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# Section One Teacher's Page

**TOPIC:** Background Information for Decision Making

**Materials:** Student Worksheets, pages 3 to 8

## I. Introduction to Section One

### A. Key Ideas:

1. It is important to attend to your feelings in order to recognise problems and difficult situations.
2. It is important to deal with difficult situations in order to get rid of bad feelings.
3. It is important to know what "feeling good" is like.
4. It is important to know what you want out of life.

### B. Vocabulary:

1. Emotion—a state of strong feeling (as of fear, anger, disgust, grief, joy, or surprise)
2. Sensation—a feeling that comes from your body (pressure, pain, heat, and cold)

## II. Activities and Group Discussion Ideas

**Page 3:** Hand out page 3. After students have completed page 3, ask them why they think adults might study the reasons that 5th and 6th graders feel bad. Ask why an adult might be concerned about how they feel. Ask if they think it would make a difference in the classroom if everyone came to school feeling bad. Ask if they think it would make a difference in the world if everyone went to work feeling bad. (Save page 3 to compare with page 4.)

**Page 4:** Hand out page 4. Have the students compare their answers from page 3 to the twelve most common answers (shown on page 4). See how many students mentioned each of these twelve situations. After the students have completed page 4, compare their responses to those made by the students who participated in the study. The students who participated in the study graded each situation according to how bad it made them feel. The researchers, after averaging all the responses, ranked the items in this order (of badness):

1. Having parents separate, 2. Being pressured to try something new, 3. Having your parents argue in front of you, 4. Not spending enough time with your mum or dad, 5. Feeling sick, 6. Fighting with parents about house rules, 7. Not having homework done on time, 8. Moving from one place to another, 9. Not getting along with your teacher, 10. Being overweight or bigger than others your age, 11. Changing schools, 12. Not having enough money to spend.

**Page 5:** Hand out page 5. Ask students what kinds of things at school make them feel nervous, worried, or upset. Ask them where in their bodies they feel nervous, worried, or upset. Explain that this page is to be kept in their decision-making notebooks. It is important that they become aware of their body sensations, so they will know when they have problems they need to solve. After students have completed page 5, hand out page 6.

**Page 6:** Have students keep this page in their decision-making notebooks. Explain that this page will be used as a source of problems throughout this decision-making programme. Read the instructions. Ask the class to generate (aloud) three or four small problems and two or three big problems. Then have each student fill in his or her own three personal problems. (Whenever problems arise in the classroom, encourage those students who are involved to add them to their "What's Bugging You" sheets.)

**Page 7:** Ask if any of the students in the class have ever had somebody jump out at them when they weren't expecting it. Ask how they felt. Ask what sensations they felt. Hand out page 7. Discuss the difference between emotions and sensations (as defined on page 1). After students have completed page 7, ask why it might be important to pay attention to sensations. (If they felt tired and ignored their sensations, what might happen? If they felt unhappy and pretended to be happy, what might happen? If they were sick and ignored their sensations or symptoms, what might happen?)

**Page 8:** Hand out page 8. Tell students that you have been discussing negative feelings. Explain that to solve problems and make decisions you also need to know what makes you feel good. Tell students that there are no right or wrong answers on page 8. Say that every person will answer differently, and that's good. Have students complete page 8. Ask what other things students said they wanted out of life. Make a list on the blackboard and see how many different things they added to their worksheets.

### III. **Additional Activities for Developing Sensation Awareness**

A. Make "feeling buttons." Make copies of page 50 and have the students cut out each of the faces.

Each student will also need cardboard, a piece of string and some tape. Have each student:

1. glue the faces to cardboard squares (for strength).
2. poke a hole in the top of each square.
3. tape the string to his/her desk, so that one end of the string hangs over the side.
4. choose a face each morning that represents his/her mood and tie it to the end of the string and consider the body sensations that go with that mood.

B. Tell students to think about the sensations they feel when they are "feeling good." Every time they feel good, suggest that they touch their left thumb and forefinger together and pay attention to their sensations. Have students keep track of the number of times they feel good each day.

C. Guided imagery trips. Tell students to close their eyes and remember a time that they felt wonderful. The wonderful feeling could have taken place while they were on a trip, during a good day at school, at a baseball game, during a walk in the park, or even when they were taking a shower on a hot day. Have them think about the way things looked, the things they heard, the taste in their mouths, and anything they could smell. Ask them to remember if they felt warm or cold. Ask them to remember how their bodies felt. Ask them to think about the feelings in their feet, legs, arms, chest, shoulders, neck, and head. Then say that it is time to come back to the classroom. Tell them to bring their good feelings back with them. At the count of ten have everyone open their eyes.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Decisions for Survival



This book is about making decisions so that you can better deal with difficult situations. What are difficult situations? They're the ones that make you feel uncomfortable. Some adults *earn a living* finding out what situations make students your age feel uncomfortable. Can you believe that? One group of adults asked ninety 5th and 6th graders, "What happens that makes you feel bad, nervous, or worried?"\* What would you have answered? Write your answers on the lines below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

Write words that describe the kind of discomfort you felt in each of the above situations. (Use words like scared, nervous, bad, or any others.)

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

\*The names of these adults are Charles E. Lewis, M.D., Judith M. Siegel, Ph.D., and Mary Ann Lewis, R.N., M.S. Their article appeared in *American Journal of Public Health* in February 1985 (Volume 74, No. 2, page 117).