

Chapter 14

Peacebuilding with compassion: Customising conflict management education for older adults

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Introduction

A natural part of human contact is conflict, which frequently results from disparities in values, objectives, views, interests, resources, or power relationships. It can affect people and civilizations profoundly and can take many different forms, from small-scale conflicts to major battles. Although disagreements can be a source of constructive progress, but when they are badly handled or remain unresolved, they usually result in violence, devastation, and social disintegration (Bar-Tal, 2011), especially in areas with precarious sociopolitical circumstances, like Nigeria, with presumed social instability, poverty, and inequality. Political, religious, and ethnic issues regularly result in bloodshed and instability, making war a recurring problem in Nigeria (Kew, 2021). Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has been identified as having the most violent conflicts on the continent (Orhero, 2020). In many African nations, human security is still threatened by violent conflicts (Chinwokwu, 2015). Community disruption, demographic displacement, humanitarian crises, national social unrest, economic upheaval by uprooting millions of people, killing people, and destroying property, are just a few of the far-reaching effects of these violent conflicts brings in Nigeria. Historical grievances, political marginalization, and economic hardship are the fundamental causes of these wars (Albert, 2008). Nonetheless, there are attempts to reduce conflict and bring peace to the Country. Nigeria has seen a variety of peacebuilding initiatives, from government programs to community-based activities spearheaded by civil society groups. Examples include the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) initiatives, Women's Involvement in Grassroots Peacebuilding in Nigeria (WIGPIN), the Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Initiative (CPPBI), and the incorporation of peace and conflict resolution into the formal education curriculum, among others (Bello, 2021).

Peacebuilding has gone beyond political talks and ceasefires to addressing the root causes of conflict and creating conditions for lasting peace (Lederach, 1997). Its' core principles are justice, healing within the community, and reconciliation. Some tactics to ensure its existence include mediation, negotiation efforts, early warning, and response systems (Chinwokwu, 2015), and the development of regional peacebuilding organizations (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2022) among others. Despite these continuous efforts, the nation still

struggles to achieve lasting peace, and inclusivity in the framework of peacebuilding has always been a problem, especially the underrepresentation of vulnerable groups like older persons (those 60 years and above). Furthermore, in settling disputes and promoting lasting peace, these methods frequently undervalue the significance of compassion.

In peacebuilding, compassion is a crucial but sometimes underappreciated component. It includes a sincere desire to lessen other people's pain and care for their welfare (Goetz et al., 2010). Empathy, healing, and understanding between disputing parties are the goals of incorporating compassion into conflict management. Though compassion is a viable route to a more durable and humane peace in conflict management strategy, its actual application sometimes leaves out older persons. Older persons are often formally overlooked by most peacebuilding and conflict management education. The existing practices and education focus on children, youth, and middle-aged adults who are perceived as active participants in conflict or its recovery (Onapajo, 2020). Due to their distinct viewpoints, life experiences, and emotional demands, older people should not be excluded from conflict management education, regardless of the assumption that they are experienced in conflict management.

By integrating older persons into the peacebuilding and conflict management framework through education, the nation can take advantage of their distinct viewpoints and abilities to promote a more humane and inclusive method of resolving disputes and peacebuilding. However, their peculiar situation must be considered. Unfortunately, there is limited research on educational framework for older Nigerians in peacebuilding and conflict management. A review of recent research studies (2020-2024) available on international databases like Google Scholar revealed that the focus on peacebuilding and conflict management strategies had been on children and young adults (Akinyetun et al., 2023; Ebebe & Onyenze, 2023; Ekhatu, 2024; Njobati, 2021; Onapajo, 2020) while those for vulnerable groups had been on women (Agbaje, 2024; Gbadeyan et al., 2024; Imam et al., 2020; Ogagavwodia & Neba, 2022; Ugwueye & Okoh, 2023).

Through a unique approach to incorporating older persons into compassionate peacebuilding initiatives from a conflict management education perspective, this chapter seeks to close the gap in conflict management research. By doing this, it aims to improve conflict resolution procedures in ways that promote long-lasting peace by utilizing the socioemotional selective theory. The chapter will examine ways to adapt compassion to older persons' needs and abilities through an age-sensitive educational approach.

