



Conflict Coaching: Its Value in Special Education Dispute Resolution

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Note: **The PowerPoint is currently available on the CADRE website:
www.directionservice.org/cadre/joneswebinar.cfm**

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Conflict Coaching: Applications for Special Education Disputes

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Goals

1. Define conflict coaching
2. Introduce the Comprehensive Conflict Coaching process
3. Discuss applications of conflict coaching for special education dispute resolution
4. Discuss possible systems of conflict coaching support for special education dispute resolution

Conflict Coaching

Conflict coaching is a one-on-one process to develop the party's conflict understanding, interaction strategies, and interaction skills.

Drivers of Conflict Coaching

- ⦿ Attractive when one or both parties do not want to engage mediation
- ⦿ Valuable for parties “stuck” in conflict
- ⦿ Option to provide “training for one”
- ⦿ Helpful for high-conflict and large system conflicts to teach collaborative skills prior to participation in other processes (e.g., mediation)



Who Can Be A Coach?

- ◎ In a special education context (as we will discuss more later) you can train a variety of participants to be coaches:
- ◎ Educators
 - SPED teachers
 - GenED teacher
- ◎ Parents
- ◎ Parent Support Members
- ◎ ADR Professionals

Who Could Be Coached?

◎ In a special education context (as we will discuss more later) you can provide conflict coaching to help a number of parties in the special education relationship:

