

Problem Solving: The Intricacies of Relating to Others

Building Relationships Grade: Seventh

Building Relationships Focus:

1. Developing knowledge and understanding of human relationships
2. Understanding skills involved in problem solving and the intricacies of relating to others through the problem-solving process
3. Examining the specific components of healthy human relationships

Related Standards: English/Language Arts, Social Studies

Lesson Objectives:

The students will:

1. Understand skills involved in problem solving and the intricacies of relating to others through the problem-solving process.
2. Distinguish the parties responsible for problems.
3. Recognize personal ownership of problems when appropriate.
4. Analyze techniques for solving various problems, including determining when it is not appropriate to interfere in others' or external problems.

Materials: Copies of "Problem Ownership" and "Problem Interference" handouts

Procedures

Tell students that a principal skill in problem solving is being able to recognize to whom or what a problem "belongs." Many times we worry about something that is beyond our control, whether the problem is someone else's or caused by external factors. It's important to recognize who or what "owns" a problem, because then we know when we can and should do something to resolve the problem and when we have to let go of the problem and not worry about it. If we get involved in trying to solve problems that don't really concern us, we can cause interference and sometimes make the problem worse.

Activity 1: Give each student a copy of the "Problem Ownership" worksheet to be completed individually in class. When the students are finished, have them exchange papers and grade them in class. As you go over each problem, generate class discussion by asking the students what could be done to solve each problem and who is responsible for doing the solving.

Activity 2: Distribute a copy of the "Problem Interference" handout to each student. Have students choose a partner to work with on the handout, discussing each problem and the interference that took place. Students are permitted to create examples of problems and instances of interference if they experience difficulty remembering actual examples. When all students are finished with the worksheet, ask volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Reflection: Transitioning from the discussion generated from students volunteering personal problem-solving experiences, ask the class the following questions: What did we learn today about problem ownership and interference? How are these ideas related to problem solving in general? How does problem ownership and interference affect our relationships with others? What are some things we can remember to do so that we “own” the problems that are ours and avoid interfering in problems that are external or “belong” to other people?

Assessment: Collect the worksheets and record a grade for accuracy and completeness, as well as for class discussion participation.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 1

Problem Ownership

For each of the following problems, decide whether the problem is yours, the other person's, or external.

Mine Other's External

____ ____ _____ Your best friend says he or she is bored with school.

____ ____ _____ A friend has borrowed your favorite shirt and keeps forgetting to return it.

____ ____ _____ Scientists are predicting a major earthquake in California in the next 50 years.

____ ____ _____ A friend comes over to visit while you're trying to finish tomorrow's homework assignment.

____ ____ _____ You didn't understand today's math lesson, and there's going to be a quiz tomorrow.

____ ____ _____ Your friend's dog escapes his leash and runs away while you're walking him.

____ ____ _____ The air conditioner in your house doesn't work, and tomorrow's temperature is predicted to be higher than 100 degrees.

____ ____ _____ Your best friend has just been dumped by his/her girlfriend/boyfriend.

____ ____ _____ Your brother is always getting mad and throwing things when he doesn't get his way.

____ ____ _____ Your best friend accidentally broke his mother's favorite vase.

____ ____ _____ You forgot to water the neighbor's plants while he was out of town, even though you'd agreed to do so.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 2

Problem Interference

List three real-life problems: one should be yours, one should be someone else's, and one should be an external problem. Describe how individuals who didn't "own" the problem became involved, or "interfered," and what the result was. If you can't think of real-life situations, you may create examples.

My problem: _____

Interference: _____

Other's problem: _____

Interference: _____

External problem: _____

Interference: _____