Theoretical framework: Socioemotional selectivity theory

Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST) emerged from the field of developmental psychology in the 1990s, primarily through the work of Laura Carstensen (Carstensen, 1995) and it has gone through a significant evolution

over the past decades. The theory was formulated based on observations and studies on how ageing influences motivation and emotional regulation. It challenges the traditional view that ageing inevitably leads to social disengagement and emotional decline. Instead, it posits that as people grow older, they become more selective in their social interactions and prioritize emotionally meaningful goals and relationships (Carstensen et al., 1999). SST underscores that ageing individuals do not disengage from social life because of a decline in capacity but because they prioritize quality over quantity in their interactions, focusing on what is most emotionally satisfying and meaningful. The main components of this theory related to this study include:

- Time perspective and goal prioritization: SST is based on a shift that is driven by the perception that individuals' time is bonded as this influences their goals. As people age and become more aware of their finite lifespan, they shift their focus from long-term, future-oriented goals (e.g., knowledge acquisition, and career development) to short-term, emotionally fulfilling objectives (Carstensen, 2006). Older persons perceive their time is limited, and as such older person's goals will be prone to maximising their emotional well-being, fostering positive relationships, and avoiding conflict during their remaining days on earth. This theory provides a unique motivational shift understanding for customizing conflict management education for older people.
- Emotional Regulation: SST highlights that positivity has been central to older persons' lives. They have a noticeable preference for positives over negative information, which significantly influences their decision-making process (Scheibe & Carstensen, 2010). This enhanced emotional regulation is particularly relevant in the context of educative peacebuilding intervention that promotes empathy, emotional stability, and reconciliation in their communities which will be engaging for older persons (Livingstone & Isaacowitz, 2021). This depicts that peacebuilding programmes for older people should adopt facilitation methods that emphasize listening and emotional validation to help older persons navigate conflict to align with their socioemotional goals (Carstensen, 2021).
- Selectivity in Social Interactions: As people age, they become more selective about their social networks. They invest more in emotionally meaningful relationships that are emotionally fulfilling and socially engaging (Carstensen et al., 1999) and are more likely to disengage from superficial or conflictual social ties (Charles & Carstensen, 2010). This selectivity can contribute to peacebuilding, as older persons are often motivated to preserve harmony in their social circles and avoid unnecessary conflict. This suggests conflict management education should incorporate prosocial behaviour to foster a compassionate and supportive learning environment (Livingstone & Isaacowitz, 2021). Moreover, older persons are often seen as custodians of cultural values and traditions (Iyare et al., 2022). This cultural authority can

be harnessed with SST suggesting that these older persons are naturally inclined to engage in such selective roles because they seek to leave behind a positive legacy for future generations.

SST offers a valuable lens through which one can understand the potential contributions of older persons in peacebuilding efforts. Overcoming the common faults of many peacebuilding efforts in the exclusion of specific demography from the process. The theory's focus on emotional regulation, conflict avoidance, and the pursuit of meaningful social goals aligns well with the objectives of compassionate peacebuilding, which emphasizes empathy, understanding, and the resolution of interpersonal and intergroup conflict. This unique contribution can enhance the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions, particularly in the context of Nigeria, where community-based approaches are essential.

Peacebuilding and conflict management in Nigeria

Peacebuilding and conflict management are distinct but complementary methods of conflict resolution. Each has a distinct function, particularly in Nigeria, where both approaches are critical for resolving the country's complicated and persistent conflicts. Peacebuilding refers to long-term, structural initiatives aimed at addressing and preventing conflict's core causes and ensuring long-term peace (Onyesoh, 2022). It focuses on creating social, political, and economic systems that lessen the risk of conflict reoccurring (Galtung, 1996). In Nigeria, peacebuilding activities address systemic imbalances, promote social justice, aid economic development, and strengthen governance frameworks. The goal is to make it difficult for conflict to resurface by developing capacities at all levels, particularly in areas with a history of inter-ethnic or communal tensions, such as the Niger Delta and parts of Northern Nigeria (Albert, 2008; Olufemi & Adewale, 2012). Conflict management, on the other hand, focuses on short-term, urgent efforts to contain, mitigate, and manage the consequences of disputes (Onyesoh, 2022). It is reactive, addressing current difficulties. It frequently includes practical strategies for defusing tensions and preventing violence from spreading (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009). In Nigeria, conflict resolution initiatives include the deployment of peacekeepers, temporary ceasefires, mediation between warring parties, and community-level agreements. For example, during election seasons, Nigeria routinely employs conflict resolution tactics such as security interventions, stakeholder discussions, and media sensitization campaigns to prevent violence (Lambe & Mubarak, 2023).

