

Session 11

“Recovering From Setbacks – Coping Skills – 1

Goals

- To allow students the opportunity to practice effective coping skills
- To help students to identify effective and ineffective coping skills
- To illustrate that students have many social and academic stressors

Materials

Activity 1
Activity 2
Worksheet 1
Activity 3

Procedure

Greet the students. Wait until the students are seated and quieted. Ask the class for a volunteer to recap the lesson from the last visit. Briefly describe the goals of today’s lesson. Choose an activity and pass out the appropriate form.

Script

Growing up can be a difficult experience. For adolescents and teens, an identity crisis, the perils of peer interaction, acceptance and rejection of situations, persons and ideas can lead to mistaken choices and difficult situations. Often young people find themselves in a situation they created but never intended to be in. The burning question on their mind is “What now?”, in other words “How can I recover from this?” Fortunately, most common mistakes don’t lead to permanent harm (though some can), and there are things you can do to recover from them. That is one of today’s topics.

Even without setbacks, there are many sources of teen stress. “Where do I stand?” and “How do I compare to others?” are key concerns. Choices about drinking, smoking, drugs and sex, along with fears about violence, are common stressors for teenagers. Academic pressure is added on top of all the social stressors. Stress manifests as a reaction to these life changes and challenges. Teenagers often feel ill-equipped to cope with the stress. We will review common stressors and explore coping strategies that will equip students to handle stress in a constructive and effective way.

Session 11

“Recovering From Setbacks – Coping Skills” – 2

Activity 1 instructions: 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 can try some the suggestions in the activity:

Activity 2 instructions: 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?

Activity 3 instructions: “I’m Sorry...”

One of the most constructive ways of recovering from a setback involves taking responsibility for any mistakes that you have made. Apologizing can be a very mature way of handling mistakes. Mistakes are a natural part of decision-making and choices. It is often our mistakes that teach us our most memorable lessons. Saying, “I’m Sorry...” can go a long way in mending relationships and recovering from setbacks, though sometimes they may not be enough. (Think of last session’s discussion of Tookie Williams.) Apologies should be sincere. Apologies should be stepping stones to wiser choices in the future.

Session 11

“Recovering From Setbacks – Coping Skills” – 3

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.

Activity 5: Quote For Discussion

Read the quote. What do you think the author was trying to say. What is the difference between encountering defeat and being defeated?

“All my work is meant to say,
You may encounter defeats, but you
must not be defeated.”

Maya Angelou (B. 1928)
American Writer, Poet and Actress

Activity 6: VA Hero

Allen Ezail Iverson (born June 7, 1975, in Hampton, Virginia)], nicknamed A.I., The Answer and Bubbachuck, is an American professional basketball player. He is an All-Star point/shooting guard for the Philadelphia 76ers franchise of the National Basketball Association (NBA). A ten-year veteran at the age of 31, he is considered by many to be among the greatest guards of his generation and one of the most prolific scorers in the history of the game. In 2003, Iverson was ranked 53rd on SLAM Magazine's Top 75 NBA players of all time.

Activity 7: Life Skill

No matter the circumstances, always be honest.