

Labels

(Building labeling skills to more effectively cope with *challenging* life events)

Purpose: 1. To increase student awareness on reasons why some people get involved in counseling and 2. Help students understand that one way counselors help people deal/cope with challenging life events is by re labeling those events.

Materials: This activity lesson plan and handout (see last page of this activity.)

Student Materials: Pencil.

Time: 30 minutes.

Key Concepts: Labeling, re-labeling, emotional cost, resources and coping skills.

Introduce/reintroduce: Self to students. Remind students that counselors are available at school and in the community to help people who need additional support in going through, getting over and getting use to change (see lesson Get Over It.)

Part 1:

Begin: By telling kids they will need to have a pencil for today's counseling activity and that the activity is intended to help them better understand some reasons why people get into counseling.

Handout: The activity sheet (last page of this lesson) to each student.

Ask: Students to turn their activity sheet over (blank side up) and then to fold the paper in half by folding the top edge of the paper down (across the middle) to the bottom edge of the paper and then creasing the newly developed horizontal line in the middle.

(Just fold it in half!)

Show & Tell: How you want the paper folding done.

Make: Sure student papers are folded in half with the SHIRTS pictured on top.

Part 2:

Step 1. Ask: Students to raise their hand if they happen to be wearing and or own any of the Big Name Brands (Nike, Adidas, American Eagle, or Aeropostale.) Undergarments need not be shared;

Step 2. Ask: Students to write in their guess for the cost of a basic Tee Shirt from five big name brand labels such as Nike, Adidas, Vans, American Eagle, & Aeropostale. *If a portion of the classroom students are unfamiliar with a specific clothing manufacturer, as

a class cross out the unfamiliar manufacturer's name and insert a better known manufacturer's name between the brackets ().

Step 3. Ask: Students to come up with a total amount for what they'd expect to pay for the five basic Tee Shirts from all of the Big Name labels and pencil that price in where the activity sheet reads Total Price: _____.

Gather: Several student responses.

Have: Students repeat calculating process for all Generic Label Brands (do not ask students to raise their hands if wearing generic clothing) and then to come up with a Total price to be paid. That Total amount is written in the Total Price _____ area under the Generic labels category.

Gather: Several student responses.

Conclude: Big Name Labels generally cost more than Generic names for *Basically* the same thing (ex. 90-100% cotton shirt.)

Ask: Students to raise their hands if their families have ever bought generic cereal, juice, bread, milk, or anything else that is basically the same as the Big Name Brands. (Not uncommon to place inner generic product into Name label packaging.)

State: Most of us usually have the *resources available* for the generic stuff but not always the Big Name stuff...all the time.

Part 3:

Ask: Students to turn their papers over so the BOX pictures are on top.

State Directions: I'm going to read nine statements (events) one at a time. You're going to box and label each event I read.

This is how you'll do that.

1. Before you do anything, let's review the labels available for Box A items (Terrible, Horrible, Unbelievable, Devastating, & Traumatic.) Now let's review the labels available for Box B items (Unlucky, Bad, Unfair, Sad, & Unwanted.)
2. Once you've heard and understand the statement being read, based on the labels available for each box, choose a box that best fits the statement.
3. Once you've decided which box a statement should be placed in, your next step is to assign that event one of the labels from the box. You will then mark the number of that event being read (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 or 9) on the line to the right of the label you've chosen.

4. Each statement can only be assigned to one box and one label.
 Not all labels need to be used.
 However, one label can be assigned multiple statements (events) and
 It's ok to end up with more events in one box than the other.

Show & Tell:

For Example: Pretend Event #1. Getting suspended from school for five days.
 Choose the appropriate Box (A or B.) Write the #1 on the line to the right of the label
 (under your chosen box) that best describes being suspended for five days.

(Example Response)

Box B:

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| Unlucky | _____ |
| Bad | _____ |
| Unfair | <u> 1 </u> _____ |
| Sad | _____ |
| Unwanted | _____ |

Ask: Does anyone have any questions?

Read: The following statements (events) and inform that none of the statements are
 sunshine & rainbows. (Modify/Change events as needed.)

- #1. Watching the family dog get hit by a car.
- #2. Witnessing your Mom get beat & robbed.
- #3. Being held under water against your will until you pass out.
- #4. Losing a close family member in a car accident you were all in.
- #5. Being held responsible for an accident that takes the life of your friend.
- #6. Slowly losing your vision over the course of one year.
- #7. Always feeling lonely, frightened & scared.
- #8. Discovering your best friend posted your private secrets and “uncensored”
 pictures of you on the internet.
- #9. Being diagnosed with HIV.

Repeat: As needed.

Announce: Let's do a number #10 and this time each of you get to choose what it is.
 I want you to think of one of your own personal challenging events from your life then
 box & label it just like you did with the others. You will not be asked to tell anyone what
 your #10 event is=)

Part 4

Direct: Students to tally the total number of events for Box A and place that number in the assigned area by box A. Repeat process for Box B.