While peacebuilding and conflict management have unique goals, they complement one another and are both necessary for long-term conflict resolution in Nigeria. Conflict management offers the necessary stability for peacebuilding attempts to take root by resolving current tensions and preventing further escalation (Lederach, 2005). For example, in Nigeria's Northeast, immediate conflict management interventions have helped stabilize insurgent-affected communities, allowing for longer-term peacebuilding efforts such as

infrastructure rebuilding, economic revitalization, and social rehabilitation (Enude, 2021; World Bank, 2021). By addressing the root causes of conflict, effective peacebuilding decreases the need for ongoing conflict management. Addressing issues such as poverty, ethnic marginalization, and governance concerns helps to prevent the incidence of new conflicts and the recurrence of old ones, reducing the need for conflict resolution (Albert, 2008). Peacebuilding and conflict management work together to establish both immediate and long-term solutions to chronic conflicts in Nigeria, resulting in a more sustainable approach to conflict resolution.

Nigeria has implemented various peacebuilding and conflict management initiatives over the years to address its complex conflicts. These efforts encompass both governmental and non-governmental interventions such as National peace initiatives, Presidential Amnesty Program, Centre for Democracy and Development; Mercy corps, mediation and dialogue platforms such as Interfaith Mediation Centre; Youth and Women's Empowerment Programs; International peacebuilding efforts such as support from African Union, World bank, United Nation Development Plan; faith-based organization programmes; and Traditional and Community-Based Peacebuilding such as Umuada, traditional leaders forum, the elders among others (Agbaje, 2024; Bello, 2021; Malachi & Ajibade, 2022; Onyesoh, 2022; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2022). Specifically, traditional leaders' forums which consist of older persons continue to be crucial to local dispute-resolution procedures and to the peaceful restoration of communities (Ehrhardt et al., 2024). Most of the time, older persons organize themselves to keep peace by doing things like fixing broken schools, roads, and public restrooms; and advocate and raise awareness at the grassroots level about important issues that impact the community's peace and security, like taking part in vigilante security campaigns (Malachi & Ajibade, 2022). In times of political or ethnic conflict, older persons are frequently viewed as having the expertise and social position to start conversations and efforts at reconciliation (Ebimgbo & Okoye, 2021). For instance, older persons in Northern Nigeria have engaged in mediating conflicts between farmer and herder communities, promoting dialogue and fostering mutual understanding (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2021). Furthermore, as custodians of collective memory, older persons can draw lessons from past conflicts and oral narratives (Akoh et al., 2022) to avoid repeating the same mistakes, providing younger generations with historical insights that can inform peaceful strategies. However, these roles they perform comes with its' own challenges.

Older persons and conflict dynamics in Nigeria

Population ageing is a growing concern in Nigeria as we have around the world. A population of those who are 60 years and above was projected as 10,206,637 for 2022 (National Population Commission (NPC), 2020) which is 4.7% of her entire population, and by 2050, this population is projected to be triple (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2019). Older persons are often viewed as custodians of cultural values, community history, and intergenerational wisdom. Nonetheless, ageing is a normal process that causes varied physical, mental, and emotional changes to differing degrees in each person, and they are more vulnerable and marginalized due to the lack of social welfare systems and safety net services. In addition, many older Nigerians are financially reliant on their family or the community for help because they do not have sufficient retirement savings or pension plans (Mbam et al., 2022). Since family and communal living arrangements are deteriorating and urban migration and modernity are rising, many of them experience isolation (Ajayi, 2021). Along with these challenges, ageing also increases the likelihood of health problems since older people may experience physical restrictions, chronic illnesses, and a reduced immune system (World Health Organization (WHO), 2015). However, because of poor infrastructure, a dearth of age-appropriate medical care, and high rates of poverty, they have little access to healthcare. Others suffer from cognitive impairment, including dementia (Ajayi & Akerele, 2023), which can impede their ability to communicate and make decisions. Their generational differences with the younger generation (Mbam et al., 2022) can often cause miscommunications and disputes. Each of these modifications has consequences and diminishes their ability to withstand crises (Urlick et al., 2017). These traits hinder older persons' ability to secure resources, leave conflict areas, and exercise their rights in their communities (World Health Organization (WHO), 2021).

