

Lesson Three:

Applying Neutral Reframing

Conceptual Base:

The basic concept of neutral reframing is not difficult to understand, but mastering the skill takes much practice. This lesson has several activities that offer the students time to practice applying neutral reframing to mediation and life situations. Once peer mediators learn to incorporate neutral reframing into their lives, they use the skill more effectively in the mediation process. Neutral reframing is most effective when it becomes integrated into our thought process.

Materials:

Student pages S-5 through S-8: "Neutral Reframing Tips," "Reframing Questions," "Reality Check #2: Applying Neutral Reframing," blackboard or chart paper

Vocabulary:

- ❖ **Brainstorming:** A process in which people state possible ideas/solutions to a particular problem or concern without evaluating or criticizing the ideas.
- ❖ **Neutral Reframing:** Restating an offensive comment or situation into non-offensive language while respecting the speaker's meaning and feeling.

Objectives:

- ❖ Students will have a class discussion about the previous lesson's "Reality Check" assignment.
- ❖ Students will share personal observations/experiences related to the previous lesson.
- ❖ Students will identify tips that will assist them in learning the skill of neutral reframing.
- ❖ Students will be able to ask effective questions to assist parties in viewing their conflict from a different, more neutral perspective.
- ❖ Students will be able to demonstrate "brainstorming ideas" in order to apply neutral reframing skills to the mediation process.

Introduction:

"Mediators should help parties reframe their own conflicts. Of course, neutral reframing may not work in every situation; some people are more open to change than others. Today we will learn more about neutral reframing and come up with some ideas about how best to use this skill during a mediation."

Activity One: Reality Check Exchange (5-10 Minutes)

Ask for volunteers to share their experiences from the previous “Reality Check” assignment.

Discussion:

“While doing ‘Reality Check #1,’ did you find it difficult to think of two offensive statements? Why?”

“Was it difficult to think of a more neutral sentence for each one? Why?”

“Do you think neutral reframing would have helped in the situation you were describing? Why?”

“Do you think the skill of neutral reframing would help you as a mediator? How?”

Activity Two: Neutral Reframing Tips (5-10 Minutes)

1. Have students refer to student page S-5, “Neutral Reframing Tips.”
2. As a class, discuss the tips.

Activity Three: Reframing Questions (15-20 Minutes)

1. Have students form small groups.
2. Have students refer to student pages S-6 – S-7, “Reframing Questions.” Read the first situation.
3. Have students discuss possible questions a mediator could ask to help the parties view their conflict from a different perspective. Ask them to use the questions from the Neutral Reframing Tips page (S-5) as a guide.
4. Have them write the four “best” questions under the scenario as a reference.
5. Have them repeat this process for each situation on pages S-6 – S-7.
6. Time permitting, have students recall situations they have experienced as mediators and brainstorm questions that would have helped the parties reframe their situation. (To maintain confidentiality, be sure to tell students not to use the disputants’ real names during this discussion.)

Activity Four: Let’s Brainstorm: Applying Neutral Reframing to Mediation (10 Minutes)

1. Write “Neutral Reframing in Mediation” on the blackboard/chart paper.
2. As a group, brainstorm ways that neutral reframing skills can be applied to a mediation.
3. Use the discussion questions (T-15) to initiate brainstorming.
4. Record on chart paper the generated ideas. You can do this yourself or ask for a student volunteer.
5. Post this list in the classroom or mediation room as a reminder to students.

Discussion:

“How would you apply neutral reframing in a mediation?”

“What questions can you ask during a mediation to help parties reframe their own situations?”

“What are some advantages to using neutral reframing in a mediation?”

“Tell me about an example from a mediation you were in where neutral reframing would have made a difference. Explain.”

“Have you ever used neutral reframing in a mediation?”

“If yes, explain what happened.”

“If no, have you ever seen any other mediators use neutral reframing? Explain.”

Activity Five: Reality Check — Applying Neutral Reframing (5 Minutes)

1. As homework have students complete the activity on page S-8, “Reality Check #2 — Neutral Reframing.”
2. When providing written feedback to the students, note that the first examples on page T-16 display a thorough and accurate response to this assignment.

Closure:

“Neutral reframing is not an easy skill to master. However, after today’s lesson, you should feel more confident in your ability to use this powerful tool. In the future, please refer to our list if you need help remembering how best to use neutral reframing.”

Extending Activity:

Ask students to think of some additional situations they have at home that could benefit from neutral reframing. (possible examples, if the students need prodding: sibling poking around in your room, clothes, closet, etc.; neglecting chores; demanding to watch a TV show, video, game, etc., that you don’t like)

"REALITY CHECK" #2:

Apply Neutral Reframing

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS:

- ❖ Practice using neutral reframing at least once in the following situations:
 - In your family life
 - At school
 - With friends
- ❖ Write the general situation and explain how you used neutral reframing.
- ❖ Write what the results were.

	<i>Explain General Situation:</i>	<i>How you reframed the situation:</i>	<i>Explain results of using neutral reframing:</i>
Family	<p><i>EXAMPLE:</i></p> <p><i>I am constantly fighting with my mother about cleaning my room. She yells at me that I never do anything. I always get defensive and yell back that she should just close the door and leave me alone.</i></p>	<p><i>When we started to argue about my room, I decided not to yell back. Instead I said "Mom, I understand you are frustrated with my messy room, and I will try to keep it cleaner. Would you be willing to help me?"</i></p>	<p><i>I didn't get angry. My mom didn't get angry. My mom was shocked. We worked together to clean my room and it wasn't as big a project as I thought.</i></p>
School			
Friends			