◎ Educators

- SPED teachers
- GenED teacher

◎ Parents

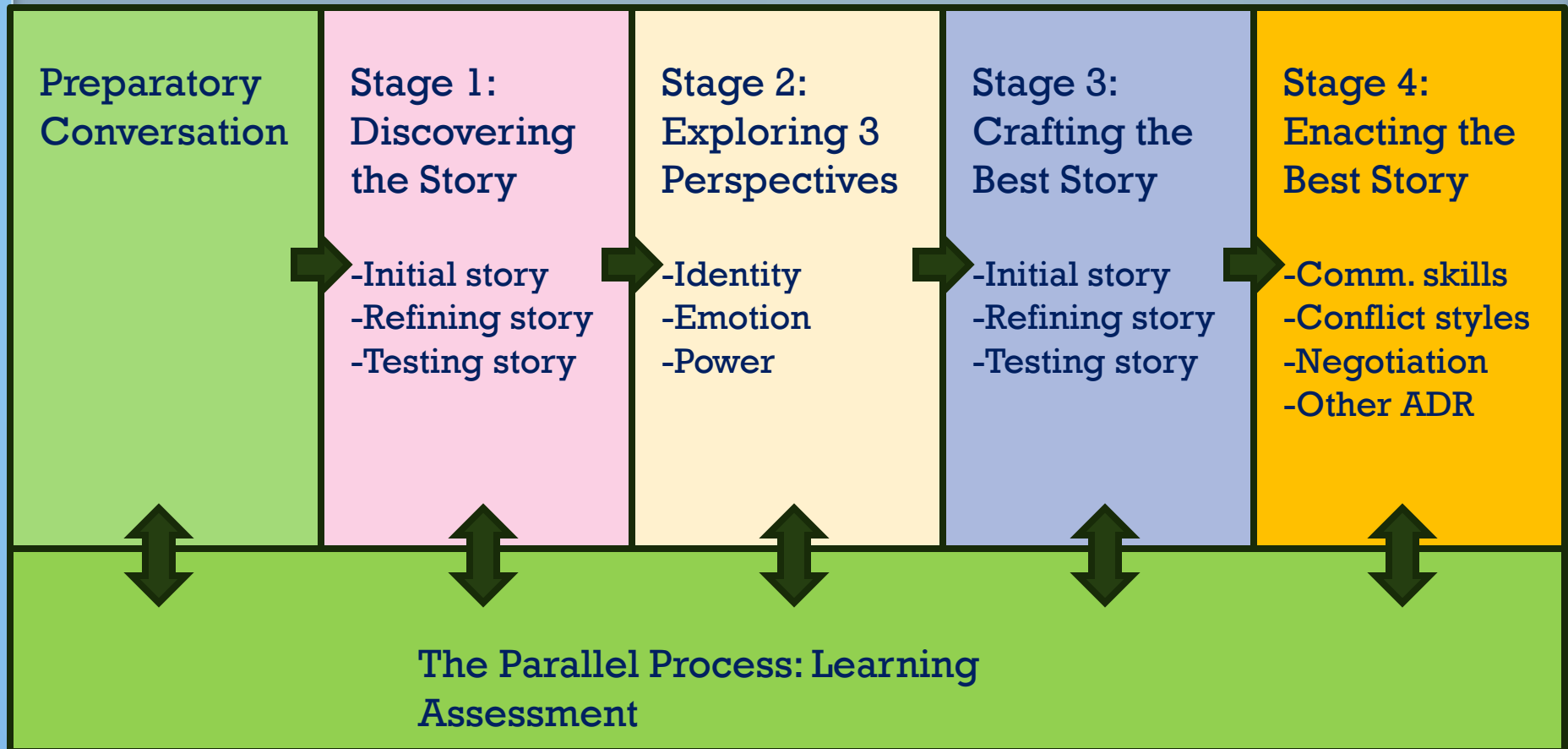


Why Conflict Coaching?

- ◉ Lowest level of intervention
- ◉ Preventative (and de-escalatory)
- ◉ Focus on conflict analysis – helping parties understand what is and might happen in conflict
- ◉ Emphasis on perspective-taking
- ◉ Builds skills and applications
- ◉ Low cost
- ◉ Peer based



The Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model



Stage 1: Discovering the Story

Inviting the
Initial Story

--

What is the
conflict?



Refining the
Initial Story

--

Do I fully
understand
the conflict?



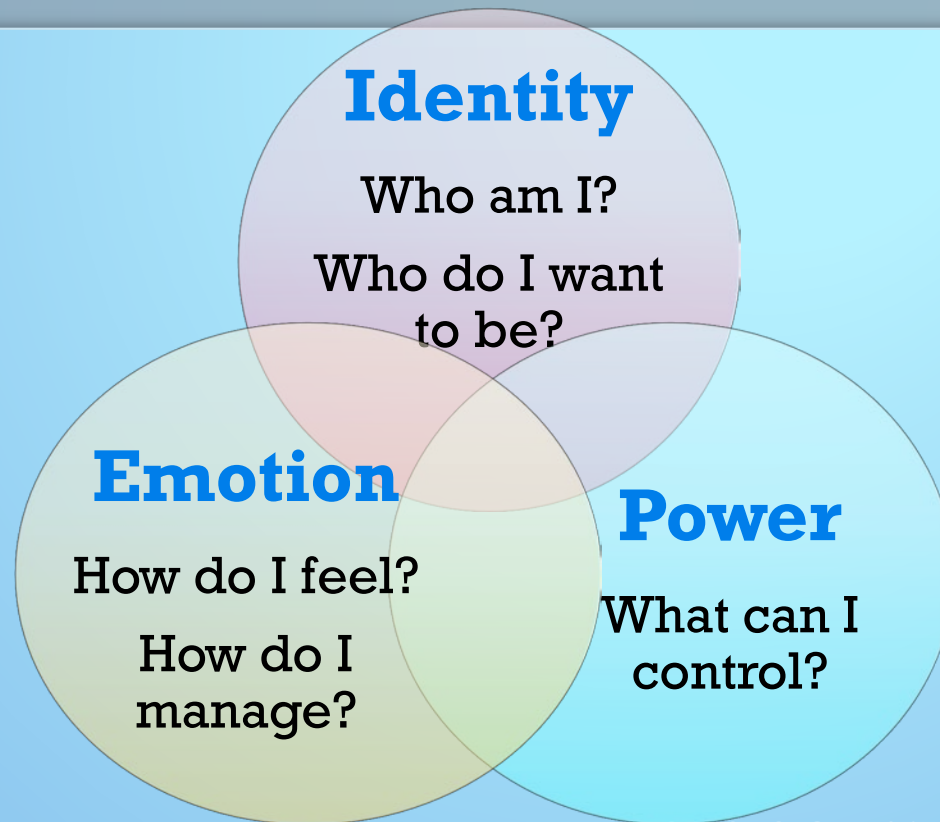
Testing the
Initial Story

--

What
perspectives
or
assumptions of
the party may
need to be
challenged?

