

Project GOAL Lesson #7

Instructional Focus:

Students will learn the problem-solving skills of responding in a thoughtful way instead of following their first impulse, and learn how positive self-talk can help them calm down in stressful situations.

Activities:

1. Share journals (5 min)
2. Introduce step 2 of the problem-solving steps: Stop and get ready to think (5 min.)
3. Sample skit and discussion: reacting impulsively vs. reacting thoughtfully (10 min.)
4. Practice scenarios: writing self-talk command and verbal response to a problem (20 min.)
5. Assign homework journal topic (5 min.)

Materials:

1. Student journals
2. Lesson 7 teacher script (3 copies for volunteers)
3. Lesson 7 student sheet 2 worksheet (One for each student)
4. Lesson 7 student sheet 1 skits (one page per group- some students will work on scenes 1 and 2 with their partner, and others will work on scenes 3 and 4).

Activity 1: Share journals (5 min.)

- Display slide 1 as students enter the room.
- Display slide 2 and quickly review the agenda for the day.
- Display slide 3. Have students share journals in partners or as a whole group, being sure to stay within the time limit.

Activity 2: Introduce Step 2 of Problem-Solving: Stop and Get Ready to Think! (5 min.)

- Display slide 4.

SAY: Remember that the first step of problem solving is to recognize a problem exists. We need to detect the problem early so that we can take care of it when it's small. Who can tell me the signs that tell us when we have a problem?

- Accept student responses, correcting and affirming as necessary. Answers: Our body gives us signals (like our heart races or we feel our body temperature rise), we are thinking about breaking a law or a rule, and someone might be upset with us.
- Display slide 5.

SAY: *Today we are going to learn the next step of problem-solving, step #2, which is stop and get ready to think! When we are in a stressful situation it is sometimes a challenge to stop and think about the situation. When our body is tense and we feel stressed, our first reaction is to follow our impulses.*

- Display slide 6.

SAY: *Our impulses are our body's automatic reactions to a problem- they are all physical. Some situations in life require us to follow our impulses.*

ASK: *Can you think of some situations in which you have to act quickly without thinking, you just have to react? Discuss with your partner.*

- Allow students to share their ideas with the class.
- Display slide 7. Share answers (*fire, first aid situations, emergency, sports, or dance moves*)
- Display slide 8.

SAY: *For the most part, we can take the time to think before we act. We have to learn to use our brains rather than our impulses.*

- Display slide 9.

SAY: *The number one skill you need to learn to be successful is how to take responsibility for your own life. This means that you need to control your own thoughts, feelings, and actions.*

- Display slide 10.

SAY: *When you allow a situation to control your actions rather than thinking it through, you are being controlled by the situation or the other person- you are giving up your control. You are like a puppet on a string, letting outside forces control what happens to you.*

Activity 3: Sample skits and discussion (10 min.)

- Display slide 11.
- Have ready: Lesson 7 teacher script (3 copies for volunteers.)

SAY: *The following skit is an example of the two basic ways you can handle a situation: you can react impulsively, which means to follow what your body tells you to do, or you can respond thoughtfully, which means to follow what your brain tells you to do.*

In one skit, Student A will react to the situation by following her first impulses. That means, without thinking- just letting her body take over. In the other skit, Student A will respond to the same situation by using Problem-solving step #2: Stop and get ready to think in order to figure out the best thing to do. That means, she will calm down and think about the situation and respond using her brain rather than her impulses.

- Present sample skit A to the class with student volunteers.
- Display slide 12.

ASK: *In what way did student A react with her first impulses? Discuss with your partner*

- Share responses (*She got angry, raised her voice, threatened the teacher*)

ASK: *What was the result?*

- Share responses (*She got sent to the discipline office, she made her teacher even more angry.*)
- Present sample Scene B to the class with student volunteers.
- Display slide 13.

ASK: *Describe how student A responded thoughtfully rather than reacting. (She stayed calm, didn't raise her voice, she used logical reasons to prove her innocence.)*

- Display slide 14.

ASK: *Which scenario, the first or the second, gave the student more power? (#2, because she controlled the way the situation went and didn't lose her temper)*

ASK: *In which scenario did the student make the situation worse? (#1, because she ended up going to the office and getting a referral, she made the teacher more angry and still failed the test)*

ASK: *Which scenario had the better result? (#2, because the student got her way and the teacher ended up apologizing for the misunderstanding. In the end, their relationship will be stronger and the student got more respect from the teacher.*

Activity 4: Practice Writing Self-Talk Commands and responses (25 min.)

- Display slide 15.
- Have ready: Lesson 7 student sheet 2 worksheet and Lesson 7 student sheet 1 skits

SAY: *In order to learn how to control you impulses and make the right decision and get better results, you can use a strategy called self-talk. It's like what you tell yourself in your mind that will calm you down and allow you to make a thoughtful decision. Our brain works by sending messages*

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which tell our body and mind how to respond. What we tell ourselves can either encourage us and make us stronger, or put us down and make us weaker.

- Display slide 16.

ASK: When you are in a stressful situation, what are some negative things that you can tell yourself? Tell your partner one example.

- Display slide 17.
- Share answers. *(I need to act now; I can't do it; I don't care; I am dumb, weak, etc.)*
- Display slide 18.

What are some positive things you can tell yourself? Share one example with your partner.

- Display slide 19.
- Share answers. *(I need to think this through; I can do it; I care about what happens to me; I am smart, strong, etc.)*
- Display slide 20.
- Distribute student sheets 1 and 2.

SAY: Now, you will get in partners and read skits. You will take turns being Student A. Student A is always going to be the one in the skit who is making the tough decision. When you are A, you will answer the questions for that skit. When you are student B, you will discuss with your partner to help them answer their responses. I want to hear talking before I see writing. Discussing the situation will help you think through the scenario.

- Allow students 5 minutes, then tell them they should be working on the next skit, changing roles. After 5 minutes, take time to discuss.
- If time permits, have each pair choose one of their scenes to share with the class.

Activity 5: Journal (2 min.)

- Distribute Journal #7 sheets or have students copy down the topic.

SAY: Here's your journal topic: Think back about a time when you did not control your first impulse and it got you in trouble. Describe the situation. What happened? How did it turn out? What

*did you say or do that got you in trouble? How did your words or actions cause others to react?
What would have been a better way to handle the situation?*

- If students do not have any examples about themselves that they are willing to write about, as an alternative, they can write about someone they know who fits this situation.