Recurrent conflicts, such as insurgencies, farmer-herder conflicts, religious tensions, ethnic conflicts, and violent political disputes are all part of the Nigerian environment. Notably, there is the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-east, farmer-herder conflicts in the North-central, and South-South militancy (Kew, 2021) these regions have 11.3%, 8.8% and 8.6% of older persons in the country respectively (NPC, 2020). These notable incidents make older Nigerians more vulnerable with a harsher repercussion for those who lack the financial, logistical, and physical resources to move or adapt. Due to mobility issues (Makanju & Uriri, 2021) or being separated from family members who put the safety of younger and more mobile people first (Smith & Duinhof, 2022), older people may be left behind when conflicts uproot communities. As a result, the parties involved in the disagreement may detain, abuse, or simply ignore them. For those who are fortunate to be transferred to displacement camps or new communities, they usually experience malnutrition, lack of social inclusion in temporary settlements, and inadequate medical care, among other age-specific issues (Böcker & Hunter, 2022). Older persons are more vulnerable to neglect and health decline because many of these camps lack age-sensitive amenities. Yet this age group can contribute significantly to peacebuilding and conflict resolution despite their vulnerabilities.

Older persons are traditionally revered individuals who mediate problems within families, between groups, and even within the community. These responsibilities

stem from cultural norms that view elders as intelligent and impartial, with the ability to settle conflicts in an unbiased manner. Elder-led councils, kingship, and chieftaincy are still practised by many ethnic groups in Nigeria, where older persons discuss community issues and offer culturally grounded answers to communal issues. However, these roles are not always officially recognized (Iyare et al., 2022) and their involvement, depends on community structures including social authority's recognition (Malachi & Ajibade, 2022). Additionally, traditional roles of older persons in mediating conflict is eroding in some communities, particularly in urbanized areas, where younger generations may not respect the authority of older persons in the same way it may be applicable in rural areas (Urick et al., 2017). Moreover, one of the most significant challenges faced by older persons in conflict situations is ageism.

Ageism is a prejudice wherein someone is treated unfairly because of their age, practical in stereotyping older persons as weak, or insignificant (Weir, 2023). The perception of older individuals in conflict circumstances can be influenced by ageism, which might result in their exclusion from peacebuilding initiatives. For instance, due to the assumption that older persons are incapable of making significant contributions, younger people may dominate conversations on dispute resolution. Older persons may thus feel excluded or powerless and may deter them from taking part in peacebuilding activities. Ageism has a significant impact on older persons' mental health and self-esteem (Brinkhof et al., 2024), limiting their ability to engage in conflict resolution. As a result, they are more likely to withdraw from social interactions and avoid conflict situations altogether, exacerbating existing tensions in their communities. Result of persistent ageism in Nigeria, may be the reason why older persons are routinely excluded from most formal conflict management educational framework. This exclusion is damaging to the peace process because it eliminates a crucial perspective and ignores the importance of intergenerational partnership in attaining long-term peace (Urick et al., 2017). Addressing ageism is critical to ensuring that older people participate (Weir, 2023) in peacebuilding efforts and can play their full roles. This can be accomplished by incorporating compassion into peacebuilding and conflict management education and practice.

Compassionate peacebuilding and conflict management

Compassion is a fundamental feeling that requires noticing and responding to the suffering of others to help alleviate it. This concept appears to be embedded in African and Nigerian culture through philosophies and concepts such as the *Omoluabi* (virtuous person), *Ubuntu* (humanity toward others), *Inuwa* (responsibility to others), *Igwubuike* (strength in unity), and our adherence to the kinship system. In terms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, compassion represents a transition from punitive to restorative justice (Rothbart & Allen, 2019), which is critical for laying the groundwork for conversation and reconciliation. It also encourages the creation of environments in which

individuals are active participants in the process of healing and reconciliation rather than passive recipients of peace initiatives (Hillert, 2024). It is critical to encourage empathy and collaboration among disputing parties, as well as deeper reconciliation, to understand the impact of conflict on individuals and communities (Rothbart & Allen, 2019).

