

Session11 – “Recovering From Setbacks: Coping Skills” -- 1

Activity 1- “Handling Put Downs”

Everyone gets put down. Often put-downs are presented as humor and sometimes they are funny. Other times they just hurt. Everyone needs to learn how to manage put-downs so that your self-esteem is not damaged and the attacker is not encouraged to do it again. First, you determine whether the put-down is a valid or invalid accusation. If it is invalid, then it is the other person’s mistake. If the put-down is valid, then there is no reason to feel hurt because valid feedback helps (not hurts) you. Besides, no one is perfect. Second, to discourage the attacker from putting you down in the future, you do the following:

1. The very best thing to do when you are put-down is to ignore it and the person making it. Most times people make put-downs to get attention. Being ignored is the thing that attackers dislike most.
2. But if you must say something to the person who put down, do not respond with a put-down. Insulting back only escalates the situation and results in more put-downs.
3. It is better to cut the person off by giving a quick comeback that is not nasty and show that you are unaffected by the put-down.

“I don’t agree.” “Really? I didn’t know that.” “Big deal.” “So what?” “Who cares?”

4. You could also agree with the person.

“How did you know?” “You know, you’re right.” “Who told you?” “I never noticed that before.”

5. Finally, you could make a joke of it.

“Would you put that in writing?
“Are you talking to the right person?”

“Did you think that one up all by yourself?”
“That was supposed to be a secret.”

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Activity 2 - “Role Plays”

Practice coping with every day set backs at school. You are to prepare to role play your assigned character by reading the description of the situation and your characters experiences. In doing so, write out the answers to the following questions:

What do you want?

How do you feel?

What are your reasons for wanting what you want and feeling like you do?

1. The school has called an assembly. You took an aisle chair. Before the assembly begins you place your books on your chair and leave to get a drink of water. When you get back, you find your books sitting in the aisle and another student in your chair. What do you do? Role play the exchange.
2. You are standing in the hallway by your locker when another student smashes into you. You are thrown against your locker and drop your books. The other student laughs. What do you do? Role play the exchange.
3. You tell a friend in confidence about someone you have a very big crush on. The next day several people comment on it to you and others. You get your friend alone to talk about it. What do you do? Role play the exchange.
4. You have been sick with pneumonia for several weeks. Your science teacher refuses to extend the deadline for your final project. Since you can not finish the project in time, this means that you will receive a low grade in the class. You believe the teacher is being very unfair. You decide to try talking to the teacher again. Role play the exchange.
5. Chris borrows your history book. The next day, when Chris returns your book, it is muddy and the cover is torn. You believe that when you borrow something, you are responsible for taking care of it. You have to spend 20 minutes cleaning the book and taping the cover back together. Chris laughs and calls you a “neatness freak”. What do you do? Role play the exchange.
6. You are making a presentation to a class. Two classmates who are hostile towards you sit together in the back of the class and continually make sarcastic remarks in loud whispers that can be easily heard by the whole class. You decide to talk to the two classmates about it. Role play the exchange.

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Activity 3 – “I’m Sorry...”

Read the poem, “I’m Sorry...” by Teal Henderson from *Chicken Soup For the Teenage Soul*

Answer the questions below.

“I’m Sorry . . .”

I’m sorry for all the times I lost my temper
For the times when I was rude
For all the gifts that were given
And never received thank-yous.

For all the love you’ve given me
And I haven’t given back
For all the times you were patient
A virtue that I lack.

I’m sorry for all the people
To whom I was so cruel
To all the people I laughed at
I acted like a fool.

I couldn’t see past your imperfections
I couldn’t see past my pride
Your feelings I trampled all over
On my high horse I would ride.

I’m sorry for all the times I lied.
For the people I hurt along the way
Not a day goes by that I don’t regret it.
And I’d take it back any day.

The only person I cared about
Was me and only me
And now I’m truly sorry
I only wish I could make you see.

I’m sorry for everything I’ve done
For all the people I let down
I’m only asking for a second chance
So I can turn things back around.

I know that it’s a little late
My deeds can’t be undone
I realize now that I was wrong
And I’m sorry everyone.

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Activity 3 – “I’m Sorry...” (continued)

Do you relate to this author’s poem? In what ways?

What do you do when you have feelings of regret?

Do you apologize to the person or person(s) you hurt?

Can you remember a time when you feel you handled making a mistake the right way?

Can you remember a time when you feel you handled making a mistake the wrong way?

Can you remember a time when your apology was not accepted? How did you handle it?

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Activity 4 – “Stress and Coping Strategies”

Stress can manifest in students as a reaction to the changes in his or her life. The combination of social and academic pressures can be overwhelming for some teenagers. This is unfortunate because oft times a teenager’s social problems are prioritized over academic difficulties. Listed below are common teen coping strategies. As a class talk about the negative consequences of the ineffective coping strategies. Then talk about the positive outcome of using effective coping strategies. Write these consequences to the right of each strategy.

Ineffective Coping Strategies

Hide your feelings and keep the stress inside	
Try to Forget, Not Think About It	
Yell at Others, Blame Others, Hate Others	
Use Drugs or Alcohol	
Runaway from Home	
Let Out Anger by Fighting or Breaking Things	
Have Sex to Look for Love	
Need to Be Alone All the Time	
Hang Out With Bad Friends	
Begin Sleeping All Day	

Effective Coping Strategies

Talking With Friends with a Positive Attitude	
Talking With Family Members	
Writing Poetry, Stories or a Journal	
Drawing, Being Artistic or Musical	
Sports, Exercise, Being Healthy	