

Lesson Plan #4 - Global

Title: What Do Your Feelings Weigh?

Objectives: In this lesson students will:

1. identify and manage feelings they have
2. recognize the need for “letting go” of negative feelings
3. understand that all people have good and bad feelings and emotions

Session Time: 30 – 60 minutes

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Cans of food of varying weights
- Glue or tape
- Markers

Procedure:

1. Prior to class cover the label on food cans with different color construction paper.
2. Have the students as a group come up with a list of negative emotions, such as mad, angry, worried, sad, frustrated, etc. Write these emotions on the food cans, one emotion per can.
3. Ask for one student volunteer. This person is the bag carrier.
4. Have the student pack all of the “negative emotions” (cans) into a backpack or pillowcase.
5. The student has to carry the bag around with him or her.
6. Ask the student if he or she wants to “get rid of” some of the negative emotions. As a class, discuss ways of dealing with each negative emotion. For every solution, take out a block from the pillowcase or backpack.
7. At the end, there should be no cans left in the bag.

Discussion: The bag represents us, and the cans represent our negative emotions. Every time we have a negative emotion, we have an emotional weight inside our body. Just as the blocks weigh down the bag, the negative emotions weigh down our mental health. Talk about the importance of learning ways to deal with our negative emotions so that we lessen the emotional weight on ourselves. Do you think it’s important to think positively about ourselves? Can you think of new strategies for replacing negative emotions with more positive ones?

Note: This lesson plan is included in the family education kit, ***Taking Positive Steps – Positive Thinking for a Positive Life***, available through the **Southern Illinois Professional Development Center**.

Note: Also included in this packet is a folk tale, *A Heavy Sack*. Use this to introduce this lesson or to reinforce it.

A Heavy Sack

An old tale tells of a man with a sack on his back. Every time someone does something unkind to him or does something he doesn't like, he picks up a stone and places it in his sack. Soon his sack is very heavy from his load of rocks. It weighs him down and makes it difficult for him to do any of the activities he used to enjoy or even to spend time with anyone he loves.

After some time, he happened upon a wise old woman. He stopped and begged her, "Wise old woman, tell me how I can again have fun and enjoy my life. For my heavy load is so great that I no longer find pleasure in anything. All I have time to do is carry the load."

The wise old woman smiled and shook her head. "Foolish man, do you not think if you empty your sack you will be able to enjoy life once more?"

The thought was indeed amazing to the man. He had not considered that he could let go of any of the rocks on his back. "But how do I do this great thing? If I let go of any of the rocks, then I will no longer remember the injustice that has been done to me."

The old woman smiled and said, "This is precisely the point. If you hold on to your past hurts, they will prevent you from being able to enjoy your future. It is in the letting go that allows you to go on. "