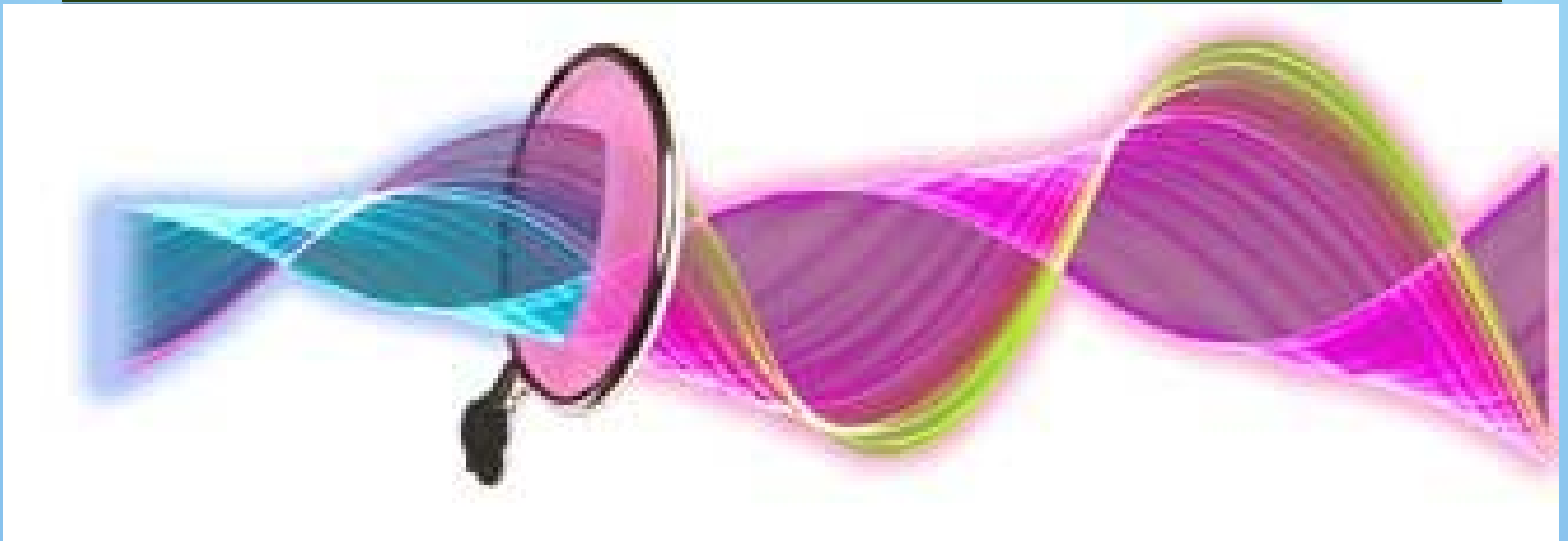
Narrative is powerful and persuasive.

Stage 2: Exploring 3 Perspectives





Three Lenses for Seeing Conflict Clearly: Identity, Emotion and Power



Strong Links Among The Three Perspectives

- ⦿ Identity threats cause negative emotions
- ⦿ Identity shapes the kinds of power we use and are comfortable with
- ⦿ Sense of power affects our sense of identity
- ⦿ Sense of power and identity affects how we feel about a situation

Stage 2: The Identity Perspective

- ◎ Helping the Party Think Through Damaged and Desired Identities
 - Who do I want to be?
 - Who do they want to be?
 - How is this conflict affecting this?
 - How can I establish my desired identity?

Suggested Activity for Identity

- Locate the worksheet on Defining Identities. This worksheet can be used by a coach to help a party think about the various kinds of identities that are “at play” for the party and the other in the conflict.



Stage 2: Emotion Perspective

“How Do They Feel About This Conflict?”

