
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW..... i

PART I: CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

GETTING STARTED 1

1. What Is Overcoming Obstacles?
2. Setting Expectations

CONFIDENCE BUILDING 31

1. Giving and Earning Respect
2. Identifying Strengths
3. Establishing What’s Important
4. Improving Well-Being
5. Developing Personal Power

PART II: ACQUIRING CORE SKILLS

MODULE ONE: COMMUNICATION SKILLS 77

1. Understanding Nonverbal Communication
2. Listening
3. Listening Critically (*two-session lesson*)
4. Speaking Responsibly
5. Communicating Constructively

MODULE TWO: DECISION MAKING SKILLS..... 135

1. Starting the Decision Making Process
2. Gathering Information
3. Exploring Alternatives and Considering Consequences
4. Making and Evaluating Decisions

MODULE THREE: SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS 193

1. Identifying Goals
2. Setting Priorities
3. Developing a Positive Attitude
4. Accessing Resources
5. Learning to Be Assertive

PART III: DEVELOPING RELATED SKILLS

MODULE FOUR: RESOLVING CONFLICTS 243

1. Introducing Conflict Resolution
2. Uncovering Stereotypes
3. Managing Anger in Conflict Situations
4. Creating a Win-Win Situation
5. Resolving Conflict

MODULE FIVE: PROBLEM SOLVING..... 287

1. Problem Solving Techniques
2. Problem Solving in School
3. Problem Solving on the Job
4. Problem Solving at Home

MODULE SIX: SKILLS FOR SCHOOL AND BEYOND 317

1. Identifying Your Learning Style
2. Managing Your Time
3. Reading, Listening, and Note Taking
4. Writing Reports and Presenting to an Audience (*two-session lesson*)
5. Preparing for Tests and Exams
6. Managing Stress

MODULE SEVEN: A GAME PLAN FOR COLLEGE/HIGHER EDUCATION 389

1. Assessing Your Talents and Interests
2. Determining the Training and Education You’ll Need (*two-session lesson*)
3. Choosing the Right Place: Colleges, Universities, and Technical Schools
4. Applying to Colleges, Universities, and Technical Schools (*two-session lesson*)
5. Discovering Money: Scholarships, Grants, and Loans

MODULE EIGHT: A GAME PLAN FOR WORK 467

1. Working Toward Your Goals (*two-session lesson*)
2. Exploring Job Possibilities
3. Looking for a Job
4. Networking
5. Preparing a Resume (*two-session lesson*)
6. Making Contacts (*two-session lesson*)

MODULE NINE: GETTING THE JOB 533

1. Completing Applications
2. Preparing for an Interview
3. Interviewing
4. Following the Interview (*two-session lesson*)
5. Responding to a Job Offer

MODULE TEN: ON-THE-JOB SKILLS 589

1. Developing a Positive Work Ethic
2. Working with Others (*two-session lesson*)
3. Communicating on the Job
4. Managing Time, Money, and People
5. Advancing on the Job

MODULE ELEVEN: ON YOUR OWN 637

1. Managing Your Finances
2. Making a Budget
3. Understanding Advertising and Mass Media (*two-session lesson*)
4. Becoming a Responsible Citizen

PART IV: DEMONSTRATING THE SKILLS**SERVICE LEARNING 685**

1. Introduction
2. Getting Started
3. Designing a Plan
4. Finalizing the Action Plan and Getting Approval
5. Taking Action
6. Assessment

LESSONS

1. Introduction to Service Learning
2. Designing an Action Plan
3. Gathering Information and Making the Commitment
4. Formalizing and Finalizing the Action Plan
5. Giving Presentations
6. Taking Action
7. The Big Day
8. Self-Assessment
9. Public Assessment

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Community for Education Foundation was founded in 1992 to ensure that all young people learn the communication, decision making, and goal setting skills they need to be successful in life. To accomplish this mission, the organization created the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program, which includes curriculum materials, teacher training, and ongoing support.

The Overcoming Obstacles curriculum covers more than 20 topics, includes over 180 hours of instruction, and offers teachers the flexibility to select lessons based on theme, teaching time, and learning environment.

To date, tens of thousands of educators across the country have used the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program to positively impact millions of students' lives.

Curriculum Materials

The Overcoming Obstacles curriculum is available at the middle school and high school levels. Both levels include standards-based lesson plans with objectives, time estimates, and activity sheets. Assessment questions and extension activities conclude each lesson.

Both levels of the curriculum include over 60 engaging lessons. They begin with the three fundamental skills on which all other skills can be built: communication, decision making, and goal setting.

After mastering these three core skills, students in both programs learn many other important concepts and skills, such as the following:

- Responsibility
- Respect for self and others
- Teamwork
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Time management
- Study and test-taking techniques
- Problem solving
- Techniques for addressing bullying
- Stress management
- Conflict resolution

In addition to the concepts listed above, students in the high school program also focus on college and career readiness, and learn strategies that enable them to:

- Plan for a continuing education
- Complete applications for scholarships, grants, and loans
- Prepare employment applications and resumes
- Perform well in job interviews
- Develop financial responsibility

Based on the belief that good citizenship must not only be learned but also applied, both levels of the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum include *Service Learning*, which provides a step-by-step guide to developing student projects that foster active participation within their communities. *Service Learning* includes descriptions of each phase of a project, as well as lessons to guide students through each step of the planning process.

