

Global Conflict Resolution Methods: Brief Overview

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss three conflict resolution methods, and how we can learn from these more traditional methods and apply them to our contemporary processes. The specific areas of focus include:

1. Ho'oponopono
2. Samroh Samuel
3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

1. Ho'oponopono

The field of conflict resolution is dynamic and constantly changing, so interveners and researchers are continually learning new things about how to improve processes, as well as introduce new ones.

Some of these processes are really based on traditional conflict resolution methods, one of which is called ho'oponopono. **Ho'oponopono** is a traditional Hawaiian conflict resolution method, much like what we would call family group conferencing in the United States. The method is based on an ancient Hawaiian belief that illness is linked to breaking spiritual laws, and things need to be set right in order for a person to be healed.

Extended family members would come together to mend broken family relations, and this process was considered a form of mental cleansing. The parties involved would mend their relationships through discussion, prayer, repentance, restitution, and forgiveness.

The United States juvenile justice system now uses a lot of the principles that come from this ancient Hawaiian practice, which is just one way that conflict resolution takes traditional principles and adapts them for a contemporary process.



TERM TO KNOW

Ho'oponopono

A traditional Hawaiian conflict resolution method.

2. Samroh Samrueal

Somroh samrueal comes from Cambodia, and is really like a conciliation process at the village level.

This process has proven to be very effective, particularly in conflicts that involve villagers who don't want to go to the high court. It's also been effective in cases of domestic violence against women.

While somroh samrueal involves elders coming together to practice a form of conciliation in the village, some elements of that process have been adapted into the contemporary conciliation methods used in the United States.



TERM TO KNOW

Somroh Samrueal

A traditional Cambodian conflict resolution process similar to village-scale conciliation.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** is a relatively new form of conflict resolution, but one which is being widely practiced by countries or cultures who have had systematic issues with discrimination or abuse of power.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission may sound familiar because of what happened in South Africa, but this process has been used in other nations as well.

After apartheid, Bishop Tutu was asked to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because of all the human rights abuses that happened under apartheid. As part of this process, people were brought together for public hearings to speak about their experiences and the wrongdoings that occurred. Each side listened to the other, and it was an enormously healing experience for the country of South Africa.

Following the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone, the country conducted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2002 through 2004 as part of the peace agreement. The process began by collecting statements from people around the country. This was then followed by public hearings and a final report to the United Nations Security Council that named perpetrators and gave recommendations for the country moving forward.

Canada has also set out to do a Truth and Reconciliation Commission because of what happened when the children of the Aborigine and Inuit people were brought to residential schools in the last century. Despite objections from their parents, the children were placed in residential schools, where they were often forbidden to speak their native language or practice native customs. Because this was considered a human rights violation, the Canadian government decided to put together the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to make the situation public as part of the restitution process.



TERM TO KNOW

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A conflict resolution process intended to bring understanding and address past events in countries or cultures with a history of systematic conflict or discrimination.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that as contemporary conflict resolution processes continue to evolve, many of them incorporate or adapt elements of more traditional resolution methods from around the world. Three such methods are **ho'oponopono** from Hawaii, **somroh samruei** from Cambodia, and the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, which is well-known because of its use in South Africa, but has also been used in other countries.

You now understand that all of these methods have contributed certain aspects to the conflict resolution processes used in the United States. The field of conflict resolution is dynamic and always changing, so it's important to be familiar with the variety of methods in existence.

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



TERMS TO KNOW

Ho'oponopono

A traditional Hawaiian conflict resolution method.

Somroh Somruei

A traditional Cambodian conflict resolution process similar to village-scale conciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A conflict resolution process intended to bring understanding and address past events in countries or cultures with a history of systematic conflict or discrimination.