

Children's Helpers Role Play

Conflict Manager's Role

You are a Northern District Manager for the Children's Helpers, an international volunteer-based organization that provides services for low-income children. With a limited budget, all of the three districts in your region are hard pressed to meet their needs. You have asked the Regional Director to whom you report (Pat Sawyer) to allocate \$750,000 for facilities renovation in your district for next year. Specifically, you wish to renovate the reception centres at two local offices. The Northern District was the area where Children's Helpers was first established within your region, and the buildings have not had substantial renovation in twenty years. You believe that if this isn't taken care of immediately, the older of the two buildings could suffer serious structural damage (for example, because of roofing leaks).

Your partner in the role play is the Southern District Manager. This person has asked Sawyer for a substantial sum as well, to use for a promotional/public relations campaign that would benefit the entire organisation, and to renovate a high profile, but comparatively new reception center in the Southern District. Pat Sawyer has told you that the amount of the budget that's not already allocated will probably be no more than \$1,300,000, and that all three districts will get some, although not necessarily the same amount. The Western District Manager has indicated that he is not likely to ask for more than \$200,000. Sawyer likes to run things democratically, and she has told you to meet with the Southern District Manager to see if the two of you can make a joint recommendation. "If not," she said, "you can each make your proposals and I'll decide." You are meeting with the Southern District Manager to see if you can agree. You know from past experience that this person is stubborn and sometimes abrupt. It will require your best conflict management skills to reach an agreement.

Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the principles of conflict management and negotiation, and planning how you will use these principles in managing the conflict.

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Difficult Manager's Role

You are Southern District manager of Children's Helpers, an international volunteer-based organization that provides services for low-income children. With a limited budget, all of the three districts in your region are hard pressed to meet their needs. You have asked the Regional Director to whom you report (Pat Sawyer) to allocate \$800,000 for you to use in for a promotional/public relations campaign that would benefit the entire organisation, and to renovate a high profile, but comparatively new reception centre in your district.

Your partner in the role play, the Northern District Manager, has also asked for a substantial sum. Pat Sawyer has told you that the amount of the budget that's not already allocated will probably be no more than \$1,300,000, and that all three districts will get some, although not necessarily the same amount. The Western District Manager has indicated that he is not likely to ask for more than \$200,000. Pat Sawyer likes to run things democratically, and she has told you to meet with the Northern District Manager to see if you can make a joint recommendation. "If not," she said, "you can each make your proposals and I'll decide." You are meeting with this person to see if you can agree. You know from past experience that this person is stubborn and sometimes abrupt.

The purpose of this role play is to give *your partner* the opportunity to practice conflict management and negotiation strategies. So, try to be realistic in your role as a stubborn, strong-willed manager. Be tough, but be reasonable if your partner seems empathic and willing to work with you. Don't give in too easy, but cooperate if your partner does a good job of trying to address your needs.