

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Define and/or describe the term *challenging times* and list various types of challenging times individuals and families face.

1-1 **Introductory Activity: Abraham Lincoln**

Read the following synopsis to the students as an illustration of someone who suffered through many challenging times, but never gave up:

"He failed in business in 1831;
he was defeated in his bid for the legislature in 1832;
he had a second failure in business in 1833;
his sweetheart died in 1835;
he suffered a nervous breakdown in 1836;
he was defeated for Congress in 1843;
he was defeated again for Congress in 1848;
his son died in 1850;
he was defeated for the Senate in 1855;
he was defeated for Vice President of the United States in 1856;
he was defeated for the Senate again in 1858;
he was elected President of the United States in 1860.

His name: **Abraham Lincoln.**"

Lead the students in a discussion about Abraham Lincoln from the synopsis above.

- Would they say Abraham Lincoln had a challenging life?
- Did his life stop because of defeat or loss?
- Did he give up?

Have the class develop a satisfactory definition of the term *challenging time*. (Some suggestions might be: a turning point, a decisive moment, an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs when the outcome will make a decisive difference for better or worse.) Leave the definition on the board or displayed throughout this topic as a reference.

A drawing of Abraham Lincoln is provided on page V-A-15 for use as an overhead transparency or small poster to supplement this activity.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:**1-2 Challenging Times Identification**

Have the students list examples of challenging times that are happy events on a large sheet of butcher paper or poster paper. Examples would be:

- weddings
- parties
- trying out
- reunions
- first dates
- passing a test
- vacations
- new jobs
- getting a driver's license
- new babies
- promotions

On another large sheet of butcher paper or poster paper, have the students list examples of challenging times that involve loss such as:

- death
- divorce
- moving
- terminal illness
- accidents
- termination of relationships
- failing a test
- family abuse
- being in trouble with the law
- disasters

Keep these lists of challenging times displayed in the classroom throughout this topic as a reference.

1-3 Celebrity Challenges

Using the examples provided on page V-A-16, **THE CHALLENGE OF DISABILITIES**, share with the students some examples of celebrities who have overcome disabilities and become very successful in other areas of their lives. Discuss what challenges these celebrities have faced and the fact that they have chosen not to allow one negative aspect of their lives to dominate them and stop them from achieving success in other arenas.

Have the students complete the student activity guide, **CELEBRITY CHALLENGES**, (page V-A-17) by matching the name of the celebrity with the challenge that each faced.

1-4 The Gum Machine

Have students read the story, **THE GUM MACHINE**, (pages V-A-19 through V-A-24) and complete the accompanying student activity guide (page V-A-25).

As a class, discuss:

- the problems and feelings associated with divorce
- the problems and feelings associated with loss
- the problems and feelings associated with change
- the tendency of humans to fantasize that life is "always greener in the other pasture"
- the fact that when we "get in the other pasture", there are still challenges to be met. There is no panacea.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

1-5 The Sweater

Read the story, **THE SWEATER**, on page V-A-26 and discuss and explore the challenge of disability and the positive manner in which Linda dealt with her challenge.

2. Analyze how positive (happy) events in our lives can be challenging times for individuals and families.**2-1 Challenging Times Challenge**

Have the students analyze how positive events in life can be challenging by playing the game **THE CHALLENGING TIMES CHALLENGE** (pages V-A-27 through V-A-30)

3. Analyze how negative events that involve loss can be challenging times for individuals and families and identify the stages of loss.**3-1 The Challenges of Loss (Stages of Loss)**

Using the teacher background information, **THE CHALLENGES OF LOSS**, (pages V-A-31 and V-A-32) and overhead transparencies on pages V-A-33 through V-A-37 as guides, introduce the students to the personal challenges that come from loss and the stages of loss that most people experience. The students can complete the accompanying student activity guide on pages V-A-38 and V-A-39.

3-2 Dealing With Loss

Have the students complete the student activity guide, **DEALING WITH LOSS**, (page V-A-42) and identify the stages of loss that the behavior exhibits.

3-3 Reacting To Loss

Have students complete student activity guide, **REACTING TO LOSS**, on page V-A-43. Discuss how the stages of loss are experienced in many aspects of our lives.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

4. **Specify ways individuals can handle challenging times.**
 - a. **Identify positive methods of managing challenging times.**

4.a-1 Positive Method Description

Describe what is meant by a **positive** method of managing challenging times for the students such as:

A positive method of managing challenging times is when the behavior will not degrade, harm, or have a negative effect on self or others. The behavior should help to produce favorable results.