- ◎ To “manage” the conflict we must be able to feel differently about the conflict
- ◎ Emotion is foundational to all conflict but especially high conflicts often found in family disputes
- ◎ Emotion escalates and blocks collaboration

Emotional Flooding

Emotional flooding is system overload; it is being swamped by emotion to the extent that you cannot think in cognitively complex ways or function effectively.

Causes:

- Threats to identity
- Rehearsing negative scripts
- Tendency for hostile attribution



Emotional Flooding

Insights for Coaches:

- Aim to prevent rather than remedy flooding.
- Become sensitive to flooding patterns; identify triggers; negotiate signals.
- Reduce internal triggers:
 - negative inner scripts
 - obsessive rumination



Emotional Contagion

Occurs when people inadvertently “catch” the emotions of others; it causes emotional convergence.

- ⦿ Happens outside of awareness.
- ⦿ Makes one emotionally “reactive” rather than emotionally “pro-active”
- ⦿ Distinct from empathy



Emotional Contagion

Insights for coaching:

- Learn to assess your susceptibility
- Consider how susceptibility to emotional contagion can affect strategy of interaction with the other and of interaction with confrontation



Suggested Activity for Emotion

- Locate the worksheet on Emotional Triggers Activity. This worksheet can be used by a coach to help a party think about the various kinds of behaviors that trigger strong emotions and can lead to conflict escalation for the party and the other in the conflict.



Stage 2: Power Perspective

“What Can They Do?”

- ⦿ Help them understand power resources
- ⦿ Explore how they can influence outcomes
- ⦿ Consider how others are using power with, for, or against them

Suggested Activity for Power

- Please locate the worksheet on Power Resources Activity. This worksheet can be used by a coach to help a party think about the various kinds of power resources that are “at play” for the party and the other in the conflict.



Stage 3: Crafting the Best Story

- ⦿ In this stage the coach helps the party shift from a focus on “what is” to a focus on “what can be”
- ⦿ Ask party to envision an “ideal” future
 - The Best Visions are detailed, clarified, refined
 - The more detailed the vision the easier it will be to make happen
- ⦿ Help parties discuss realistic outcomes and coping strategies

Transition to Stage 4

- ◎ Once the coach and party have crafted the “best” story and they have discussed critical skills necessary to enact the “best” story, the coach and party plan skills development agenda
- ◎ Stage Four is the process of skills development in the CCC Model



Stage 4: Enacting the Best Story

Key Skill Areas

Communication Skills

- confrontation
- nonverbal communication
- confirmation
- comprehension

Emotional Competence Skills

- Emotional Intelligence
- Coaching for Optimism

Conflict Styles

- identify styles
- consider fit
- teach adaptation

Negotiation

- interest based
- bargaining
- multiparty negotiation
- team negotiation

Other Dispute Resolution Processes

- preparing for mediation or arbitration

Specific Applications to Special Education

◎ Coaching for Educators by Educators

◎ The Need:

- Increased pressures on SPED teachers to manage collaborative conflict with other educators (GenEd), allied health professionals, and parents – the heavy lift
- Consequence – losing 13% of SPED teachers every year
- SPED Educators are not getting enough conflict resolution training in pre-service and professional development
- We're losing the very people we need to provide the best possible services to children

Specific Applications to Special Education

◎ Coaching for Parents

◎ The Need:

- Help parents and family members deal with conflict within the family (has significant impacts on escalation and dysfunctional conflict with the system)
- Help parents prepare to engage as partners in the IEP process and/or due process hearings
- Help parents build skill sets that increase their ability to develop positive relationships with schools and educators in the future

Preparing the Parent for Other Dispute Resolution Processes

- ◉ Investigation
- ◉ Explanation
- ◉ Preparation
- ◉ Selection and timing of system access
- ◉ Reflection and analysis
- ◉ Future planning



