let us start with a game to warm up.

Exercise 1: Apple pickers
Warming up (15 minutes).

1. Place an apple (or other small object like a stone, pencil or stick) in each corner of the space. If you are in the open air, place these objects about 10 meters from a central point, in the four points of the compass.

2. Make a team of 4 children and place them in the middle of the room (or the central point, if being in the open air).

3. Ask them to stand back to backs (faces outward) and to put their arms through those of their neighbors (linking their elbows).

4. Instruct them to all pick one apple (object) as quickly as possible, without letting go of each other. Explain that the team is not allowed to speak!

5. The rest of the group observes the team. When finished, ask the children:
   - How long do the children take to get their object?
   - Did they start working as a team or as an individual?
   - Was there a conflict in the process of getting the apples? If so, how did they solve it? If not, what prevented a conflict?

6. Do a second round with other children and see if they changed the approach.

Group talk
In this game we saw a group that had to deal with the interest of each person (in this case it was getting an apple as quickly as possible). But because of being linked with the elbows, nobody could just do his/her own thing. Situations like this can lead to a conflict. But if the group cooperates, they solve the problem without any difficulties.

In the coming sessions we will look at conflicts. We will see what type of conflict you experience in your life. Then we will look how to deal with it in a positive way.
Now, can you explain or describe what a conflict is? (Let the children answer. Make sure they are NOT only talking about big conflicts here like the War, but also about their own smaller conflicts.)

Is conflict good or bad? When is it good, when is it bad? Can we always prevent a conflict from arising? Should we always prevent it?

Emphasize that conflict simply is a natural part of life. It is very difficult to always prevent a conflict. Most people have a very negative view of conflict. They feel it provokes anger, causing fights. Some people see it as a waste of time.

In reality, conflict does not always have to be a negative experience. The important part is: how do people DEAL with a conflict. One can learn a lot from a conflict situation. Sometimes conflict is even needed to ‘clear the air’.

We will do now some exercises to make clear how a conflict can start.

**Exercise 2: Mystery pictures**

*Explaining conflicting perspectives (5-10 minutes).*

1. Show picture 1 to the group (see Annex to Session 1 on pages 12 and 14). Ask the children to describe the image to the group. Make sure they see both the vase and the two faces.
2. Show picture 2. Make sure they see both the old and the young woman.

**Group talk**

How come we can see the same thing in different ways? That is hard to say, but we do. The same thing happens when people are in conflict. They look at the same situation in different ways. Just like with the pictures.

A conflict is difficult to resolve when the fighting parties state that the other is wrong and are not open to the vision or opinion of the other party.

**Exercise 3: Levels of conflict**

*Discovering the possible contexts of conflict (40 minutes).*

- **Intrapersonal:** within an individual, thoughts, ideas, and emotions conflict.
- **Interpersonal:** a conflict between two or more loose individuals.
- **Intra group:** a conflict within a group: a sports team, family, community, or class.
- **Inter group:** a conflict between groups: communities, gangs, or ethnic groups.

1. Explain the children the 4 different levels of conflict, (see above & as mentioned on page 8)
2. Divide the group in 4 groups.
3. Assign the 4 levels of conflict to the 4 groups (each group a different level). Ask the groups to think of an example of this type of conflict, a certain situation that they know of.
4. Ask each group to make a 'still image' of their type of conflict. (If this is too difficult they also can make a small role-play.)
5. Invite each group to show their image to the others. Ask the other children if they recognize the type of conflict depicted by each image. Make them discuss their own experiences on this level of conflict.

Assignment for next time
As you have seen in this session, conflict has many shapes and sizes. For next time, if you run into any kind of conflict situation: try to think what type of conflict it is. You can take examples from conflicts in which you yourself are involved, or conflicts you see between others. What are the causes of conflict? Which are the differences in perception?

Exercise 4: Thank you
Closing game (5 minutes).

1. Make a circle with all the children holding hands.
2. Explain that altogether you’re going to come to the center of the circle 3 times while bringing your hands forward. The first time you all whisper thank you with the hands low, the 2nd time you say thank you with the hands in front of you and the 3rd time you ‘shout’ thank you with the hands above the heads.
3. Do the 3 ‘Thank You’s’ all together.
Annex to Session 1: Mystery pictures

Picture 1
Old woman or young lady?
SESSION 2: CONFLICTS IN YOUR OWN LIFE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Children have insight in the conflicts in their own environment</th>
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| Methods: | Group talk  
Exercises  
After talk |
| Resources: | Flipchart, markers, objects (chairs or other objects suitable) |

Group talk
Welcome Everybody! Today, the assignment of last week will be important input for this session. But let us first start with an exercise.

