“Keep Conflict Out of the Ring” Conversation Starter

Facilitator Key

Questions to ask and points to make are in bold.
Notes and instructions for facilitator are in italics.

Conflict is a normal part of life. Disagreements happen between friends, classmates, teammates and brothers and sisters. While conflict is unavoidable, we can control how we engage in conflict so that it is respectful, productive and safe.

The *Keep Conflict Out of the Ring* poster encourages us to handle conflict through conversation rather than physical confrontation. When conflict arises, things can feel intense. Emotions may run high, and it can be tempting to respond quickly and with aggression. The poster encourages us to pause, listen and communicate clearly to prevent things from escalating to something physical.

Sometimes, however, physical confrontation is treated as entertainment or a way to work things out. Events like fight nights or amateur boxing tournaments are organized as social or philanthropy events. While these activities may appear harmless, they involve real physical risk. Participants can suffer injuries or other long-term health consequences.

Our communities are strongest when we model leadership, accountability and care for one another’s safety. Learning how to manage conflict through conversation helps prevent harm and builds stronger relationships.

Alpha Chi Omega
REAL. STRONG. WOMEN.

PI KAPPA PHI
Exceptional leaders. Uncommon opportunities.

Sigma Nu Fraternity
EXCELLING WITH HONOR

ZETA TAU ALPHA
Seek the Noblest

Chapter Discussion

1. **What message do you think this poster is trying to communicate about how conflict should be handled?**
    a. *Encourage members to look closely at the imagery and speech bubbles. Ask what emotions or reactions the poster is meant to create*
2. **Why do disagreements sometimes escalate into physical confrontations? What factors make it harder to slow down and communicate in the moment?**
    a. *It may be helpful to bring up the role of pride, peer pressure, alcohol, stress or the presence of an audience.*
3. **What does it look like to "win" a conflict without defeating the other person? Is it possible to disagree and still feel respected?**
    a. *Encourage members to consider compromise, understand different perspectives and maintain relationships.*
4. **The speech bubbles have some phrases you can use to de-escalate a confrontation. What other ways can we think of that aren't listed?**
5. **If you notice a disagreement escalating between two people, what role can a bystander play in helping de-escalate the situation?**
    a. *Think of practical ways someone can intervene safely, such as redirecting the conversation, separating individuals or encouraging a pause.*
6. **What is one thing you can do differently the next time you experience conflict?**

When a disagreement starts to escalate, small choices make a difference.

- **Pause and manage your emotions before responding.**
- **Listen carefully and try to understand the other person's perspective.**
- **Ask questions instead of making assumptions.**
- **Move the conversation away from an audience when possible.**
- **Focus on finding a solution rather than winning the argument.**

Conflict is unavoidable, but by developing skills to engage respectfully, you can build stronger relationships by resolving conflict productively.

Resources

• *Conflict Resolution in the Workplace*: Practical strategies for managing emotions, listening effectively and solving problems collaboratively. (PositivePsychology.com)

• *3 Ways to Lead Tough, Unavoidable Conversations*: A TED Talk by Adar Cohen exploring how curiosity and listening can transform difficult conversations.

• *3 Ways to Resolve a Conflict*: A TED Talk by Dorothy Walker focusing on understanding perspectives and working toward solutions.

• Conflict Resolution Network: Tools and frameworks for improving communication and resolving disagreements respectfully.