

Becoming Courageous

Act: Lesson 4

Courageous Problem Solving

Objective:

1. To teach the students how to solve small problems by themselves
2. To teach students how to solve, with support, medium sized problems.

Rationale:

1. In order to be able to solve problems, students to first be taught how to solve them.
2. When students become more and more proficient at solving problems, they begin to be able to resolve situations that they used to need adult help for.

Alignment to the British Columbia Core Competencies:

Social Responsibility; Problem Solving in Peaceful Ways:

1. I can solve some problems myself and can identify when to ask for help.

Supporting Literature:

1. Courageous Problem Solving is a process that I developed when I studied Courage and Resilience for my Master of Education.
2. *Difficult Conversations* by Bruce Patton, Douglas Stone, and Sheila Heen

Materials and Resources:

1. Courage Journals. Exercise books, or any type of book or journal. Courage Journals are used to reflect on the content of the day's lesson. Each child should have their own.

Additional Resources: (available on website just below the lesson)

1. Courageous Problem Solving business cards for Small Problems
2. Courageous Problem Solving sheets for Medium Sized Problems
3. Joint Courageous Problem Solving sheets for Medium Sized Problems

Lesson (approx 1 hour)

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How Long does it take to solve a problem courageously? Well, it takes a lot longer than the standard “say you’re sorry”. If you can invest the time in teaching the students how to courageously approach problem solving, then you will find that their behaviour will change. Students - some with severe behaviour and mental health challenges - may seek out these problem solving sheets to help them sort through difficult challenges.

As a bonus, if students know that a “small problem” (give them 5 minutes to work it out on their own before I decide that they need help from an adult) becomes a “medium problem” when they can’t work it out themselves, it gives them a lot of motivation to work hard to solve the problem themselves!

Introduction:

1. Organize students so they can see the smartboard.
2. Start with a conversation about how to solve a problem: what do you need to accomplish, and what are the steps to doing this. You want to guide the students to come up with these steps: 1. Agree on what the problem is. 2. Take responsibility for your part. 3. Say how you are feeling. 4. Make a plan for next time. 5. Apologize. 6. Forgive.

Being Ready: Before you are able to do any problem solving, it is important (really important) that you are ready. This means that you need to be calm enough to:

1. Sit down, listen and ask questions peacefully.
2. Accept that you may never completely understand the problem.

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Main Activity:

Small Problem (which means that you can solve it yourself or with a friend)

Pick a problem that you can use as an example (make sure it is one that you would expect students to solve on their own). Hand out the CPS (Courageous Problem Solving) cards to the students, and have them role play solving the problem themselves by following the steps on the card. Depending on the ability of your students, you might want to first have two adults role play solving the problem. When all of the students have had a chance to work through the card and solve the problem, gather them back together. You could choose to have a couple of pairs demonstrate to the class how they worked through the CPS card and were able to solve the problem on their own.

Explain that in the future, when students have a small problem, they can use the cards to help them solve it themselves. (I keep a few in my desk that the students can borrow when they need help with solving a small problem)

Medium Problem (which means that you need an adult to help you solve it)

Attached to this lesson are 3 different CPS sheets for different ages of students. Depending on the maturity and the ability of the student, any of them can be used for a medium sized problem.

The important thing to remember is that although the steps are the same for a medium sized problem as they are for a small problem, there are some differences because the problem is more complex (hence it being a medium problem instead of a small problem)

The steps for solving a medium sized problem are:

1. Agree on and describe the problem
2. Accept responsibility for your part in the problem
3. Think about how you were feeling and try to determine why you were feeling that way.
4. Think about what you are willing to do to work toward a solution, and then put this plan into action for next time.
5. Communicate a strength that you have noticed about the other person,
6. Apologize
7. Forgive
8. Think about how you show courage
9. Think about what went right in this situation
10. Think about what you can thank the other person for.

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Reflective Activity:

Think of a time in your life when it would have been helpful to have a Courageous Problem Solving sheet to help you sort through a medium sized problem.

Extensions:

1. Attached to this lesson are the following resources:

- Courageous Problem Solving cards for students to sort out small problems. Print these out double sided and cut into cards.
- Courageous Problem Solving Sheet for a student to solve a problem that they caused by making a poor choice
- Courageous Problem Solving Sheet (11 x 17) for two students to work through a problem that they have created by both making a poor choice.

Creative Activity: Solve Your Problem 4 Different Ways Worksheet. Students choose a problem and write it in the centre. Using words and pictures, they think of 4 different ways to solve it. Worksheets are found in the “creative activity” section.

Story Books:

Doors in the Air by David Weale and Pierre Pratt. Big Idea: opening a door is the beginning of possibility.

What Do You Do With A Problem? By Kobi Yamada. Big Idea: “problems help us to discover how strong and brave and capable we really are”

What if...? Then We... by Rebecca Kai Dotlich. Big Idea: Any problem is solvable.