Exercise 1: Chairs
Understanding causes & dynamics of conflict (25 minutes - including discussion afterwards).

1. Depending on the group size, have enough chairs (or other objects like balls or cones) put together in a certain (marked) area. There should be about as many objects as there are active participants.
2. Depending on the group size divide the group into active participants and observers
3. Distribute one of 3 instructions to each participant (A, B or C), they can read the instruction but shouldn’t reveal it to anyone:
   A: Put all the chairs (or other object) in a circle
   B: Put all the chairs (or other object) close to the door (or other mark point in your work space)
   C: Put all the chairs (or other object) close to the window (or other mark point in your work space)
4. Tell the group they have 5 minutes to carry out the instruction they received. You may tell the group that they are not allowed to speak during the exercise, or you can allow them to speak (but they cannot reveal their instructions to others though!)
5. It is important to be able to stop the participants if they get too carried away, so beforehand you need to agree on a signal on which they will freeze or stop!!

Group talk
Ask the group (let the Observers speak first): Did you see conflicts? On which levels there was conflict (intra personal, interpersonal, intra group?). What did the observers see happen? Why? How did the group/participants (try to) solve the problem? (How) did they solve the conflict? Did they use (physical) force? Did they
follow their instruction at any cost? How could they have solved the problem? Is this exercise of any relevance to daily life, how?

In this exercise, because the children had different assignments, they had conflicting interests. This is also the case in real life; people have different interests, goals or needs. We all experience conflicts; it is part of our lives. But sometimes it is hard to deal with conflict situations. What we will do in this session is to investigate some examples of conflicts from our own lives in order to understand them better. We will use role-play for this. Sharing these experiences may help us understand and deal with it.

Now we come to the assignment of last time: who ran into a conflict and wants to tell us about it?

First, try to list the examples of conflicts the participants come up with. When there are many, let the children choose two conflict situations that are most common. Try to get a concrete and relevant situation or incident so that the group can identify with the situation.

Note: from here up to exercise 5 you focus on one of the conflict situation the children have mentioned. Go through all the exercises. If time allows you take a second and third situation and go through all the steps again.

Exercise 2: Analyze the situation

Analyze a situation (5-10 minutes).

1. Explain that together we will try to understand more about the situation: Now let us look at one of the conflict situations that some of you mentioned.
2. Ask the children the 4 W’s (and make notes for yourself):
   - What happened? (Story, let the children be specific)
   - Who was involved? (Characters)
   - Where did it take place? (Location/setting)
   - When did it happen? (Time)

Note: the 5th W, ‘Why did it happen?’ (motive) will be discussed during the exercises, so at the start you don’t need to know this yet.

Exercise 3: Image of a theme

Children place themselves in the shoes of the different characters involved (10 minutes).

1. Let the children stand in a semi-circle.
2. Pick one of the conflict situations mentioned by the children.
3. For each main character involved in the conflict, ask the whole group to imagine their feelings during the conflict and express this all together. (For example: “Think of how the teacher felt when she saw the fight going on in the class”, then count 1-2-3 and all the participants make a sound and movement to express the teacher's feelings at that time. Then move to the next character involved).
4. Choose some children (depending on how many characters there are in the situation you want to portray) and let them stand in front of the semi-circle. The child that gave the example can be 'sculpting' the other children in the image of the situation.
5. Ask: How did this conflict start? Make a new (group) image of the moment that the conflict started.
6. Tap the shoulder of the different characters to get to know more about how they feel.

Exercise 4: Bringing the image to live (1)
Children get the chance to express, visualize and reflect on the conflict (30 minutes in combination with exercise 5) - Continuation of exercise 3.

1. Explain that with a clap you will bring the image to live, which means that the children in the image start to act out the conflict.
2. Depending on the situation, you can stop and start the scene and discuss with the children what they see, what the motives of the different characters are (tap the shoulder of the characters as a check).

Note: think of techniques like switching roles (giving different children the chance to act), tapping the shoulder, stopping and starting the scene and making time lapses.

3. If time allows, do this with 2 or 3 conflict situations that are most relevant for the group.

Group talk
Now we have put this conflict situation into a role-play, we can do with it what we want, we can direct it! So let us discuss what direction we want it to take? What could be possible solutions for this conflict? What steps are needed to make that solution happen? Who are involved? We will now make a start in finding solutions, but of course it takes certain skills, practice and time to learn how to deal with conflicts in real life. Next time there will be more room for practicing those skills.

Exercise 5: Bringing the image to live (2)
Children get the chance to express, visualize and reflect on the conflict (30 minutes in combination with exercise 4).

