

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: CASE STUDIES

The following case studies match the scenarios in the online training. Review (watch or read) each scenario, and then answer the questions, below. Think about what you have learned and identify a conflict resolution technique that you would use in each situation.

Case Study #1

Julia just finished a certification appointment for Maria, a participant who has cerebral palsy. Maria has some difficulty speaking and uses a wheelchair for mobility. As they head toward the door, Maria says something to Julia.

Julia replies, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand what you said." Maria repeats her comment.

Julia looks confused and says, "One more time please?" Maria repeats her comment in a louder voice.

Looking a bit flustered, Julia says, "Okay, well, maybe we can talk about that next time."

Julia reaches for the door and says, "Let me get that for you." Maria, at the same moment, angrily pushes the button for the automatic door and rolls away.

Julia walks back to her office feeling embarrassed and that she is no good at working with disabled participants.

Questions to consider:

1. What could Julia have done differently to avoid or minimize this conflict? What could Julia learn from this experience? (*Hint – try using a Creative Response*)
2. Write the dialogue for the next time Julia sees Maria at the clinic.

Julia says	What might work better?
"I'm sorry, I didn't understand what you said."	
Julia looks confused and says, "One more time please?"	

Case Studies for Conflict Resolution: A key element in civil rights training

Wisconsin WIC

Julia says	What might work better?
Looking a bit flustered, Julia says, “Okay, well, maybe we can talk about that next time.”	
Julia reaches for the door and says, “Let me get that for you.”	

Case Study #2

Mrs. Ortiz checks in to the WIC clinic for her appointment. She is Spanish-speaking. Mrs. Ortiz has brought her children with her to the clinic. While in the waiting room before the session begins, the children are noisy and begin running through the waiting area.

Rebecca is trying to work at the front desk and is getting frustrated. She begins speaking in English to another WIC employee, loudly enough so that some people in the waiting room can hear what she is saying. She is overheard saying, “These people (referring to Mrs. Ortiz) don’t know how to control their kids.”

Rebecca tells the participant, “If you don’t get control of your children, you’ll have to reschedule your appointment for another day and get your checks then.” Mrs. Ortiz leaves the clinic without getting her checks.

Mrs. Ortiz later calls the state WIC office and states that she was discriminated against and was denied WIC services. Mrs. Ortiz says that Rebecca thought she couldn’t understand English, but in fact she heard what Rebecca was saying about her family.

Questions to consider:

1. What are some assumptions that people make about WIC participants? Can you think of other examples where these assumptions could lead to conflict?
2. Write a new statement for Rebecca to use when talking with Mrs. Ortiz about her children’s behavior. (*Hint – try using the Win/Win Approach*)

Rebecca says	What might work better?
Rebecca tells the participant, “If you don’t get control of your children, you’ll have to reschedule your appointment for another day and get your checks then.”	

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Case Study #3

In a predominately Hispanic community, a new participant is transferred in. The new participant, Angie, is not Hispanic and does not speak Spanish.

Angie just found out she is pregnant, and she also needs to schedule a recertification appointment for her daughter. She calls the clinic to schedule the appointments.

The clerk, Sandra, answers the phone in Spanish. Angie explains that she doesn't speak Spanish but needs to schedule two appointments. Sandra switches to English, and she and Angie begin looking for appointments.

Angie is having a hard time understanding Sandra. Sandra tries to explain that she can't get Angie and her daughter appointments together until the end of the following week.

Angie is frustrated and says, "This is not going to work. Obviously you don't want to help me, why don't you get someone on the phone who speaks English so I can get my checks."

Sandra says, "Well, I guess you should have planned ahead instead of waiting until the last minute."

Angie hangs up the phone and decides she will not ever go to this WIC clinic again.

Questions to consider:

1. Have you ever been treated rudely by a WIC participant? How did you respond?
2. Write a different response for Sandra to use after Angie asks to speak to someone else. (*Hint – try using Cooperative Power*)

Sandra says	What might work better?
Sandra says, "Well, I guess you should have planned ahead instead of waiting until the last minute."	

Case Study #4

A WIC clinic in a diverse area employs several bilingual staff. There is a group of staff who speak Hmong, and they often converse in their native language at work.

Kelly, an employee who doesn't speak their language, feels self-conscious and sometimes wonders if they are talking about him. He frequently complains to his friend at work about other staff not speaking English.

One day Kelly walks into a meeting room and several staff are already there, speaking in Hmong. Kelly walks in and says, "Hello." The other staff say "Hello" back and then resume their conversation, which Kelly does not understand. Kelly rolls his eyes and sits down on the other side of the room to wait for the meeting to start.

Questions to consider:

1. Why might the bilingual staff choose to speak in their native language?
2. How could Kelly address his feelings in a positive way? (*Hint – try using Appropriate Assertiveness*)

Kelly	What might work better?
Kelly feels self-conscious and sometimes wonders if they are talking about him. He frequently complains to his friend at work about other staff not speaking English.	

3. How might his coworkers respond? (*Hint – try using Empathy/Active Listening*)

Kelly	What should they say?
When Kelly complains to his friends about the non-English speaking co-workers.	