Unit 3: Life Skills: Social Problem-Solving

Content Area: **Guidance**
Course(s): **21st Century Skills**
Time Period: **Week 33**
Length: **5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Social problem-solving is a life skill because it reduces the risk for youth violence and promotes success in future relationships, both personal and professional. This unit introduces a problem-solving strategy in five parts: problem identification, brainstorming solutions, evaluating possible solutions, choosing a solution, and evaluating the choice for its efficacy. Students are encouraged to look at a social problem as a challenge rather than as a social failure. Problem-solving in this strategy is a collaborative process in which all involved take an active role.

In grade seven, students will build on their skills relative to anger management and conflict resolution introduced in grades four and five, and reinforced in grade six. These skills will be mastered in grade seven, because they are the foundation of this problem-solving model.

Standards

CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP9	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CAEP.9.2.8.B.3	Evaluate communication, collaboration, and leadership skills that can be developed through school, home, work, and extracurricular activities for use in a career.

Essential Questions

- What are the steps necessary for successful problem-solving?
- How is problem-solving related to violence prevention?
- Why is it essential to identify the problem by putting it into words?
- How do I evaluate each solution?
- What does “collaborative” mean?
- What is the "blame game" and how does it impact problem-solving?
- How are gossip and rumors related to violence?

Application of Knowledge and Skills...

Students will know...

- how to use the problem-solving model to deal with gossip and rumor
- that in order for problem-solving to be successful, it must reflect the needs of all parties involved, and is, therefore, a "collaborative" process
- the definition of “blame game” and how to avoid this pitfall
- the importance of each part in the process and how each works collectively to resolve conflict and, therefore, to prevent interpersonal violence
- the steps to the problem-solving process

Students will be able to...

- apply this problem-solving model to dealing with gossip and rumor
- demonstrate a problem-solving model for given scenarios
- evaluate solutions on the basis of safety, effect on those involved, fairness and workability; and choose a solution from several alternatives so that it reflects the needs of all
- identify a problem in a given situation by verbalizing what happened and the points of view of those involved; generate multiple solutions to a given problem
- predict obstacles to the solution such as the "blame game"

Assessments

- Problem Identification using I-Messages Formative: Other written assessments Students will review their understanding of the "I-message" as one way to identify a social problem. They will be expected to take a side in a given social problem. Each student in the pair will be expected to write out his/her own "I-messages" as part of the problem identification process.
- Solutions from Brainstorming to Solving Formative: Other written assessments Student pairs will complete a worksheet outlining the parts of the problem-solving model for their given scenario. Steps 2 through 5 will be addressed.
- Problem-Solving Role Plays Formative: Dramatization Students will role-play their problem-solving scenarios. Their work will be evaluated using a teacher-developed performance rubric. Skills evaluated will include: problem identification using an "I-message", possible solutions, evaluation of solution chosen, feasibility of the solution chosen. Discussion of non-verbal communication and its impact on problem-solving will be addressed.
- End-of-Course Test Summative: Benchmark Assessment Students will outline the problem-solving process. They will identify anger-management and self-talk as part of the cool-down phase prior to problem identification. They will recognize the three questions that are necessary when evaluating solutions.

Activities

Week 1: Review of Conflict-Resolution Strategies (WIN/WIN) and Anger Management: Their Impact on Social Problem- Solving.

Students will review the skills introduced in grade four and reinforced in grades five and six. A discussion of these skills as a foundation for social problem-solving will occur in the first class. Students will understand that the risk of violence is significantly diminished when a person is able to handle conflict and stay cool under pressure. Specific scenarios will be discussed in small groups.

Week 2: Problem-Solving Model - Step 1: Problem Identification.

Students will work in pairs to identify the problem in given scenarios. They will write out "I-messages" as part of putting the problem into words. Pitfalls such as "blame game" will be discussed.

Week 3: Steps 2 through 5: Brainstorming Solutions/Choosing One/Evaluating that Solution.

Using the same social problem, student pairs will brainstorm solutions, select one, and evaluate that solution for its safety, effect on others, fairness to both, and its feasibility. The term "collaborative" will be discussed. Students will prepare a worksheet outlining the parts of the problem-solving process for their given social problem.

Week 4: Role-Plays.

Students will role-play their problem-solving strategies. Student pairs will share their problem with the group through role- play. Each pair's solution will be evaluated by the class for its feasibility.

Week 5: Application of the Problem-Solving Model to Specific Challenges such as Gossip/Rumor.

Students will take the problem-solving model and apply it to a social challenge that does not have a clear-cut solution. In a situation like this, it is often necessary for a student to decide when the problem demands the intervention of an adult or the authorities. Students will be given scenarios to discuss in groups.

Week 5: Benchmark Test

Students will take the benchmark assessment on social problem-solving. They will be able to outline the model to include all five steps: problem identification, brainstorming solutions, evaluating possible solutions, selecting one solution, and evaluating that solution for its feasibility. Students will recognize that anger-management must be an integral part of this process. They will be able to recognize that self-talk and reflection are necessary after problem-solving so as to reinforce positive social skills.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

- Advanced students may create their own scenarios to role play.
- Challenged students will receive modified performance rubrics, study-guides, and a modified benchmark test.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

- Language Arts/Writing: Students will reinforce their writing skills by preparing role-plays and completing in-class assignments.
- Performing Arts: Students will reinforce their acting skills through participation in role-plays.

Resources

Committee for Children's Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum

- role plays
- posters
- take-home letters

Teacher-made performance rubrics and tests.