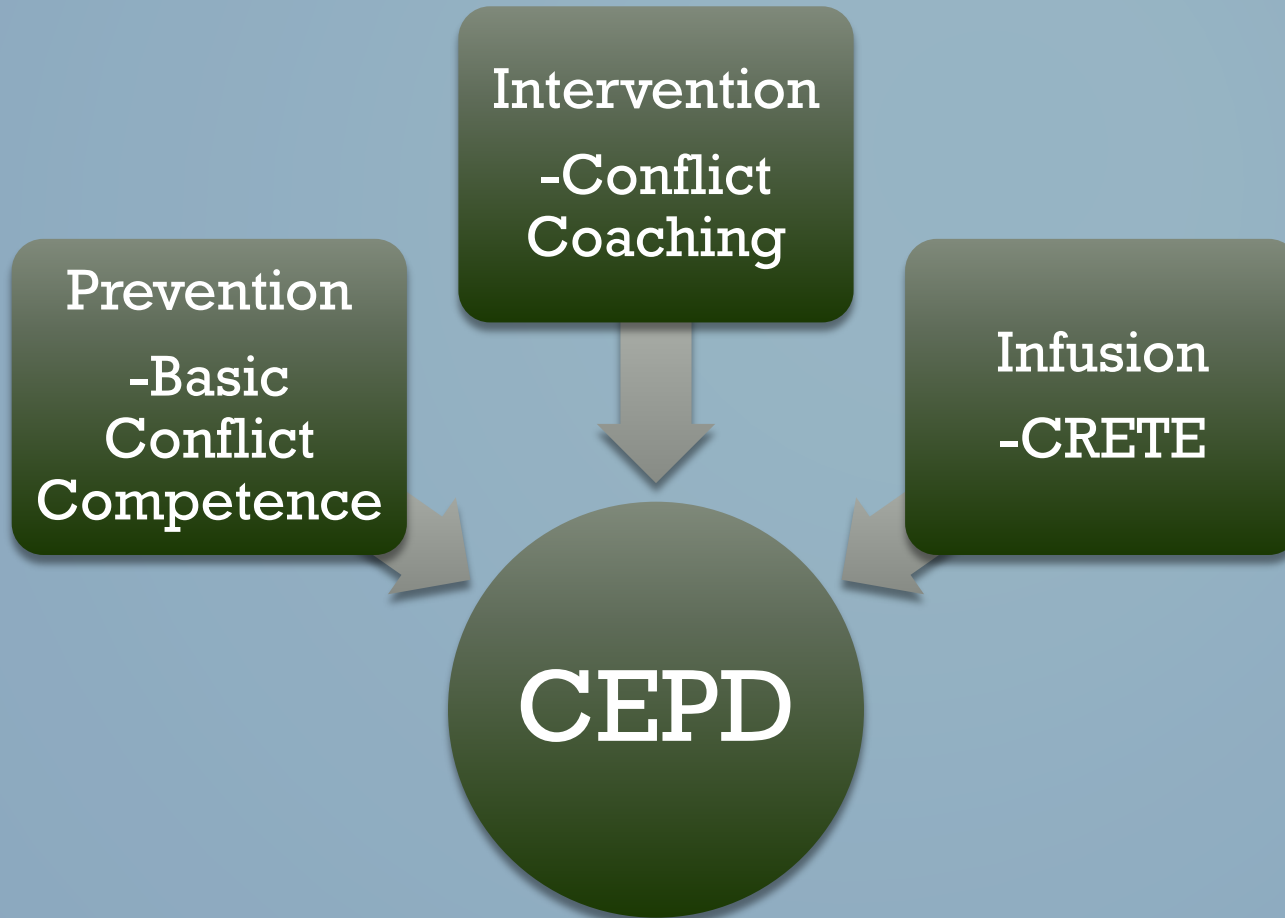
Specific Applications to Special Education

⦿ Coaching for Administrators

⦿ The Need:

