

BULLYING AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

EIGHTH GRADE

LESSON 3

TITLE: The Empathy Maze: Easier to Navigate Than You Think!

PURPOSE: To increase empathy among the student population.

OBJECTIVES: The student will be able to:

- understand the importance and value of empathy.
- understand the correlation between empathy and resolving a conflict.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: LA.8.1.6.1, 8.1.7.4, 8.2.2.2

STUDENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS AND STANDARDS: PS 1.1, 2.2, 4.1

VOCABULARY: empathy, conflict resolution, culture, friendship

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME: 45 Minutes

PREPARATION/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

- dry erase board and markers
- Xerox copies of handout 8-3 (one per student)

SPRINGBOARD ACTIVITY: Explain to students that you will be taking them on a journey of self-growth to help with understanding perspective, conflict resolution, problem solving, friendship and culture. Review the meaning of the words culture, empathy and friendship.

ACTIVITY:

1) Give each student a copy of handout 8-3: Empathy Maze. This exercise is to be timed in increments of 15 seconds. Read the following statement:

- Think about a time when you were sad because someone close to you betrayed you. You called a friend because you needed to talk to someone about what happened. You are looking for empathy, but you really don't know how that person is going to react to what you have to say.
- Place your pen or pencil on the start line. I am giving you 15 seconds to go from the start line to one of the openings. If you end up in a dead end, just stay there.

- Once students are done and the 15 seconds are up, read the statements which define the numbers. These statements are enclosed below. As you read the statement, have students write down the possible feelings one might feel after their statement is read.

#1 The person you reached tells you: "listen, I don't have time to listen to you today. I'll call you when I have time!"

#2 The person you reached tells you: "I have my own problems, and really don't care!"

#3 The person you reached gives you advice and the advice is: "Get tough and don't worry about that!"

#4 The person you reached also gives you advice and says: "Get over it! You're making something out of nothing!"

#5 The person you reached listens to you, and asks you how you feel. That person says: "whenever you want to talk, know that I am here for you!"

If you have reached a dead end, you could not find anyone to talk to.

ASSESSMENT: Teacher observation, class participation and completion of activity.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: Lead a discussion about empathy and feelings. Discuss with the class the following points in a whole class discussion.

- How did you feel about the description of your number?
- Those of you who reached a dead end, how do you think you might feel in such a situation?
- How many of you have sometimes ignored or been impatient with a friend who needed to talk to you?
- How many of you have ignored a stranger who you know was going through a tough time, but you just didn't feel like being bothered?
- How many of you have known about a conflict which was about to happen, or someone being bullied, but you did nothing about it? Or maybe you laughed? Or maybe you were the bullied

Discuss: Sometimes we don't know how people are going to react to our needs. Empathy comes both ways. Maybe that person is going through a bad time him or herself? Talk about it before you get into a conflict with that person. Let that person know how you felt about being ignored and your feelings being dismissed. Often you will find that the individual was not even aware of his/her reaction, and will be sorry for hurting you.

Empathy Maze

The maze is a grid-based structure with a 'Start' point at the bottom left and six numbered exit points: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6. The maze is composed of a grid of squares, with some squares blocked to form a complex path. The 'Start' point is located at the bottom left corner of the maze. The numbered exit points are located at various positions: #1 is at the top right, #2 is on the right side, #3 is on the left side, #4 is on the right side, #5 is on the left side, and #6 is at the bottom left, near the 'Start' point.