Implementation

Overcoming Obstacles can be implemented in a variety of courses and modified to fit individual school schedules. The curriculum materials can be used as a one- or two-semester course, in advisory programs or after-school settings, or integrated into core content areas.

The curriculum is organized into separate modules. Each module contains a sequence of lessons designed to develop specific concepts and skills, which are then reviewed and reinforced throughout the remainder of the program.

The modules are organized for planning purposes into four parts. The introductory modules in part I of the program provide a foundation for the introduction of the core skills of communication, decision making, and goal setting, which are presented in part II. These core skills in turn provide the basic tools that students will use in part III and during the service learning project in part IV.

The curriculum's modular structure is deliberately flexible, and allows you to tailor the program to meet your students' needs. Community for Education Foundation recommends that you begin the program with part I, follow with part II, and choose an order for the modules in part III that is appropriate for your students. Part IV addresses the variety of ways you can incorporate a service learning project into your instruction.

Each Overcoming Obstacles lesson is designed for use in a 50-minute class session, but can be condensed or expanded to meet your specific needs. For example:

- A single lesson plan might be divided into two or three 30-minute periods by expanding activities beyond their estimated time frames and extending class discussions.
- Extensions included at the end of each lesson offer follow-up activities that can be used alone to fill any remaining time in a class period or together to create an entire class period of their own.
- Two lesson plans might be used in sequence to meet the time requirements of block scheduling.
- The modules concerning specific skills (e.g., communication skills, on-the-job skills) may be used for one-semester courses that meet three times a week. Lessons from *Service Learning* may then be selected to fill out the remaining periods in the semester schedule.

You can also integrate the program into your core content classes by asking students to apply life skills to what they are learning. For example, you might have students apply the problem solving skills taught in the curriculum to word problems in their math classes. You might also have students use conflict resolution skills to find alternative solutions to wars they learn about in their history classes. Additionally, you might have

students investigate different forms of nonverbal communication across various cultures in their foreign language classes.

Individual activities and extensions can also be incorporated into daily lesson plans. For example, you might use the “Walk a Mile in Their Shoes” activity from “Lesson 2: Uncovering Stereotypes” of *Module Four: Resolving Conflicts* in a lesson about the civil rights era in the United States.

You are encouraged to adapt and customize the lesson plans presented in this program to fit the dynamics of your classroom.

Lesson Structure

Each Overcoming Obstacles lesson includes step-by-step instructions for setting up and facilitating activities. Each lesson provides topics, discussion prompts, activities, and examples.

The following pages outline the lessons’ structure and organization.

The agenda outlines the lesson's activities. You may wish to write the agenda on the board before each session begins, allowing it to serve as a frame of reference for both you and your students.

The objectives section is an outline of the lesson's goals. The purpose statement at the beginning of each part reflects the objectives statements.

The materials needed section lists the instructional materials to be used in the lesson. The section also indicates the parts of the lesson in which each item will be used.

LESSON **4**

CREATING A WIN-WIN SITUATION

A G E N D A

- Starter
- Who Wins the Dollar?
- Win-Win, My Needs/Your Needs
- Someone in the Middle
- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the characteristics of win-win solutions.

Students will practice the techniques of win-win negotiation in a conflict and apply those techniques to their personal conflict resolution goals.

Students will identify the role of a mediator in conflict resolution and practice mediating conflict.

Materials Needed

- Several wadded up pieces of paper and a wastebasket (Starter)
- Two one-dollar bills (Part I)
- One copy of the "Win-Win, My Needs/Your Needs" activity sheet (#4) for each student (Part II)
- A dictionary (Part III)

21

8 MODULE FOUR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Starter (3 minutes)

Before class, display pictures of well-known movie stars who are currently popular. Elicit from students the titles of movies these stars were in and the roles they played. Record responses under the pictures. Ask students to describe the stars' personalities; then, ask if they personally know any of these famous people.

Explain to students that "typecasting" is assigning actors to play certain roles again and again because those are the roles in which audiences love to see them. Provide examples, such as Tom Hanks' usually portraying the "good guy" in movies. Point out that once an actor begins to play similar roles in every movie, we begin to make assumptions about his or her real personality. Most people base their beliefs about actors on the roles they play.

Tell students that stereotypes are similar to the assumptions that people make about a star's real personality based on the roles he or she plays in movies. Stereotypes are assumptions about people based on little information.

Part I Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that stereotypes are misleading generalizations.

1. STUDENTS RECOGNIZE MISLEADING PRECONCEPTIONS.

Ask for five volunteers. Have each volunteer choose one of the brown paper bags with an item inside. Tell the students that they are not to open up the bags until you tell them to do so.

Once all five students have chosen a bag, tell them that they are going to get one chance to trade their bag for another or to keep the one that they have. Allow the student who was last to choose a bag the opportunity to trade first. Continue in reverse order until each of the five volunteers has had a chance to trade.

