

Building Positive Relationships from School to Home

We all recognize the importance of developing and maintaining collaborative relationships between home and school. What happens, however, when a parent calls or arrives for a meeting in a highly charged emotional state? Like anyone else, when feeling dissatisfied, angry, afraid, incompetent, discounted, powerless or confused, parents may blame, accuse or attack. This often leaves staff members feeling frightened, abused and defensive. Typical staff responses such as: defending, rationalizing, counter-blaming and justifying generally do not calm the parent down and may even serve to further damage the relationship. At these times, there is frequently a great deal of talking at each other but virtually no true communication. As with all unresolved "Conflict Cycles", both parties leave feeling dissatisfied.

This one day (5 hour) workshop is designed for up to 40 participants. We will explore, in depth, the "Conflict Cycle" from a parent-teacher perspective. In order for true communication to start, staff members must be able to understand and "drain off" the parent's intense emotions, while, at the same time, handling their own emotions. Through video examples, discussion and role plays, staff members will learn the process of de-escalating intense emotions, interpreting and positively reframing parental concerns and engaging in collaborative problem solving.