Tips and Strategies: Handling Conflicts

- **Guiding Questions and Expected Responses:**
  - What is the first thing you should do when there is a conflict?
    - The first thing you should do when there is a conflict is calm down. This might include walking away from the situation for a short time and taking some deep breaths or using other methods to calm yourself.
  - What is the next thing you should do?
    - The second step is to share your feelings with the other person.
  - What is the third step in solving a conflict?
    - The third step is to apologize for hurting the other person's feelings.
  - How can you reach a compromise with someone during a conflict?
    - You can reach a compromise with someone by working together to discuss a solution that you both agree to.

- **Tips and Strategies to Practice Handling Conflicts:**
  - Role-play with parent/caregiver
  - When conflicts naturally arise (with siblings, friends, etc.), help them practice the steps of conflict resolution
  - Use various cues/prompts:
    - **Verbal Cues:** Ask a question that suggests a response (e.g. "Can you share how you are feeling with her?") or "comment on other people's actions" (e.g. "He apologized for making you sad.") (Watling & Spitzer, 2018, p. 411)
    - **Visual Cues:** Picture prompts that demonstrate skills (e.g. steps to resolving a conflict) (Watling & Spitzer, 2018)
  - Demonstrate how to appropriately handle conflicts when they arise (modeling) (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
  - Ask higher order questions (e.g. "Why is it important to reach a compromise?") (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010, p. 245)
  - Give feedback (e.g. "You did a nice job apologizing.") (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010, p. 245)
  - Teach child to verbally instruct themselves on what to do (e.g. "When I am mad, I will take deep breaths to calm down.") (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
  - Create a mnemonic for the child to use to remember the steps of conflict resolution (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
  - Social Autopsies/Social Dissection (OCALI, n.d.):
    - Analyze social situations from the child's life to determine social errors and how to correct them
    - Analyze social situations in cartoons/movies
  - Continue to use other evidence-based interventions that are effective for your child (Social Stories™, scripts, etc.)

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References

Kramer, P. & Hinojosa, J. (2010). *Frames of reference for pediatric occupational therapy* (3rd ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

OCALI. (n.d.). Social autopsy. https://www.ocali.org/project/resource_gallery_of_interventions/page/social_autopsy

Watling, R. & Spitzer, S. L. (Eds.). (2018). *Autism across the lifespan: A comprehensive occupational therapy approach* (4th ed.). American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.