






Conflict Countdown

 TIME	20 – 30 min.
 No.	Minimum 6 participants
 MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space
 OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This exercise explores anger and the risk of this escalating to physical violence; being able to identify when someone is behaving in a way that we do not like; as well as the impact that our body language and/or facial expressions might have on someone else. The more we can be attuned to these feelings and actions, and recognise them in ourselves and others, the more likely it is that we will be able to communicate and interact with others in a positive way.
 INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitators count from 1-10 consecutively (alternating with each number). As the number increases so should the level of frustration/anger, as in an argument or disagreement (e.g., “1” is spoken in a calm and measured voice vs. “10” being shouted, with clenched fists, shoulders raised, jaw tensed etc.). Ask pupils to watch this interaction and think about what is happening.

2. Once they (correctly) identify that it looked like two people having an argument, you can ask the following questions to explore this further:

- How did you know we were having an argument?
- What did you notice about how we were communicating with each other?
- What do you think would have happened if we had kept counting to 20? 50? 100?

Non-verbal communication should also be explored:

- What else made you think that we were having an argument?
- What did you notice about our posture, eye contact, body language or how we moved?
- How do these things affect the way people respond to us?
- Is this the best way to communicate? At which level would you rather be spoken to?

3. Link this to communication and how, if someone raises their voice/becomes aggressive, it often causes the other person to mirror or escalate that aggression.





4. Ask pupils to think about different ways people speak, listen and respond to each other:

- What does 'listening' look like?
- How does it make you feel when someone isn't listening to you?

To break up the discussion you can ask for volunteers to perform their own versions of this exercise.

5. It can be useful to note the varying speeds at which anger builds in different people, and the different ways in which people can express this emotion. Is anger always obvious? Can we always tell if someone is angry with us, or someone else?

To finish the activity, ask one pair to count backwards from 10 – 1,

	gradually reducing the levels of anger and aggression as the numbers decrease.
 DISCUSSIONS	Ask pupils how they felt their emotions, how different ways of verbalizing it affected their feelings.
 HINTS	<p>If there is time, you can ask pupils to experiment with different tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try a version with no shouting or raised voices – does this change the mood at all? - Take away any verbal communication – what does the interaction look/feel like with just movement? - Replace numbers with the words “Yes” and “No”. How does this change the dynamic of the relationship?
 THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE	Not Applicable
 THEORY	Not Applicable