The students may think of other phrases or descriptions that might be added. Lead a discussion on other ways of managing a challenging time in a positive way. Discuss the importance of being flexible, being nice, going the extra mile, making constructive suggestions, preplanning to avoid crisis, allowing plenty of time, considering the other's feelings and frustrations, being patient, taking a deep breath, avoid making comments that would encourage conflict, getting adequate rest and nutrition, etc.

4.a-2 Children's Book Review

Discuss the important role teenagers can play in helping their younger brothers and sisters cope with a challenging time. By helping others cope, teens can help themselves also. One excellent way to help children deal with loss is to read to them from books.

Have each student do a **BOOK REVIEW** on one of the books listed on the bibliography on pages V-A-45 and 46, complete the student activity guide on page V-A-47, and give a brief report to the class.

4.a-3 Videos

Show a video that deals with issues related to loss and discuss the positive and negative ways that the characters handled the challenging times. Some suggested videos are Mrs. Doubtfire, Brian's Song, Sometimes I Don't Like My Mother, Welcome Home Jelly Bean, Cool Running, and When We First Met. (See Resources on page V-A-11)

4.a-4 Personal Reviews or Interviews

Have students read about or interview an everyday, noncelebrity person who has experienced a major challenge in his/her life (death, divorce, moving, terminal illness, job loss, termination of relationship, disasters, family abuse, disability, in trouble with the law, etc.) and handled it in a positive manner. A student activity guide is provided on page V-A-48 for optional use.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

Let the students share their articles with the class and address these questions:

1. What challenge did this individual face?
2. How did the individual handle the situation in a positive manner?
3. What was the outcome?
4. What other alternatives did the person have?
5. Why was this a good choice?
6. What were some of the comments this person made?
7. What impressed you the most about this person?

4.a-5 The Crisis Technique

Using the teacher background information, **THE CRISIS TECHNIQUE**, provided on pages V-A-49 and V-A-50 and the overhead transparencies provided on pages V-A-51 through V-A-54, introduce the students to this method of managing challenging times. A corresponding student activity guide is provided on page V-A-55.

4.a-6 Putting the Crisis Technique to Work

Using the contrived situations presented on the student activity guide, **PUTTING THE CRISIS TECHNIQUE TO WORK**, (page V-A-57), have the students apply the crisis technique as they look for solutions.

4.a-7 Positive Solutions

Tape large pieces of butcher paper to the walls around the room. At the top of each paper write one of these questions:

- What if I don't make the election?...
- What if I lose my boyfriend/girlfriend?...
- What if I fail a test?...
- What if I don't have any friends?...
- What if my parents get a divorce?...
- What if a parent loses a job?

Have the students write positive ways to manage the above situations on the papers. Lead a class discussion on the methods identified by the students. Reinforce positive methods of handling the challenge.

b. Identify negative methods of managing challenging times.**4.b-1 Negative Methods Description**

Describe a **negative method** of managing challenging times for the students such as:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

A negative method of managing challenging times is when the behavior will degrade, harm, or have a negative effect on self or others. This behavior would produce unfavorable results.

The students may think of other phrases or description that might be added. Lead a discussion on the negative ways of managing challenging times. Discuss the harm and/or unfavorable results that are caused by physical abuse, verbal abuse, striking out, throwing tantrums, breaking the law, breaking things, using drugs or alcohol, feeling sorry for self, etc.

4.b-2 Some Behavior Can Be Puzzling

Have students identify the various types of negative ways to handle challenging times by completing the crossword puzzle, **SOME BEHAVIOR CAN BE PUZZLING**, (page V-A-59).

4.b-3 A Bad Day for Billy

Have the students read **A BAD DAY FOR BILLY** (page V-A-61) and identify all of the behaviors that are negative ways to manage a challenging time.

4.b-4 Behavior Identification

Collect pictures from magazines or clips from television shows or movies that depict people engaging in activities that are not positive ways of handling situations (e.g., drinking, smoking, stealing, mocking others, being disrespectful.) Have the students record the negative behavior they observe and then give one positive way the situation can be turned around by using the **BEHAVIOR IDENTIFICATION** student activity guide (page V-A-63).