Direct/Ask: Students to raise their hand if their Box A total was greater than their Box B total. Raise your hand if Box B is greater than Box A. Raise your hand if both boxes contained the same number of events?

Call: On several students to read the numbers of the events (ex. #4, #7, #10) they listed as:

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Terrible | Unlucky |
| Horrible | Bad |
| Unbelievable | Unfair |
| Devastating | Sad |
| Traumatic | Unwanted |

Ask: Looking at Box A, how would you know if its total is TOO MUCH for you?

Report: One sign of too much might be when a person is consistently having a hard time (not being successful) with families, friends, school and at work. (The lid is off the box and its contents are all over the place.)

Ask: Students to raise their hand if they ever had a moment, an hour or a day where they struggled with something Terrible that had happened. (Many will raise their hands.)

Support & Clarify: The normalcy of the short struggle but highlight that some people will struggle with the experience of those terrible events for weeks, months & years. This is when counseling can help.

Talk out loud: For example, let's say that your terrible event was being "suspended" and you're still upset about it and keep thinking about it and talking about it even months and years later. It's possible the counselor can help turn terrible into something more manageable like Unlucky. Chances are you've already got pretty good resources (coping skills) to deal with Unlucky, Sad, Unfair, Difficult & Unwanted events/situations. *Basically*, not everyone who gets suspended considers it to be a terrible thing and even if it starts out being labeled as Terrible, it can be re-labeled as a minor setback or eventually even a Good thing depending on how well it can be adjusted to be perceived.

(Side Note): Some things don't have to be labeled as Terrible, Horrible, Unbelievable, Devastating or Traumatic yet some people INSIST on it. In times like these, try to be mindful of your client's secondary gains.

Ask: Students to look at their papers and think for a minute about their #10 and the label they chose for that event as well as for others not listed. They should also reflect on how satisfied they are with living their lives as measured by school, family interactions and friendships.

Suggest: Those events may be things like a divorce, a death, a health issue, accident, a forced event, injury or worse.

Share & Remind: Students that it's not uncommon to have Terrible things happen in life because some things ARE Terrible no matter how you look at or deal with them (I watch Criminal Minds too!.)

Bottom line announcement: Everything we put in Boxes A & B are basically going to be a *Challenge* for us to get through, get over and get used to. People seek counselors not always because of how Terrible something is (was) but mostly because of how they struggle living their lives as a result of it. Counselors will either help you re-label that event and match it with coping resources you already have in place and or help you develop new coping resources to make that Terrible thing more manageable (less disabling) and improve your life with family, school and in your friendships.

Remind: Students that given enough time (as we get older) sometimes, early negative life events can also have positive outcomes.

Big Name Labels



Basic T-Shirts
 90% Cotton
 Washable: Hot
 w/whites only.
 Tumble Dry Low Heat.

Generic Labels



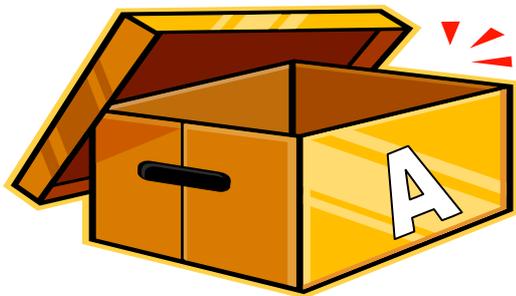
| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Nike | _____ |
| Adidas | _____ |
| Vans | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| American Eagle | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| Aeropostale | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| Total Price: | _____ |

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Target | _____ |
| Dollar Store | _____ |
| Kmart | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| Walgreens | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| Walmart | _____ |
| () | _____ |
| Total Price: | _____ |

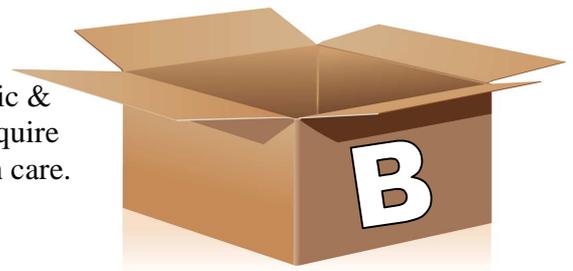
Total A Items: _____

More Labels

Total B Items: _____



Basically problematic & challenging. Will require change. Handle with care.



| | |
|--|-------|
| Terrible | _____ |
| Horrible | _____ |
| Unbelievable | _____ |
| Devastating | _____ |
| Traumatic | _____ |
| Total Price: Too Much? (How would you know?) | |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Unlucky | _____ |
| Bad | _____ |
| Unfair | _____ |
| Sad | _____ |
| Unwanted | _____ |
| Total Price: Less Than. (We usually have the resources available) | |