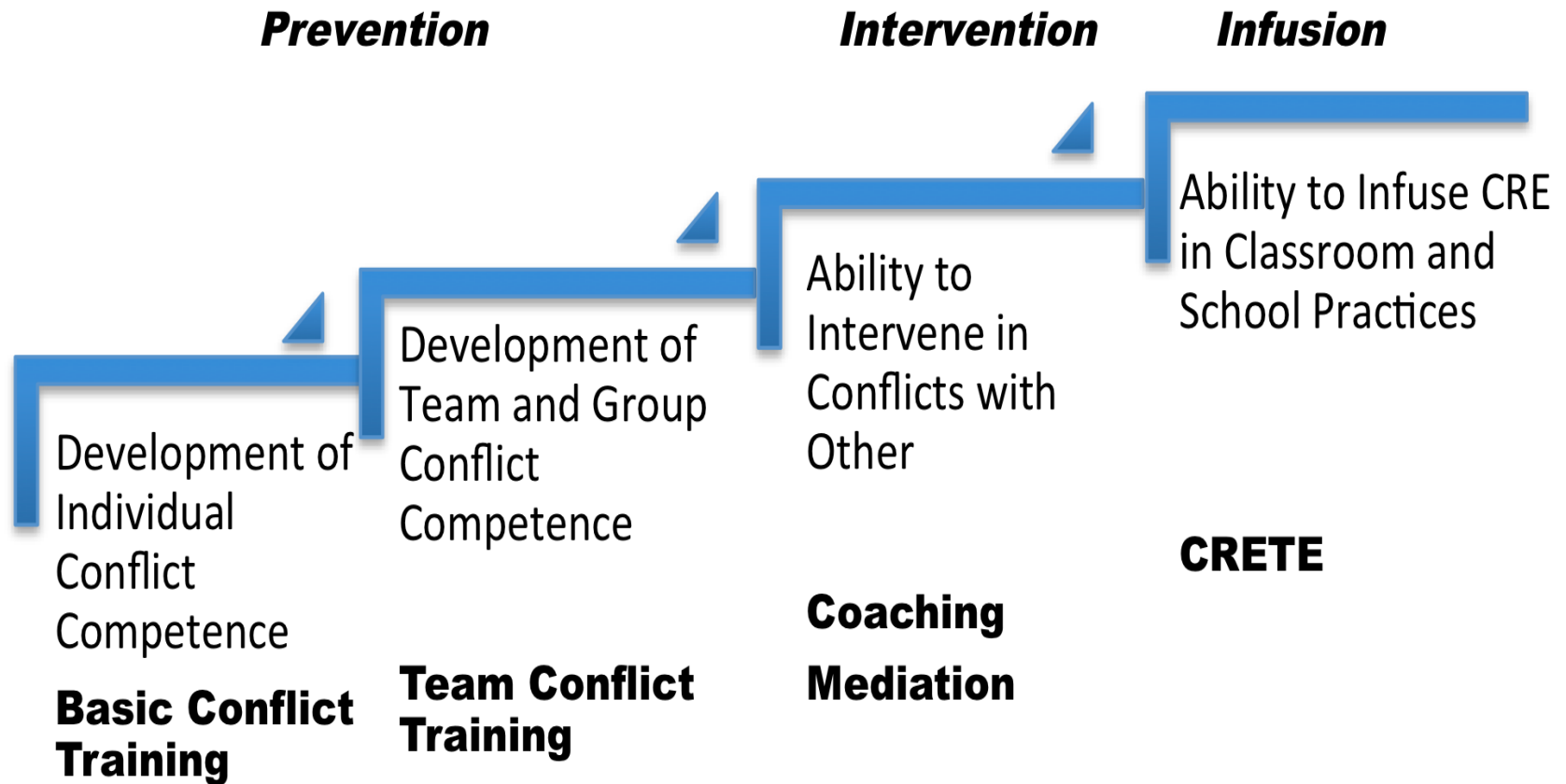
- Help administrators consider how their involvement may be escalating conflict
- Help administrators consider how to partner more effectively with parents
- Reduce the conflict between SPED and GENED teachers and administrators/the system – cited as a significant issue in contributing to attrition and costs of escalation
- Help administrators think about building systems of dispute resolution that prevent escalation to due process hearings