1. Let a new group of children act out the proposed solution for the conflict situation (possibly more alternatives).
2. Discuss how realistic the solutions are; could it happen like this in real life? Discuss that in real life, many steps may be needed to arrive at a solution. Explain that next time, we will work on the skills needed to deal with a conflict.
3. End with a big applause for all the performers that were involved in this session (probably everybody was a performer at some stage)!
Assignment for next time
Think about what you learned or liked most about playing these scenes or observing them so that you can tell this to the group next time.

Exercise 6: Mad chicken
Closing game to relax the minds & bodies (5 minutes).

1. Explain that the whole group is going to count from one to eight whilst shaking their right hand in the air. Repeat whilst shaking left hand, then right foot, left foot and shake waist.

2. The group repeats these 5 actions, but this time they only count up to four.

3. Repeat again, counting to two. And lastly count to one. Repeat this last part twice.
SESSION 3: HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

Goal: Children have learned more peaceful ways to deal with conflicts in their own environment

Methods: Group talk
Exercises
After talk

Resources: Notes from last time (about the conflict situation)

Exercise 1: Human knot

Problem solving and discuss the process of problem solving (15 minutes).

1. Ask a volunteer to step away from the venue and wait until he/she is called back (he/she shouldn't be able to see what is going on, so stepping away and closing eyes is also an option).
2. Ask the remaining group to form a big circle, holding hands and begin to form as many tangles by crossing over and under without breaking the circle. What one sees after doing this is a tangled structure of people's hands together.
3. Ask the volunteer back and inform him/her that the challenge is to untangle the structure to form a perfect circle making sure that people keep holding hands at all times.
4. Discuss: How was it to untangle the structure? What did you do to solve the 'entanglement'? When do we face entanglements in our lives and how do we undo them?

Note: If the group is too big make 2 groups and let 2 volunteers do the untangling; the group that is untangled first is the winner!

Group Talk

Last time different conflict situations were acted out. Let us look at the assignment of last time: did you think about what you learned most from playing the scenes? What was it?

So, different ways of how to deal with the conflict were already addressed. Now this session we want to look more closely at important skills that are needed to deal with conflicts. Also, we are going to look at the conflict situation again and look more closely at skills needed and steps that can be taken to resolve the conflict.

Ask the children: What is important when dealing with a conflict? Write down the answers. Go over the skills one by one and see if it can be connected to the skills below. If they don't mention the skills below, you explain the needed skills:
1. Listening skills

2. Perspective taking (Ability to take another persons perspective, remember the exercise of last time, with expressing the emotion of each character involved in the conflict)

3. You versus I statements: When being involved in a conflict, begin with I statements rather than You-statements: For example: “I felt angry because...” And not “YOU made me angry because...”. This way, you are not blaming or attacking the other person.

Exercise 2: resolving a conflict in stages

Strengthening analytical and conflict resolution skills (40 minutes).

1. Now let us pick one the conflict scenes of last time (consider picking one of the other conflict situations that were mentioned last time if the central conflict situation of last time was already fully 'played out' and 'solved')

2. Make the image of the scene again as a reminder. Make the image of the moment that the conflict is 'full-blown' (peak moment)

3. Explain that last time the group already thought of a solution. This time they will do it in a more structured way. Explain that together you will go through some steps to resolve this conflict:

   **I- Clarify the Needs:** ask the two main characters (or parties) of the conflict to describe what it is they need (they have to listen very well to each other, remember the 'you versus I' statement; they should not accuse each other, but explain to the other person what it is they need).

   **II- Identify the main issue:** ask the children (the audience) to summarize the main issue of the conflict: what is this conflict essentially about? Then ask the group what could be the common quest/solution for the two opponents.

   **III- Generate alternatives:** Ask the group to list different possibilities to reach this. They should only generate ideas, not criticize ideas of others.

   **IV- Evaluate alternatives:** what do the different parties like about the ideas? What do they not like? If one party doesn't like an idea, how could it be improved? Do the ideas meet the needs that were expressed at stage I? Is it realistic?

   **V- Choose a solution:** together with the group and the two opponents, choose a solution. Make sure everyone has the same understanding of the solution.

5. Ask the participants from the image to act out the solution, and make it a very lively and expressive scene!

Exercise 3: Zip zap boing

Closing game (10 minutes).

1. Ask the group to stand in a circle and explain that we will pass around an imaginary ball. We will do this by a gesture combined with the word zip, or zap or boing.
2. First you pass the ball to your left or right, you say 'ZIP' (and need to make the gesture of passing the ball).

