

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

We would like to introduce you to the newest member of the Counseling Department, Kate Caldwell. Please join us in welcoming Kate to the Pine Valley family! Below you will see our roles, phone numbers, and email addresses that you can use to reach out to any of us.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PINE VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

<p>Amanda Miller School Counselor Grades: PreK-6 (716) 988-3291 ext. 3322 amiller@pval.org</p>	<p>Stacy Chase Counseling Department Secretary (716) 988-3276 ext. 4334 schase@pval.org</p>
<p>Shane Gallivan School Counselor Graduation years: 2023, 2025, 2027, 2029 (716) 988-3276 ext. 4310 sgallivan@pval.org</p>	<p>Katie Markiewicz District School Psychologist (716) 988-3291 ext. 3356 kmarkiewicz@pval.org</p>
<p>Kate Caldwell School Counselor Graduation years: 2022, 2024, 2026, 2028 (716) 988-3276 ext. 4335 kcaldwell@pval.org</p>	<p>Morgan Pitts Social Worker Family Service of The Chautauqua Region In district: W/Th/F (716) 988-3276 ext. 4450 mpitts@pval.org</p>





STEPS TO WORK THROUGH CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We all have conflicts every day. We can have disagreements with our parents, spouses, siblings, friends, co-workers, and children. How we handle the conflict can directly affect our relationship with them. It's not just what we say, it's the tone in which we say it. How we say something can either help a situation de-escalate or make it worse. Children don't always hear their tone of voice when they're angry. Once a person is feeling attacked and defensive, they shut down and the communication diminishes. The conflict then escalates, and the problem doesn't get solved. Here are some steps that can help us through adult conflict and guide us when supporting our children through their conflicts.

5 STEPS TO RESOLVING A CONFLICT

Step 1: Cool off and get in control of your anger.

Conflict cannot be solved when people are angry. Take a step back, breathe deep, and get control over your emotions before trying to talk things out. If you approach the person when you are angry it can lead to more serious confrontation (name-calling, hurtful comments, physical aggression, and defiance). Your anger can make things worse. You could end up saying or doing things that you don't mean. In school, children are taught Social Emotional Lessons that reinforce key skills children need to cope, problem solve, and maintain relationships. Children are taught various coping skills like using their mouth filter, using assertive words to communicate their thoughts and feelings, and putting a leash on their anger monster. Children are also taught to analyze a conflict and to self-reflect on whether they are adding fuel to a conflict fire with their negative behavior or if they are adding water with calm and respectful behavior.

Step 2: Tell the person what you think and how you feel using the 4 Step Assertiveness Plan.

When talking to the other person remember to avoid put downs, name calling, and sarcasm. This will only make things worse and cause the other person to attack you. It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. Be respectful and watch your tone of voice. The other person will feel attacked if you begin to yell and scream.

*** Remember conflict is two people against a problem, not two people against each other. ***

Step 1: Tell the person what's upsetting you and what you don't like.

Step 2: Tell the person how their actions make you feel. Use "I" statements.

Example: I feel _x_ because _x_.

Step 3: Tell the person what you do want and what you would like to change.

Step 4: Tell the person what will happen if the behavior doesn't stop. This is where you and the other person can discuss possible solutions and work on a compromise.

Step 3: Each person restates what the other person said.

This is called reflective listening. You show the other person that you were listening to what they had to say rather than focusing on your own point of view. When you are respectful and willing to listen, the other person will be more apt to listen, too. This supports empathy; you step into their shoes and understand their perspective. Reflective listening means you mirror back what the other person said. Some examples are: "What I heard you say is..." and "It sounds to me like...". You want the other person to be honest with you so relax and try not to be defensive.

Step 4: Brainstorm solutions and come up with one that makes both people happy.

The key to this step is to be willing to compromise with each other. It's not about who wins and loses and it's not about who gets their way. Both people can be winners and walk away from a conflict feeling satisfied. Both people need to come up with three possible solutions to the problem and then compare their ideas. Discuss with each other what would make each of you happiest and what will ensure peace.

Step 5: Affirm, forgive, and thank each other.

A handshake, hug or kind word can give closure to a conflict. Forgiveness is the strongest form of closure. It shows both people that there are no grudges and that the conflict has been resolved between them. Forgiveness may take time but open yourself up to forgive and move forward. Staying upset can keep us stuck in the past and prevents us from moving on. You can preserve and heal relationships with meaningful apologies and by showing a desire to work through problems that arise.

As parents and teachers, it is important to model positive conflict resolution and anger management skills. It's okay for children to see their parents disagree. What's vital is for them to see their parents work through it in a healthy way and move on. Children learn best when they see it demonstrated every day. Often, when conflicts arise here in school, we conduct a restorative meeting between students. This meeting allows students to speak their minds, re-tell a situation, and determine what they need to move forward in a positive way. Having children learn how to communicate and resolve conflicts early in their lives will promote better problem solving in the future.