



## **Social Issues**

### **Intergenerational Conflict**



#### **Definition:**

This is conflict between people of different ages/generations.

#### **Examples:**

- Conflict between people of different ages in a community.
- Younger people intimidating older people when out on the streets - name calling, threatening behaviour.
- Older generations openly criticising young people, making generalisations based on fiction not fact and a lack of understanding of how times may have changed.
- Ageism as a result or symptom of this conflict- discrimination against older or younger people.

#### **Why the situation occurs?**

Intergenerational conflict results when there is a lack of understanding of a different age group and/or a lack of respect for this group. This can lead to intimidation, a break down in the community, threatening behaviour or, in the worst cases, violence.

Younger generations may find it hard to identify with older people - to understand that they were young once too, that they have contributed to society and that even though they may be less active due to the onset of age, they are still highly intelligent with a wealth of experience to share with others.

Older generations may find it hard to tolerate the behaviour of some young people. They may find it hard to accept that they have many more opportunities these days and may not face the same struggles. They may not recognise that the young people of today face different challenges related to modern society. They may not understand these challenges that young people face.

This conflict can occur within family units. Some people may feel resentment towards an older relative that they have to look after. They may dearly love this person, but have to make many sacrifices in their lives to care for them. Alternatively, the older relative may feel guilty and angry about being in this situation and may think themselves a burden on their family. This could lead to anger, sadness and a break down in relationships.

Ageism - discrimination or prejudice against people of particular ages, particularly in employment - is linked to intergenerational conflict. People who are discriminated against because of their age may find it hard to identify with and respect those from another generation who are perhaps promoted above them or treated more favourably.

Communication is a key element in breaking down these barriers so that we can understand each other better.

### **How you can make a difference:**

Tackle the issue - learn about the different points of view, learn how to empathise with the situation from all sides. How can we understand each other better, how are we different and how are we similar? How can we make others more sensitive to the situation? How can we help to broaden people's conceptions of youth and old age?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

### **Resources and Links:**

Information on the World Organizations of the Scout Movement's Strategic Priority 2: Adolescents:

<http://www.scout.org/strat/sp2en.shtml> (English)

<http://worldnet.scout.org/stratcd/frsp2/> (French)

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports Adolescents and Youth.

Link to UNFPA Adolescents website (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) :

<http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents>