FAMILY CONFLICT

A conflict is a struggle between two or more people who disagree. That struggle may be verbal, physical or both. Conflicts range from little disagreements between friends, family members to violent battles between enemies.

A family conflict is a struggle between two or more family members who disagree over issues. There could be conflicts between husband and wife or between siblings (brothers and sisters) or even between parents and children.

Causes of Conflicts in Families

Conflicts can be caused by the following:

1. Situation causes: Any situation that dissatisfies people can cause conflict. For instance, in families, when parent(s) show more love or attention to a child and neglect the others.
2. Personality differences: No two individuals are the same, not even twins. Individual differences are from heredity and environment. These different

behavioural patterns can bring about conflicts in the family.

3. Power struggles: Conflicts can occur when people feel a need to be in control. Power is the ability to influence another person. This can occur between husband and wife. It can also occur between a younger and an elder brother or sister.

Negative Results of Conflicts

Conflicts not resolved properly can lead to negative results. Some of these negative results are:

1. Negative, stressing emotions arise, such as anger, frustration, fear, pain, humiliation, sorrow or bitterness, etc.
2. People who are often angry may become ill. Sleeping and eating patterns may be affected.
3. People may say things they do no mean and thus hurt another person's feelings.
4. Conflicts breakup friendships and family.
5. Violence may occur and to physical injury or even death.

Ways of Resolving Conflict

1. Becoming aware of the conflict or problem: Most conflicts are based on differences among people. Such differences then turn into disagreements. Recognizing the differences and disagreements is the first stage of conflict resolution or avoidance.
2. Setting limits: At this stage, the differences should be understood properly to understand the positions of each person thus the boundaries of the other person. The persons now ought to behave within their boundaries so to avoid conflict. However, for conflict resolution, these limits help for dialogue.
3. Arguing/dialogue stage: At this stage, the persons analyze their qualities so to understand their weaknesses and strengths, thus the basis for their relationship.
4. Negotiating and compromise: At this stage, the persons try to make adjustments to their positions on the conflicting issue. It is more like practical mutual advising of each other.
5. Following up: At this stage, living together with considerations given to the points highlighted by

the conflict. At this point, parties become better and appreciate each other more with tolerance.