Ask the volunteers to share their feelings about the bag that they are holding. Elicit from the rest of the class their opinions about what might be in the bags.

Ask the volunteers why they chose to trade or keep their bags. Allow them to look in their bags and again share their feelings about it.

2. STUDENTS DEFINE STEREOTYPES AS MISLEADING GENERALIZATIONS.

Discuss the judgments that were made before opening the bags and the different emotions that those judgments aroused.

Ask students to identify the generalizations that drove their thinking about the contents of the bags. For example, students might say that heavy items are more valuable than light items or that items that rattle are broken.

Point out to students that, based on the real contents of the bags, some of their first reactions were unjustified. Explain to students that stereotypes are similar generalizations about people that can have the same effect, misleading us and our reactions to people.

The starter is a brief activity, question, or prompt intended to engage students and focus their attention on the concept or skill being introduced.

Part I is a preliminary activity designed to present the concept or skill that will be taught in the lesson. Students are asked to draw from prior experience and to demonstrate the concept or skill in an activity or discussion.

Part II (not pictured) is a follow-up activity designed to develop or practice the concept or skill introduced.

LESSON 2 SETTING PRIORITIES 11

Part III Setting Priorities (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students practice prioritizing their own activities.

- STUDENTS MAKE THEIR OWN TO-DO LISTS.**
Tell students that they are now going to practice prioritizing their short-term goals. Have students refer to their "On Your Way" activity sheets (#2) from the previous lesson and any planners they may have. Have them create a list of the tasks they need to accomplish this week. Remind students to include any regularly scheduled activities (such as homework or extracurricular activities).
- STUDENTS PRIORITIZE THEIR LISTS.**
Give students about five minutes to number their lists in order of priority. Encourage students to discuss any conflicts with you or with each other. Remind them to always consider the consequences of their decisions.
- STUDENTS DISCUSS THE PRIORITIZING PROCESS.**
Ask students to explain the process they went through to prioritize their activities. Ask them to share any conflicts that seemed particularly difficult to resolve and explain what they considered when prioritizing. Encourage students to discuss consequences.

Explain to students that there are two steps to dealing with conflicting goals. First, they must recognize that a conflict exists. Second, they must create a plan to deal with the situation, and act on it. Point out that they shouldn't make the mistake of hoping that the conflict will simply go away, because it won't.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to define "prioritizing." Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Prioritizing means ordering items from the most important to the least important so that goals can be accomplished.
- The criteria for prioritizing can differ depending on circumstances and needs.
- It is important to consider consequences when prioritizing activities.
- When goals conflict, it is important to consider alternatives that might resolve the problem.

Questions for Assessment

1. How does setting priorities help people accomplish their goals?
2. List all of the things that you need to do this week. Prioritize the list.
3. What criteria did you use to prioritize your list?

Part III requires students to apply what they have learned and put the tools and ideas discussed into practice. Students may demonstrate a skill through writing, role playing, or another interactive activity.

The conclusion asks students to reflect on the significance of what they have learned and to review key points taught in the lesson.

Questions for assessment assess students' mastery of the lesson's skills and concepts. They can inspire journal entries or other writing assignments, become homework assignments, or serve as a test.

Lesson extensions are supplemental activities related to the lesson topic. Students are offered multiple opportunities to respond to quotations, conduct research, develop technology skills, write journal entries, or work on additional projects.

Activity sheets (not pictured) are designed as practice tools for concepts presented in each module. They help students define the ideas and terms, and practice the skills taught in the lessons. Activity sheets can be found at the end of their respective modules. A glossary of terms is provided with each module.

6 MODULE FOUR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

LESSON EXTENSIONS

<p>Extension: Using Quotations Quote: "Do not look back in anger, or forward in fear, but around in awareness." —James Thurber, writer Activity: As a class, discuss how this quote relates to controlling emotions during conflict and recognizing what situations cause conflict for individual students.</p>	<p>Extension: Addressing Multiple Learning Styles Activity: The definition of "conflict" mentioned in this lesson states that it is a mental struggle between opposing sides. Have students illustrate (through movement, songs, essays, poems, images, etc.) the definition. Have students perform or explain their illustrations.</p>
<p>Extension: Writing in Your Journal Activity: Have students focus on the goals they set for conflict resolution and write about how confident they are that they can achieve their goals. Have them describe why they set these particular goals. Discuss how the students' values impacted their conflict resolution goals.</p>	<p>Extension: Math Connection Activity: Everywhere we turn, there are stories about conflict. Have students create charts and graphs that depict the types of conflicts that exist in our lives. Tell students to review a newspaper every day for one week. Have students graph how often stories featuring conflict appears during that week.</p>
<p>Extension: Homework Activity: Write the following words and their definitions on the board: "confrontation," "compromise," "withdraw," "settlement," and "arbitration." Have students look up the definition of each word and write a few sentences describing their role in conflict.</p>	<p>Extension: Additional Resources Activity: Have students read the scene from J. D. Salinger's <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> in which Holden Caulfield gets into a fight with his roommate, Stradlater. Have students discuss the emotions that Holden was feeling and what he could have done to control those emotions.</p>