3. Then you pass the ball to someone across (anyone except for your neighbors), and you say 'ZAP'.

4. When you do not want to receive a ball passed to you - through a 'zap'-, you say 'BOING', and that means the ball is given back to the person who gave it to you, who then needs to zip or zap someone else.

5. Practice the instructions step by step; first a few rounds 'zip', then a few rounds 'zap', few rounds zip & zap, lastly add 'boing' to the game.

Note: Zif zaf zoef is very similar to this game, but has slightly different rules:
In this game you say ZIF when passing to the left, ZAF when passing to the right, and ZOEF when passing it across the circle.

Make sure if using both that participants don’t get confused. Then it’s best to choose to introduce only one of the two.

Assignment for next time
See if you remember the stages of solving the conflict. If you remember the stages, choose one person (a friend, brother/ sister or another relative) to explain it to and tell about the situation that was put into a drama scene. Can you explain the process to someone else? If you don’t remember it, don’t be afraid to ask next time.
SESSION 4: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PEACE

Goal: Children have ideas and insight on how to foster a culture of peace

Methods: Group talk  
Exercises  
After talk

Resources: Papers (flipchart size), pens/crayons, enough copies of the donkey drawing (one for each pair) cut into 6 pieces.

**Group Talk**
Welcome everybody! Who did the assignment of last time? Who did you explain the stages to? Did everybody remember, or should they be repeated? Maybe one of the children can repeat the stages of resolving conflict in their own words.

**Exercise 1: Donkeys**
*Example of 'cooperation needed to achieve a goal' (15 minutes).*

1. Divide the group into pairs.
2. Give each pair a Donkey drawing cut into 6 (each image is separate).
3. Give them a few minutes to put the images in the 'right' order.
4. Discuss the drawing according to the 'stages to resolve conflict' that were introduced last time (ask the children, they can define it in their own way!):

   **I- Clarify the Needs:** Each donkey needs the pile of food

   **II- Identify the main issue:** The donkeys want to eat the food but because they are tied to each other they can't reach the food

   **III- Generate alternatives:** They can give up. They can keep pulling until they line breaks. One can hurt the other and eat all the food. They can eat the food piles together one by one.

   **IV- Evaluate alternatives**

   **V- Choose a solution:** the solution of eating the food piles together one by one is chosen; this way the needs of both donkeys are fulfilled in a peaceful way.

5. What could the title of this drawing be? ('Cooperation is better than conflict' is one possibility, but many other titles are possible.)
Peace-Talk
What is peace? What does peace mean to you? In the same pairs as in the Donkey exercise, try to discuss and come up with a definition of peace.

Key words (this is not an extensive list):

- Peace is a state of well-being
- Peace is dealing with conflicts in a positive way
- Peace is not fighting
- Peace is respecting each other and each other’s differences
- Peace is a being part of the same world
- Peace is room for growth and development

Exercise 2: Drawing together
Stimulating cooperation (30 minutes).

1. Make groups of 4 and give each group a big piece of paper (poster size).
2. Let the groups brainstorm on what a peaceful environment (either within family, community, country, or world) looks like. Using different art materials draw/make a picture of a peaceful environment.
3. Let them prepare to present their drawing to the rest of the group.

Exercise 3: The Peace Action Plan

Actively thinking on peace (20 minutes).

1. Each group should now think of how to contribute to peace. How can they (themselves) help to make the world look as peaceful as in their drawings? Of course they cannot just change the whole world, but there may be small actions they can undertake. What steps could they take? Let them be as specific as possible. Small-scale actions are fine (many small bricks make one big building).
2. Let the groups present their ideas and together list the ideas that are brought forward into a ‘Peace Action Plan’.
3. How will you follow up on the Peace Action Plan? Think of a way to see if ideas are put into practice (possibly next time that the group comes together, you can evaluate.

   Note: When putting together the ‘Peace Action Plan’ it is your task as facilitator to cluster two or more of the same/similar ideas into one!

Module evaluation

Evaluate the module, by presenting questions like:
- What have you learned about this theme?
- What was easy, what was difficult for you?
- Did you already use something you learned in I DEAL in your daily life?
- If so, how? If not, what is keeping you from using it?
- Did you miss anything? What else would you have liked to learn about this theme?

Exercise 4: Thank you

Closing game (5-10 minutes).

1. Form a circle with the group, hands joined.
2. Explain that you will all come forward to the center of the circle and whisper ‘Thank You’ and go back again. Again all come together to the center, hands joined in front of them and now say ‘Thank You’ aloud. Then a Third and last time you will all come to the center, hands joined high in the sky and shout ‘Thank You’!
3. Do it all together. If it doesn’t have a nice build up when you do this, try it a second time.

Or end with a (local/familiar) Peace Song.