In Nigeria, where conflicts are frequently rooted in historical grievances, identity-based tensions, divergent narratives, and a lack of mutual understanding, infusing compassion techniques into peacebuilding and conflict management framework helps to foster true reconciliation and healing. Compassion-driven programs, such as dialogue circles, community storytelling, and trauma counselling, among others can help victims and perpetrators of violence see each other as human beings rather than rivals (Gilbert, 2021). For example, the Interfaith Mediation Centre's activities in Northern Nigeria include compassionate dialogue, which facilitates exchanges that allow individuals from various communities to sympathize with one another's viewpoints and experiences, lowering tension and building peace (URI, N.D.). Compassion helps peacebuilders bridge gaps, resolve underlying emotional wounds, and inspire inclusive involvement, particularly often excluded populations (Rothbart & Allen, 2019) like older persons. As Nigeria continues to face many forms of conflict, incorporating compassionate peacebuilding tactics will be critical for establishing a peaceful, inclusive, and stable society. It has been proven to reduce cycles of violence and foster peace by addressing structural violence and social inequality (Christie & Morrison, 2021). One example of such inequality is ageism and the marginalization of older people in formal structures, which not only denies them a voice in conflict resolution but also restricts the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives by removing a demographic that may promote stability and reconciliation.

In many Nigerian communities, older persons act as mediators in local disputes, drawing on community norms and beliefs to promote peace and resolve issues compassionately (Malachi & Ajibade, 2022). Compassionate treatment and inclusion of older individuals in conflict environments increases their sense of value, respect, and inclusivity. This sense of inclusion can alleviate feelings of social isolation and increase enthusiasm to participate in future peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, compassion contributes to the development of supportive social contexts in which older individuals can express their emotions and concerns without fear of being judged or excluded. Recognizing and integrating compassion into older people's peacebuilding roles can help foster an environment in which younger generations and conflicting parties feel understood and supported based on their wealth of experiences with the community both at peace and in conflict. For example, in areas like the middle belt of Nigeria where communal clashes over resources are common, having frequently held older persons' led community gatherings and conflict resolution with compassionate approaches that emphasize shared values and long-standing relationships within

the community may be a more sustainable peacebuilding strategy (Ojewale, 2021).

A sustainable peacebuilding strategy should include incorporating compassion into conflict resolution strategies such as:

- active listening (Rothbart & Allen, 2019), which makes older people feel heard and respected;
- empathy building (Hillert, 2024), which helps bridge generational divides and fosters greater understanding between older and younger people; and
- emotional support for the older persons, which is linked to improved well-being and resilience (Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015).

In the same vein, compassionate peacebuilding means acknowledging older people's potential vulnerabilities (HelpAge International, 2012) and creating conflict resolution processes that address these challenges by ensuring their inclusion in peacebuilding processes; acknowledging their contributions and perspectives by empowering and supporting their roles and institutions at the grassroots (Malachi & Ajibade, 2022); and finally providing training and capacity building to enhance them (Wolfe, 2022). Furthermore, because older people are already culturally positioned as conflict resolution experts, compassion-focused training would deepen and strengthen their natural role in community peace efforts.

Tailored conflict management education for older persons

To fully realize the potential of older Nigerians as community mediators, conflict management education must be targeted at this demographic's specific requirements. Older individuals in Nigeria frequently confront unique obstacles that might lead to conflict, such as generational disparities, socioeconomic pressures, and changes in family dynamics. A specialized conflict management education program may not only teach older individuals how to effectively manage problems in their personal and community lives but also empowers them to promote a peaceful and inclusive society. Such educational activity is expected to be a culturally sensitive programme that emphasizes compassion, communication, and inclusion. To secure long-term advantages and community acceptance, such a program must have specified by location, tailored content, and sustainable structures. The key principles that should guide such activity include:

- Compassion: This is crucial in dispute resolution, especially for older persons who realize the importance of community and family relationships. Facilitating older persons' learning to approach conflict with empathy, active listening, and patience improves their mediation skills and promotes a gentler approach to dispute resolution (Wolfe, 2022). Compassion also promotes self-compassion, assisting older persons in managing stress and emotional burdens associated with conflict. Older persons in Nigeria may be

stigmatized for seeking help, but a compassionate program can enable them to resolve issues in ways that maintain their dignity and resilience in live with the United Nation decade of healthy ageing policy (World Health Organization (WHO), 2021)

- Effective communication: Communication, which can be problematic for older persons with minimal formal education, therefore, simplified communication approaches, such as clear language, visual aids, and interactive activities are vital for use. These approaches has the tendency to improve comprehension and enable all participants to participate effectively in peacebuilding (Pukallus, 2022). This emphasizes accessibility and acceptability which will allow older persons to contribute more confidently to peacebuilding, promoting inclusivity.
- Inclusive decision-making: Involving individuals in decision-making leads to higher satisfaction and better conflict resolution (Majer et al., 2021). Conflict management programs should involve older individuals in decisions about curriculum organization, instructional methods, and evaluation strategies. By allowing older persons to shape their learning experience, the program upholds traditional Nigerian norms that highlight older persons' opinions, promoting community respect for their position in peacekeeping.
- Consider age-sensitive learning methods to account for physical, cognitive, and social changes. To assist older persons, navigate their specific issues, content should highlight stress management, the development of supportive connections, and assertive communication methods. Addressing age-specific concerns in Nigerian communities increases program relevance, stimulates engagement, and empowers older persons (Ajayi, 2021) to actively participate in conflict resolution.

