

Challenges: Stand Up and Stand Out

Summary

In this lesson students will understand the impact of attitude and disposition when facing challenges and Identify positive ways to deal with challenges and adversity.

Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 1: HEALTH FOUNDATIONS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF HEALTHY SELF \(HF\) Standard HI.HF.3:](#)

Materials

- [Posters:](#)

(pdfs)

"Oh, What a Beautiful Morning"

"Life is Hard and Always Has Been"

"Life is Hard, But You Can Do Hard Things"

"You Can Learn to Grow"

"Attitude Is Everything" (Swindoll poem)

"Look for the Pony"

"Never Give Up!"

"Never Give Up on the Inside" (quotations)

Worksheets:

- ["Positive Ways to Deal with Challenges and Adversity"](#)

(pdf)

"You Can Do Hard Things"

- ["Find the Pony"](#)

(pdf)

Poem: "Attitude" by Charles Swindoll (in posters PDF)

Pony story

- [Jerry's story](#)

(pdf)

Quotations (in posters PDF)

Index cards

Round balloon

Instructional Procedures

Lesson at a Glance

Discuss the concepts of hardship, challenge and adversity (balloon activity).

Discuss positive outcomes of negative experiences

Complete worksheets "Find the Pony, " "Life is Hard but I Can Do Hard Things."

View the video, "If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out" by Mike Schlappi (optional)

New Vocabulary

optimist

disposition

pessimist

challenge

adversity

attitude

Introduction (Setting Focus)

Show the "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" poster and discuss what happens to people when they have a "bad day." Ask students if they have ever had a day that seemed like the one depicted on the poster.

Show and discuss the "Life is Hard and Always Has Been" poster. Discuss about hardships and challenges and what create the difficult parts of life.

Before the class gets depressed and starts feeling sorry for themselves, show the "Life is Hard, But You Can Do Hard Things" poster. Explain that despite hardships and difficulties, we can still live a happy and fulfilling life. Reinforce that we can do hard things and overcome adversity. Define the terms "challenge" and "adversity." Students give examples of negative ways people deal with challenges and adversities. Use the following balloon activity to reinforce the discussion.

Whining - Inflate a round balloon and release the air while pinching the neck of the balloon to create a "whining" sound.

Fly off the handle - Inflate the balloon and let it go zoom around the room.

Explode the anger - Inflate a balloon until it pops.

Allow themselves to become a victim - Inflate and tie off a balloon. Bop the balloon around the room at the pleasure of the group.

Take it out on others - Ask for permission from student and lightly tap the student with the balloon.

Explain that the discussion for the day will focus on positive ways to deal with challenges and adversity.

Students complete the "Dealing With Challenges and Adversity" worksheet during the class discussion.

Body (Strategies/Activities)

Discuss the following quotations with the class:

"I am determined to be happy in whatever situation I may be for I have learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our disposition and not our circumstances."

"What we become depends not on conditions but on decisions." *Martha Washington*

"The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances." *Gordon W. Allport*

"It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it." *W. Mitchell*

"Do you see the difficulty in the opportunity or do you see the opportunity in the difficulty."

Reinforce that each of us has the power to overcome obstacles. We can't always control our circumstances, but we do have control over our attitudes and the choices we make. It's up to us. Read and discuss the poem "Attitude" by Charles Swindoll. Reinforce that we can't always control our circumstances but we can control our disposition or attitude.

Use the "Attitude is Everything" poster and explain that attitude is a choice, one of the most important choices we ever make. Every day, in every situation, we make a choice to have a positive attitude, a negative attitude, or to be indifferent. It's a powerful choice that we alone can make.

Share "Jerry's Story" with the class and discuss the differences a positive attitude can make.

Share the following story with the class:

The story is told of two twin brothers; one was an optimist and the other was a pessimist.

(Define "optimist" and "pessimist.") They each received a gift for their birthday. The pessimist was given a whole room full of toys. He quickly looked through the toys and then began to complain, because he didn't get some of the things that he wanted. The optimist was then given his present. He opened up the door to the room, and there in front of him was an enormous pile

of horse manure. His eyes lit up and he began to furiously dig through the pile of manure. Confused, his parents asked him what he was doing. He smiled and said, "With all of that manure, there has to be a pony in there somewhere."

