



International Institute
for Restorative Practices

General Conflict: Facilitator's Script

This is a guide for incidents where there is no clear victim or offender.

Step 1. Welcome and Introduction

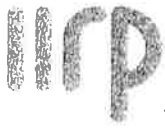
"Hello. As you know, my name is and I have been asked to facilitate this meeting. (Introduce participants, if necessary.) I have spoken to all of you about the incident/s, and it is clear that what has happened has affected/hurt/harmed everyone involved. This is an opportunity to talk about what has happened and how each of you has been affected/hurt. To help us all work together again, we need to discuss ways of stopping any further hurt/harm so we can improve relationships."

Say to everyone: "Do you understand?"

Step 2. Start with the person who has been most affected

- "I would like to start by asking (person's name) to talk about how he/she became involved and what happened?"
- "At the time, what were you thinking about?"
- "What have you thought since?"
- "How has this affected/hurt you and others?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"

Step 3. Ask all participants in turn the above questions



Step 4. Say to all participants

"Now that we have heard how all of you have been affected/hurt in some way by what has happened, is there anything anyone would like to say at this point?"

Step 5. Invitation to all participants

- "What suggestions do you have that will stop any further hurt/harm?"
- "What will help all of us work together again, without further conflict?"

Step 6. Ask each participant

- "What would you like to see come out of today's meeting?"

Step 7. Invitation to all participants (record undertaking/s if required)

- "What will each of you now do to help improve your relationships with one another?"

Step 8. Final Invitation to participants

- "What have you found useful from today's meeting?"

Step 9. Closing the Meeting

"Thank you for being involved. It has allowed us to share and understand what happened and, importantly, provided the opportunity to find positive ways of building better relationships with one another."

Conference Facilitator's Script

1. Preamble

"Welcome. As you know, my name is (your name) and I will be facilitating this conference."

Now introduce each conference participant and state his/her relationship to the offender/s or victim/s.

"Thank you all for attending. I know that this is difficult for all of you, but your presence will help us deal with the matter that has brought us together. This is an opportunity for all of you to be involved in repairing the harm that has been done."

"This conference will focus on an incident which happened (state the date, place and nature of offense without elaborating). It is important to understand that we will focus on what (offender name/s) did and how that unacceptable behavior has affected others. We are not here to decide whether (offender name/s) is/are good or bad. We want to explore in what way people have been affected and hopefully work toward repairing the harm that has resulted. Does everyone understand this?"

"(Offender name/s) has/have admitted his/her/their part in the incident."

Say to offender/s: "I must tell you that you do not have to participate in this conference and are free to leave at any time, as is anyone else. If you do leave, the matter may be referred to court/handled by the school disciplinary policy/handled in another way."

"This matter, however, may be finalized if you participate in a positive manner and comply with the conference agreement."

Say to offender/s: "Do you understand?"

2. Offender/s

"We'll start with (one of offenders' names)."

If there is more than one offender, have each respond to all of the following questions.

- "What happened?"
- "What were you thinking about at the time?"
- "What have you thought about since the incident?"
- "Who do you think has been affected by your actions?"
- "How have they been affected?"

3. Victim/s

If there is more than one victim, have each respond to all of the following questions.

- "What was your reaction at the time of the incident?"
- "How do you feel about what happened?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"
- "How did your family and friends react when they heard about the incident?"

4. Victim Supporters

Have each respond to all of the following questions.

- "What did you think when you heard about the incident?"
- "How do you feel about what happened?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"
- "What do you think are the main issues?"

5. Offender Supporters

To parent/caregiver ask: "This has been difficult for you, hasn't it?
Would you like to tell us about it?"

Have each respond to all of the following questions.

- "What did you think when you heard about the incident?"
- "How do you feel about what happened?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"
- "What do you think are the main issues?"

6. Offender/s

Ask the offender/s: "Is there anything you want to say at this time?"

7. Reaching an Agreement

Ask the victim/s: "What would you like from today's conference?"
Ask the offender/s to respond.

At this point, the participants discuss what should be in the final agreement.
Solicit comments from participants.

It is important that you ask the offender/s to respond to each suggestion before the group moves to the next suggestion, asking "What do you think about that?" Then determine that the offender/s agree/s before moving on. Allow for negotiation.