Such a program could be a workshop or ongoing training given at easily accessible, familiar community locations such as local halls, religious venues, traditional leader's places, market areas, and adult literacy centres, among others. These venues should offer secured and inviting environments for effective participation of older persons. For remote areas, such programme may require outreach strategies, such as mobile teaching units, radio programs, or partnerships with community leaders for cluster trainings.

The curriculum for this program should encompass among others:

- Mediation skills, including basic bargaining methods and de-escalation strategies.
- Conflict analysis tools such as methods for identifying conflict causes and dynamics.
- Practice empathy and active listening exercises to better grasp others' viewpoints.
- Utilization of non-escalation techniques to prevent confrontations from escalating.

- Trauma-informed mediation that provides guidance for addressing emotional trauma during dispute resolution.
- Identifying emotional triggers and managing personal pressures might affect conflict resolution.

To address both the emotional and structural dimensions of conflict resolution, this educational activity may include facilitation methods such as trauma-informed techniques (Mediators Beyond Borders International, N.D.), transformative learning approach (Ajayi, 2021), empathy-building exercises (Klimecki, 2019), case studies, and role-playing scenarios among others. These techniques will ensure that participants develop a practical understanding of how to resolve disputes humanely. In addition, perhaps storytelling and group discussions should be paramount in such programs to allow reflection on their experiences and pathway for a sense of fostering peace in the remaining days on earth based on SST. Indigenous storytelling and folklores have been identified to be vital tools in facilitating learning among adults (Ajayi, 2019).

Furthermore, this educative programme can be viable and sustainable if the following are in place:

- Community-based support networks: This will enable older persons to continue helping one another during and after the program. Community-based support groups and intergenerational mentoring programs can provide an ongoing opportunity for older persons to practice conflict resolution skills. Such groups also allow older persons to exchange comments, offer guidance, and establish social relationships, which improves their ability to resolve conflicts efficiently. In addition, intergenerational seminars, discussion circles, and mentorship activities may be continuous activities for community members to align their ideas, resulting in increased solidarity and trust between generations and grieving parties (Urlick et al., 2017).
- Institutional support: Governmental and local organizations can promote older persons' continuous participation in peacebuilding activities as well as conflict management education through policies and structural support. Anti-ageism measures that address preconceptions of older persons in conflict situations can serve to change societal perceptions. Furthermore, getting funds for age-inclusive peace programs and establishing channels for older persons to engage in decision-making promotes the long-term viability of conflict resolution projects at both the community and national levels.
- Research: To ensure sustainability, conflict management education for older persons requires research. Scholars and peace advocates should aspire to use evidence-based research to identify location-specific curricula, instructional methods, and evaluation procedures.

This proposed educational activity will have a wide-ranging impact on older persons, affecting not only their own well-being but also community harmony and social cohesiveness. Specifically:

- Acquired skills will help older persons to interact better with family, friends, and community members, resulting in healthier relationships and fewer disagreements.
- Activities will reduce stress and anxiety, which are commonly linked to mismanaged conflict. It will encourage self-compassion and emotional intelligence which can greatly enhance mental health when conflict is approached constructively.
- Older persons' mediation and conflict resolution skills will promote community stability and cohesion. By resolving problems with empathy and patience, they strengthen the social relationships that hold communities together, generating a sense of unity and resilience.
- This programme will boost older persons' confidence and feeling of purpose as mediators, leading to increased community engagement in peacebuilding projects.

Conclusion

Regardless of the physical, mental, and societal impediments that may hinder older persons active participation in peacebuilding, a tailored compassion-based conflict management education programme for older persons has the tendency to ensure sustainable peace in Nigerian communities. This education can help older persons approach conflict with empathy, contribute their experiences to peacebuilding, and promote generational harmony. Such a program, through sustainable support networks, intergenerational partnerships, and culturally relevant training approaches, can enable older persons to become influential peacekeepers and compassionate mediators in their communities, resulting in long-term good change in Nigerian society.

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