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Module Seven | Self Assertiveness



Activity One

Nursery Rhymes are powerful

This activity makes use of old-fashioned nursery rhymes as a script for students to recite in three different styles – shy, cranky and confident. Students experience delivering and receiving messages (nursery rhymes) to gain an understanding of the difference between all three styles. The aim of the activity is to: assist potential targeted students in speaking up for themselves; having potential bullies experience negative, aggressive speech and behaviour from another and provide potential bystanders with the confidence to speak up.

Materials Required

✓ Blackboard

Step One

Have the students list all the nursery rhymes they can remember and record these on the board.

Step Two

Ask students to break up onto groups of 2/3. Students are to select one of the nursery rhymes from the list to recite a few lines from it.

Step Three

In their normal speaking voice ask the children to stand up in their group and to take turns in reciting a nursery rhyme to each other.

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Step Four

Now ask the entire class if you were a very shy and quiet student, how would you look? How would you sound? How would you behave? How would you move your body? Ask the students to stand up in their groups and say the nursery rhymes being a shy and quiet student.

Step Five

Now ask the entire class if you were the crankiest person in the world how would you stand? How would you look? How would you sound? How would you behave? How would you move your body? Now ask the students to repeat their nursery rhymes being a cranky person.

Step Six

Now ask the students how does a person stand and talk when they are feeling confident. Ask the students to repeat the same nursery rhyme again but this time they need to stand and talk as if they were the most confident student in the world.

Step Seven

Have a discussion with the students about which feeling: i.e., quiet, cranky, confident was the best for them. Was this when they were saying the nursery rhyme or when they were listening to the nursery rhyme. Help students connect this with how they relate to each other in the classroom and the playground.

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Activity Two

Belly watchers

This activity is conducted with the entire class and will need a large area for the students to walk around in a circle. Students compare two different communication styles – a timid style (belly watchers) with an assertive style. Students exhibit the two different styles, comparing the verbal and physical behaviours of each style as they walk around in a large circle. This is then followed by a short discussion about how the students felt about each style. Students are encouraged to adopt a more assertive behaviour by being observant of what is going on in the playground and speaking up when they see something that is not right.

Materials Required

✓ Nil

Step One

Talk to students about being assertive. How one stands tall, makes eye contact to people they are talking to and other people who are around. They talk in a confident voice and listen to others who are talking to them. Tell the students about belly watchers. Explain that these types of people have a lot of trouble being assertive.

Step Two

Look at the features of belly watchers. These are people who don't look up an awful lot. They usually have their head down looking at their belly and often mumble to themselves about how bad they feel, blaming themselves for all their troubles. Ask the students to stand up and walk around in one big circle (they can go in different directions) being belly watchers. Do this for 5 minutes or so then have the students sit down in the circle.

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Step Three

Ask the students what it was like being a belly watcher. Did they sometimes bump into each other because they were not looking up? Did the students miss observing a possible danger situation ahead, like a desk or a cupboard etc? What was it like not talking to others?

Step Four

Ask the students who has played Marco Polo. Like belly watchers, the person who is 'it' in Marco Polo misses out by seeing who is around them. In the game Marco Polo, the person who is 'it' must listen very carefully to find the other players. This is when a person has to rely on feedback from others to know what to do. Do you think belly watchers rely on feedback from others or are they too focused on themselves? Do you think this might mean that belly watchers could possibly avoid dangers like a potential bullying situation if they were to look up and listen to what was being said or done around them?

Step Five

Ask the students 'how does someone look when they are being assertive?'. How do they hold their body? What do they sound like? Do they listen to others or speak over the top of them? Do they use a loud, quiet or a medium sounding voice?' Ask the students to stand again and walk around the room in a large circle. This time they need to walk like an assertive person, their eyes need to be looking at students around them, they need to be listening to others and be able to speak up for themselves. As the students walk around ask them to say to each other, "Excuse me, I need to get past you", have the other student reply "of course" and step aside. Ask the first student to respond, with "Thank you".

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Step Six

Ask the students whether they preferred to walk around as belly watchers or assertive students. Congratulate the students on graduating from belly watchers to assertive students. Suggest to the students, next time they go for lunch or recess / little lunch, they should think about watching what is going on around them and speaking up when they see something is not right.