When the Going Gets Tough

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Classroom Guidance

Grade Level: 4th - Grade-6th

Time: 30 minutes

ASCA National Standard(s):
Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.

ASCA National Student Standards
PS:B1.4 Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems
PS:B1.6 Know how to apply conflict resolution skills
PS.B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify healthy and unhealthy strategies they have used to deal with their anger/frustration
- Students will be able to identify solutions when confronted with frustration or difficulty in an assignment, project, or activity.

Materials:

- Case studies
- Marker board or overhead

Activity:

Begin by asking the students what they learned the following week in group guidance. Then introduce the topic of anger/frustration. Ask them “Have you ever been so angry you wanted to scream?” “What does being angry look like? Feel like?”

- Inform the students about what they should be able to do by the end of today
- By the time I leave today I hope you will be able to know the difference between healthy and unhealthy ways of handling anger/frustration. I also hope you will be able to find solutions to help you the next time your angry.

1. Share with the class a time when you had difficulty completing a task or mastering a skill. This may be related to work or to an outside interest. Describe what happened, how you felt, and how you handled it.
2. Ask the class if they have ever experienced similar frustrations or “roadblocks” with their schoolwork, hobbies, or activities.
• These may include not being able to master a certain athletic skill, homework problem, or a sibling was bothering them. Discuss the feelings these types of roadblocks caused.

3. Then ask students to discuss what they do to calm down or overcome the frustration.
   • Write “ANGER” on the board
     1. Ask them to list healthy ways to handle anger/frustration so they can see and hear some of the ideas.
     2. These may include the following options:
        1. Ask for help
        2. Keep practicing
        3. Take a break
        4. Try a different approach
        5. Talk over the problem
        6. Go do something else for a bit

4. Write their “unhealthy” ideas on the other side and ask them to comment on which strategies would most likely lead to a successful resolution of the problem. Why? Which would be less likely to lead to success?

5. Inform them of what is next. “Now that we have come up with some great examples of healthy and unhealthy ways to handle anger, we’re going ot get into groups and show each other what these examples would look like in different scenarios).

6. Number off the students into groups of 3-4 students in each group and assign them to a place in the room. Explain how everyone needs to be involved. Designate one person to be the reader, to avoid conflict.

7. Hand out Case Studies to groups of four students and direct them to read and discuss each situation. Give the students between 3-5 min to read and decide what to say/act out.
   • Have each group demonstrate one healthy way to overcome anger, and one unhealthy way (they can also just say what the unhealthy idea would be) Encourage creative, unusual approaches. Sometimes these are the very best! Each group will present its best strategies to the class.

**Other Options**

• Students can prepare inspirational posters with tips for sticking with it “when the going gets rough.”

8. After each group has presented, ask them to remain seated and have them tell you what they learned today. Review some of the healthy and unhealthy ways to handle anger/frustrations. Thank them for participating and ask if they have any questions before you go.
Case Studies

1. The basketball game is tied with 20 seconds to go. You intercept a wild pass and barrel down the court—wide open. You toss your lay-up, only to hear groans from the stands: The ball has hit the backboard so hard; it ends up at half court. The story of your life. You feel like quitting the team…

2. Your family is new to the United States. Although you studied English in your own country, and did quite well at it, it's all so different here. Everyone speaks so fast and with words you don't even know. It's hard to follow the teachers at school, and even harder to keep up with what the kids are saying. Every day, you go home with a headache. You feel lost and behind. It's so frustrating!

3. You have word problems for math homework. Some of them are okay, but there is a couple where you don't even know where to start. You're not really sure what the questions are asking, let alone the answers. You've already spent too much time on the assignment anyway, and you still have other homework to do. What can you do?

4. You've landed a major role in the school play, and you're thrilled. The problem is that you must sing a song—ALL BY YOURSELF—in front of the whole school. You're so scared; you wish you weren't in the play at all. Maybe you really should go out and "break a leg."

5. You just finished working on your solar system for science. With a little help from your parents you finally finished working on your science project. Together you spent two days making the best volcano that'll have the coolest explosion! You were struggling in that class but this should surely help! The only problem… you and your little brother were playing in the kitchen and he accidently ran into the table knocking your volcano down! It didn’t all break but there is enough damage. It’d due tomorrow! What can you do!?

6. The neighbor kids all play hockey at the school. You've been dying to play, so your parents give you an awesome pair of hockey skate for your birthday. You throw on the blades and realize . . . you can barely stand up, let alone hold a hockey stick! Forget it. You'll never be able to play with those kids! What’s the point of trying…

7. Your English teacher has assigned a short story to write and it's due this Friday.
Every time you sit down to write, your mind's a blank. You keep hoping that, somehow, a great idea will magically appear before Friday. So far this hasn't happened . . .

8. You wake up late this morning. You throw on clothes nearest to you; grab your stuff for school barely having time to do your hair. You run out to the bus stop barely. Making it on time. Meanwhile, your parents forget it’s school picture day. You get to school on time thanks to the bus but when you realize your taking pictures right away in the morning all you want to do is hide...

9. You are having a rough morning. You didn’t get much sleep last night and your friends notice that you’re not your usual self. You explain to your best friend that your parents are getting a divorce and ask them not to tell anyone because it’s hard for you. Your friends tell another friend, and together they tell the counselor. You are so mad that your friends told someone!