5. Review personal skills applicable to managing challenging times and identify personal choices that accompany each challenge.**5-1 Personal Management Skills**

Using an enlarged graphic (this could be really large and really fun!) of page V-A-64, explain that being prepared to take charge during challenging times is like this car--it takes all the parts and pieces to run smoothly. The same is true for individuals--it takes lots of skills to be successful in life and to get us through challenging times. Throughout this curriculum the students have learned many of the necessary skills, and now they can put them all together and take charge of their lives. These are also the same skills used for managing challenging times.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

The teacher can put the car pieces together as he/she reviews the personal management skills learned and practiced in this class:

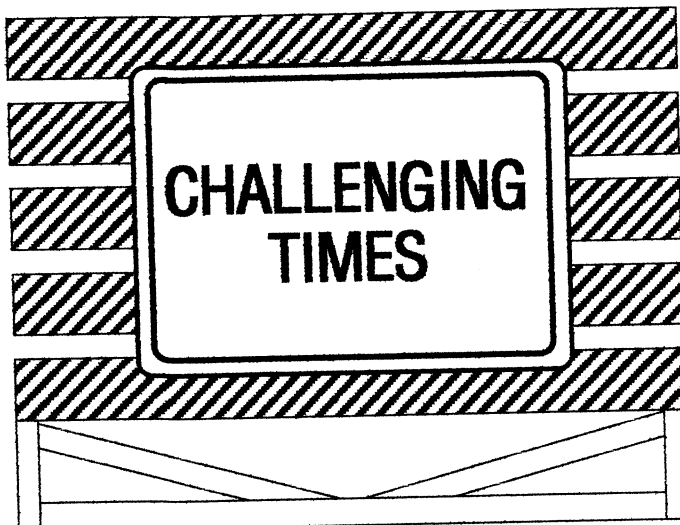
communication skills	relationship and friendship skills
coping skills	decision-making skills
critical thinking skills	appropriate behaviors
social skills	choosing appropriate role models
judgment skills	sexual responsibility
controlling emotions	being responsible

5-2 Summary Activity: Challenging Times: Roadblocks or Mile Markers?

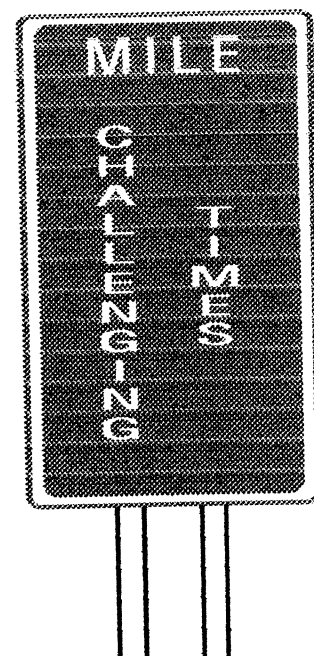
Conclude this topic by reviewing the major concepts with this analogy:

- Everyone faces challenging times in his/her life--some good, some bad.
- Challenging times happen--some we can choose, others we can't.
- The one thing we do have a choice in is how we handle these times.
- It is up to us whether challenging times become roadblocks or mile markers in our lives.
- Roadblocks stop everything and provide reasons for failure, non-achievement, and quitting.
- Mile Markers simply mark a spot along the road of life and provide opportunities for learning, growth, achievement, and success.
- Life goes on and we choose the quality of it for ourselves.

Some pages of graphics supporting this summary activity are provided on pages V-A-65 and V-A-66.



V-A-10



RESOURCES:**Videos:**

Mrs. Doubtfire. 1993. 125 min. Twentieth Century Fox. Starring Robin Williams and Sally Fields. Available at local video stores. The challenges that a father faces in trying to gain visitation rights to his children.

When We First Met. Learning Corporation of America, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. A story about two teens, Jenny and Rob, who fall in love. Jenny is not aware that Rob's mother was the drunk driver who killed her sister.

Cool Runnings. 1993. 98 min. Walt Disney Pictures. Available at local video stores. The challenges that face a bobsled team from Jamaica who want to be in the Olympics.

No Big Deal. 86 min. 1983. Kandel Enterprises and Film Gallery: A Cinetudes Film. Available through local video stores. A video about a boy who has an alcoholic mother. Popular students are asked to be role models for him. He uses them and ends up in juvenile detention.

Books:

Kipfer, Barbara A., *14,000 Things To Be Happy About.* Workman Publishing Co., Inc., 708 Broadway, New York NY 10003. 1990. ISBN 0-89480-370-0

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth, *On Death and Dying.* MacMillan Publishing Inc., 200 Old Tappan Rd., Old Tappan NJ 07675. 1991. ISBN: 0-02-567111-1.