Which boy do you think had the best circumstances?

Which boy do you think was the happiest?

What made the difference?

Show and discuss the "Look for the Pony" poster. Even though it may be hard to believe, some good can be found in every situation. The key is to "look for the pony" or to look for the good in every situation and experience. Encourage students to give examples of bad situations and then try to brainstorm something good about each one.

Students complete the "Find the Pony" worksheet and share their ideas about finding potential positive outcomes from negative events.

Show the "You Can Learn and Grow From Misery and Woe" poster. Explain that we don't need to go out and seek adversity. However, these experiences can provide an opportunity to learn, grow, and find strengths and abilities that would have otherwise remained buried. Discuss how we can learn and grow from challenges in our lives.

Examples:

A woman whose house burned down learned that the most important thing to her was her family; since they were all safe, the loss of the house didn't really matter in comparison.

A boy born without arms learned how to write, paint, eat, cook, and drive with his feet.

Sir Edmund Hillary failed at his first attempt to climb Mount Everest. On one occasion while addressing a group in England he made a fist and pointed at a picture of the mountain. He continued that the mountain had beat him the first time, but that he was going to beat it the next time because the mountain had grown all that it was going to, but he was still growing. Hillary later became the first man to successfully climb Mount Everest with a Sherpa, Tenzing Norgay.

Show the poster "Don't EVER Give Up!" Does the frog still have a chance? Explain that he does if he doesn't give up. Share some of the following examples of people who refused to give up:

Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team.

Wayne Gretzky was told that he was too small to play professional hockey.

Dr. Seuss's first children's book, *And to Think that I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was rejected by 27 publishers.

Winston Churchill flunked the sixth grade.

Walt Disney loved to draw and sketch as a child but was told he didn't have any talent.

Lucille Ball's drama instructor told her to try another profession.

In 1962 the Beatles were turned down by executives of a record company. They didn't like the sound and thought the group's guitars were on the way out.

Elvis Presley was fired after one performance. The manager thought he lacked talent.

Wilma Rudolph had double pneumonia and scarlet fever when she was four. This left her paralyzed in her left leg and she was never expected to walk. At age 13, she decided to become a runner. For the next several years she placed last in every race she ran.

Eventually she won three gold medals.

Louis L'Amour received 350 rejections before he sold his first book.

Students write about someone they know who didn't give up. How did that person deal with challenges and what can be learned for the person? Share the papers in small groups.

Use the "Positive Ways to Deal With Challenges and Adversity" worksheet as a review of the lesson.

Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)

Reinforce that life brings challenges and adversity. Being able to triumph and grow from these experiences depends on the individual. It depends on what's inside the head and the heart.

Remind students that life is hard, but they can do hard things.

Read the following Ann Landers quotation and discuss. The Harold Russell poster (included) may also be used.

"If I were asked to give what I consider the single most useful bit of advice for all humanity it would be this: expect trouble as an inevitable part of life and when it comes, hold your head high, look it squarely in the eye and say, 'I'll be bigger than you. You cannot defeat me.'"

Inflate a balloon and release the air into a whirligig or windmill. People can channel pressure to produce a positive effect.

Students complete the "Positive Ways to Deal with Challenges and Adversity" worksheet. Share ideas and plans for dealing with challenges and adversity in a positive manner.

Optional video activity - Many school and district media centers have the video, "If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out" by Mike Schlappi.

Introduce and view the Mike Schlappi video "If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out" (24 minutes).

Mike is a great example of someone who faced challenges and hardships in a positive manner.

After viewing the video, explore how Mike faced his challenges in a positive manner.

- Didn't blame anyone else.

- Took responsibility for his own life.

- Gave himself pep talks.

- Dwelt on the positive.

- Accepted help and support from others.

- Stayed involved in school, sports, and with his family and friends.

- Continued to set and work toward goals..

- Had a positive attitude.

Authors

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