Conflict Education Professional Development



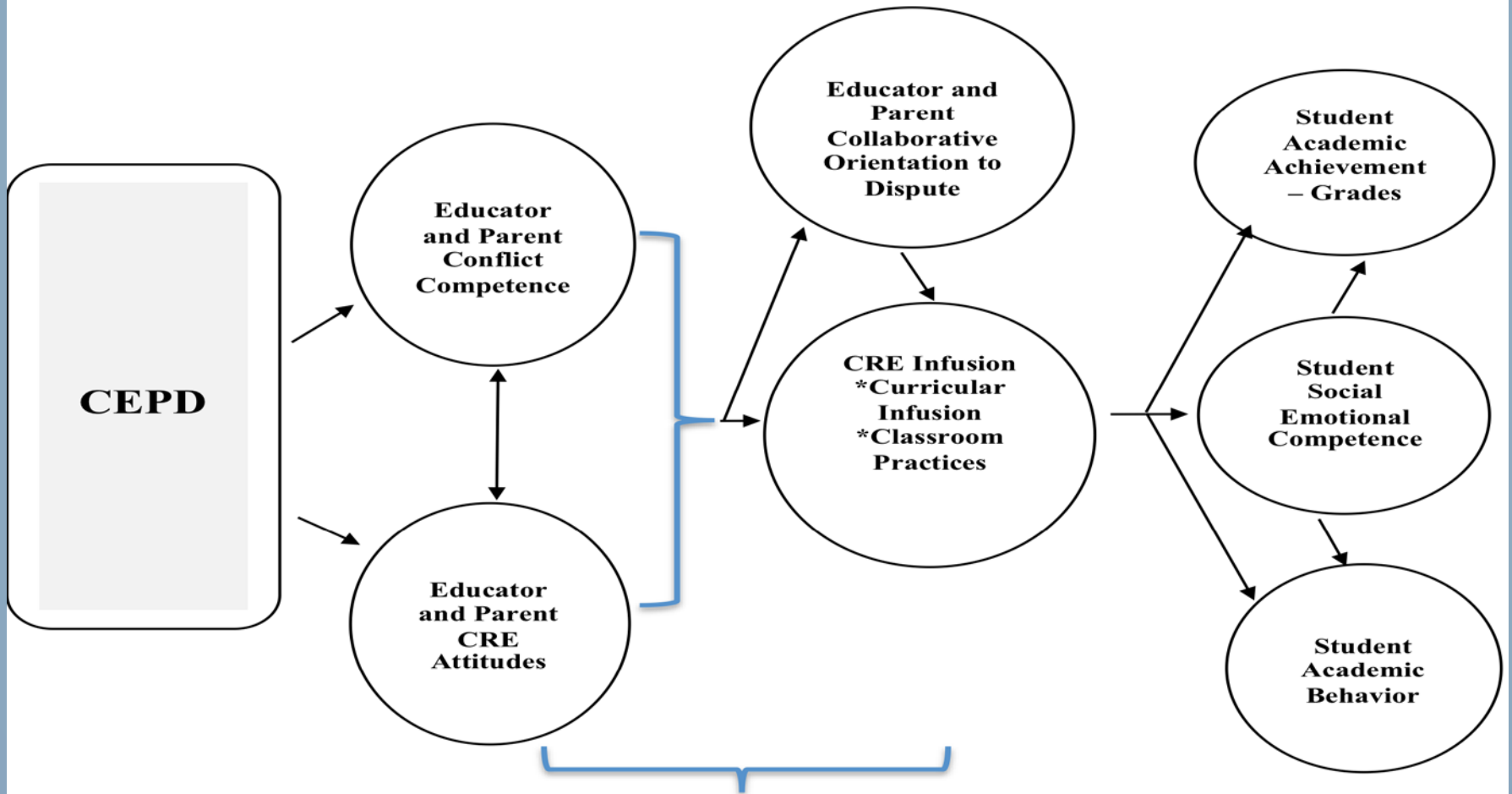
Full System Development

Figure 1. Logic Flow for Conflict Education Components



Expected Benefits

Figure 2. CEPD Theory of Change Model



Questions and Discussion



Upcoming CADRE Webinar

**Preparing for Dispute Resolution:
CADRE's Parent Dispute Resolution Resource Showcase
with
CADRE Assistant Director, Philip Moses**

**January 30, 2013
11:30AM – 12:30PM Pacific Time**

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www.directionservice.org/cadre/parentshowcasewebinar.cfm**



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