

Junior Advisory Lessons

7th Grade
1. Study Skills
2. Full Value Contract
3. Values and Decisions
4. What Kind of Friend Are You?
5. The Role of Emotions
6. Handling Emotions
7. Jumping to Conclusions
8. Test Anxiety
9. Avoiding Serious Conflicts
10. Taking Responsibility
8th Grade
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6. Emotions and Decisions
7. Stress Reduction
8. Test Anxiety
9. Assumptions
10. Helping Friends Avoid Conflicts

7th Grade Lesson Descriptions

- 1. Study Skills:** Students work in collaboration to develop the necessary skills to help them study for a variety of assessments and to study in a more productive manner.
- 2. Full Value Contract:** Students have the opportunity to apply the full-value contract to the middle school setting. They will discuss what this looks like in different classrooms and settings and will develop a better understanding of the different components of the contract.
- 3. Values and Decisions:** Values are a resource students can turn to and use in a wide range of situations and when making decisions. Identifying, focusing on, and remembering values has been shown to improve coping skills and positive decision making. Research on values shows that focusing on them increases people's resilience to stress and improves psychological well-being.
- 4. What Kind of Friend Are You?** Thinking about the kind of friend they want to be helps students create positive relationships with peers. Identifying friendship values is a focused way for students to clarify what is important to them in friendships and think about specific ways to make strong peer connections.
- 5. The Role of Emotions:** Emotional knowledge is a powerful part of what students learn in the Second Step Program. Students work together to understand that although emotions provide important information, fast, emotional reactions can lead them to act in ways they will regret. This lesson helps to prepare students to think about the decisions they make rather than reacting to their emotions.
- 6. Handling Emotions:** Research shows that attempting to “control” emotions or make them go away often backfires. In this lesson, students learn ways to be more aware of emotions without reacting to or following them. Values can help students judge whether emotionally driven actions really represent what they care about and help them make sound decisions even when they are upset.
- 7. Jumping to Conclusions:** Students who have trouble with peer conflicts and aggression may have difficulty understanding others' perspectives and tend to make negative assumptions about their peers. Helping students develop the habit of perspective taking is an important step in reducing peer conflicts.
- 8. Test Anxiety:** Students build upon and revisit study skills. This lesson helps students to learn and review strategies to reduce test anxiety.
- 9. Avoiding Serious Conflicts:** Serious conflicts between students make them feel unsafe at school and often require staff intervention. This lesson helps students recognize serious conflicts and identify strategies for avoiding them.
- 10. Taking Responsibility:** Taking responsibility for their decisions is a difficult but important skill for students to develop. Once students are able to recognize the role their decisions play in conflicts, they are better able to resolve and move beyond the conflicts, reducing the overall level of conflict in the school environment.

8th Grade Lesson Descriptions

- 1. Your Identity:** A healthy self-concept is key to students' success and well-being in school and in life. During adolescence, students are developing their sense of self. This lesson guides students toward evaluating themselves in favorable ways by examining how they see themselves now and in the future and by teaching students to recognize the positive traits others see in them.
- 2. Identity and Social Groups:** One of the main aspects of adolescence is exploring and beginning to form an identity. Our beliefs about ourselves, as well as others' beliefs about us, shape our identity, and having different identities in diverse settings and situations is common. However, the need to fit in and conform often leaves adolescents feeling pressured to adopt identities they are not comfortable with. This lesson encourages students to seek out relationships in which other people accept them for who they are, so they do not have to take on identities that do not suit them.
- 3. Healthy Relationships - Part 1 (Positive Relationships):** Relationships with peers are especially important during adolescence. When students are clear about what positive relationships look like, it helps them connect with peers who support them and make them feel good about themselves.
- 4. Healthy Relationships - Part 2 (Negative Relationships):** Students can find themselves in a variety of negative, unhealthy relationships. Knowing how to recognize a negative relationship and having strategies to deal with these scenarios can help students stay safe and be socially successful.
- 5. If-Then Plans:** Extensive research, including brain research, has shown that when people make an IF-THEN PLAN, they are twice as likely to follow through with their plans. Linking an action with an environmental cue is a way to automatize the action. Instead of having to remember and use willpower, students can learn to make positive actions more automatic through the use of IF-THEN PLANS.
- 6. Emotions and Decisions:** Emotional knowledge is a powerful part of what students learn in the Second Step Program. Students work in this lesson to understand that although emotions provide important information, fast, emotional reactions can lead them to act in ways they may regret. This helps prepare students to think about the decisions they make rather than react to their emotions.
- 7. Stress Reduction (Anxiety):** Research shows that taking slow, deep breaths is an effective way to calm down. Slow breathing can also help students handle difficult situations by simply taking a moment to pause the action. Students are taught breathing strategies to reduce stress.
- 8. Test Anxiety:** Students build upon and revisit study skills. This lesson helps students to learn and review strategies to reduce test anxiety.
- 9. Assumptions:** Students who have trouble with peer conflicts and aggression may have difficulty understanding others' perspectives and may make negative assumptions about their peers. Helping students develop the habit of perspective taking is an important step in reducing peer conflicts.
- 10. Helping Friends Avoid Conflicts:** Serious conflicts between students make them feel unsafe at school and often require staff intervention. This lesson helps students recognize serious conflicts and identify strategies to help friends avoid them. It is rooted in research that demonstrates learning to help others is a powerful motivator for students.