

Decreasing Conflict

GOAL: To give participants a strategy to use in interacting with someone who is angry about a situation. This situation may be a racial issue, but could be used in any conflict resolution situation.

TIME REQUIRED: 30 minutes.

MATERIALS: None

PHYSICAL SETTING: Any

PROCESS: Let the audience know that there is a productive way to interact with someone who is angry at them. Even if the issue is racial or some other emotionally laden topic. There are three responses that the participant can use.

When someone goes off on them, the first thing they need to do is to acknowledge the other persons emotion. "You sound really angry, can you tell me about it?"

After giving them time to vent their feelings, the second question is to ask them "What are you doing about it?" For example, "What are you doing about race conflicts within the residence halls?"

Listen to what they have done.

The final question is to ask them if they want to know what you are going to do. "Would you like to know what I'm going to do?" OR "Would you like to know what I'm doing about it?"

The facilitators need to review the three responses again:

- 1) Can you tell me about it?
- 2) What are you doing about it?
- 3) Do you want to know what I'm doing?

Have the participants get into groups of three to role play a situation they have been in before or one provided by the facilitator. Have two people do the role play and the other one observe and give feedback. Have the participants switch roles until everyone has had a turn at asking the three conflict resolving questions.

SOURCE: Outline was written by Rosemary E. Simmons, Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The original exercise was created by Dr. Kesho Scott from Grinnel College in Iowa.