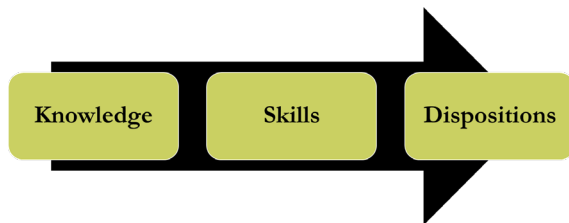


What is Conflict Transformation at Middlebury?

The field of conflict transformation (CT) explores how destructive conflicts can change and become relatively constructive. Conflict is part of the human experience. Whether conflict enriches our communities or harms them depends on how we engage in it. Conflict can enrich our relationships and strengthen our social and political systems.



The CT Collaborative at Middlebury seeks to expand our knowledge, skills, and dispositions to transform conflict into more constructive dynamics.

Transformation is possible and sometimes necessary at multiple levels – personal, interpersonal, and structural.

KNOWLEDGE: Good conflict intervention starts with good conflict analysis.

- *Contextual knowledge*: what actors, dynamics, history, and values have shaped a conflict?
- *Critical self-awareness*: reflecting on “Who am I in conflict?” reveals different conflict styles, personality traits, histories, strengths, and challenges.

SKILLS: Several approaches to conflict can help disrupt destructive dynamics.

- *Structured dialogue* encourages participants to listen to understand.
- *Intercultural competence* engages across different frames of references and values.
- *Mediation* identifies the interests behind conflicting positions to support problem-solving.
- *Restorative practices* encourage accountability for harm while repairing relationships.

DISPOSITIONS: People can conduct themselves in ways that foster constructive conflict.

- *Curiosity* reveals deeper insights into views and experiences that are not our own.
- *Creativity* helps generate new possibilities to move beyond harmful patterns.
- *Risk-taking* is necessary, since first attempts may not succeed.
- *A relational focus* sees human connection as a place to redefine purpose and shift patterns.

CORE LEARNING GOALS

Alongside partners that inspire and inform our work, Middlebury’s approach to conflict transformation builds on our strengths – including our liberal arts foundation and our commitment to global learning.

The CT Collaborative’s many programs share three core learning goals. We seek to foster:

- (1) a new understanding of conflict,
- (2) skills to understand self and others, and
- (3) a commitment to act.