As the agreement develops, clarify each item and make the written document as specific as possible, including details, deadlines and follow-up arrangements.

As you sense that the agreement discussion is drawing to a close, say to the participants:

"Before I prepare the written agreement, I'd like to make sure that I have accurately recorded what has been decided."

Read the items in the agreement aloud and look to the participants for acknowledgment. Make any necessary corrections.

8. Closing the Conference

"Before I formally close this conference, I would like to provide everyone with a final opportunity to speak. Is there anything anyone wants to say?"

Allow time for participants to respond. When they are done, say:

"Thank you for your contributions in dealing with this difficult matter. Congratulations on the way you have worked through the issues. Please help yourselves to some refreshments while I prepare the agreement."

Allow participants ample time to have refreshments and interact. The informal period after the formal conference is very important.

What to Cover in the Initial Meeting

Introduce yourself and ask to hear the person's story.
This is an opportunity to get connected and begin building trust.

Discuss your understanding of the incident.

Explain the purpose of a restorative conference in general, and specifically for this case.

Stress the importance of their involvement. Try to be as inclusive as possible.

The wider the network, the better.

- This is who I have so far...
- Is there anyone missing?
- Do you have contact information for...?

The Process

- The script
- The preamble
- Participants processing the incident
- Review the questions that will be asked
- The agreement
- Breaking bread

Explain the responsibilities of participants in the process during and after the meeting.

Encourage them to think about what they want to say, to share their thoughts and concerns.

Be clear that this is an opportunity to create a mutual understanding of the incident, explore how people have been affected and create an agreement to help repair the harm.

Who will be the support people for the parties involved in the conference?

Assess if there are any safety concerns.

What dates, times and locations would work? Don't be too general.

* Please review Chapter 3 in *The Conferencing Handbook* for more information about how to prepare participants.

Conference Preparation Guide

Meeting with the Offender

Prior to your initial meeting, your first contact will be with the offender(s) to assess their:

- Ownership without rationalizing or minimizing
- Openness to hear the impact directly from the victim
- Willingness to proceed with the conference

Hi. My name is (facilitator's name). I'm with (facilitator's organization/school), and I am working on setting up a conference to address the incident that occurred (brief description of events).

I would like to explain the conferencing process (brief description). I would like to offer you (and/or your son/daughter) an opportunity to attend a conference. The conference may be held as an alternative or in addition to the court's/school's traditional response to conflict/violation of the law/code of conduct.

The conference will help us learn how others have been affected by your actions and ways to repair the harm that has occurred. The conference is not a place to pass judgment but rather an opportunity to listen to one another and gain a mutual understanding of what happened and work toward a solution to repair the harm.

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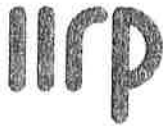
Meeting with the Victim

Hi. My name is (facilitator's name). I'm with (facilitator's organization/school), and I am working on setting up a conference to address the incident that occurred (brief description of events) in which you were unfortunately harmed. This process can provide you with an opportunity to meet with (offender's name) and share how you were affected. The conference process will also give you a chance to be involved in working toward a solution to repair the harm.

I would like to explain the conferencing process (brief description) and answer any questions you may have so you can decide if you would like to participate. The conference may be held as an alternative or an addition to (referring the matter to court/school discipline policy/handling the matter in another way).

(Offender's name) has admitted their involvement in the incident and is willing to participate. While I can't guarantee the outcome of the conference, I can tell you that it usually goes very well and participants are satisfied to have had a voice in the process. The conference is not a place to pass judgment but rather an opportunity to listen to one another and gain a mutual understanding of what happened and work toward a solution to repair the harm.

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Meeting with the Supporters

Hi. My name is (facilitator's name). I'm with (facilitator's organization/school), and I am working on setting up a conference to address the incident that occurred (brief description of events). (Offender's name or victim's name) has asked for you to be at the conference to support them. I would like to explain the conferencing process (brief description).

The conference will help us learn how others have been affected by what happened and ways to repair the harm that has occurred. The conference is not a place to pass judgment but rather an opportunity to gain a mutual understanding of what happened and work toward a solution. Your presence would benefit the process, and I know (offender's name or victim's name) would appreciate your support.

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