

REVIEW OF LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM BY MOMS FOR LIBERTY BAY COUNTY

– Merrell Strong Kids and Botvin Life Skills

AUGUST-OCTOBER 2022

BACKGROUND

In August 2022, Moms for Liberty - Bay County chapter emailed the Superintendent and School Board of Bay District Schools expressing concerns about Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Bay District Schools (BDS). This email was prompted after a review of past school board meeting minutes and seeing the SEL permission slip for parents to sign during the 2021-2022 school year posted on the BDS website. The permission slip is no longer used and the SEL is now part of the Life Skills curriculum.

According to the minutes of school board meetings in 2019-2020, the district chose to use Merrell Strong Kids and Botvin Life Skills curriculum to meet the requirement to teach Life Skills as stated in the State Academic Standards.

State Academic Standards

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1003/1003.html

(n) Comprehensive age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate K-12 instruction on:

1. Health education that addresses concepts of community health, consumer health, environmental health, and family life, including:

- a. Injury prevention and safety.
- b. Internet safety.
- c. Nutrition.
- d. Personal health.
- e. Prevention and control of disease.

- f. Substance use and abuse.
 - g. Prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking.
2. For students in grades 7 through 12, teen dating violence and abuse. This component must include, but not be limited to, the definition of dating violence and abuse, the warning signs of dating violence and abusive behavior, the characteristics of healthy relationships, measures to prevent and stop dating violence and abuse, and community resources available to victims of dating violence and abuse.
 3. For students in grades 6 through 12, awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.
 4. Life skills that build confidence, support mental and emotional health, and enable students to overcome challenges, including:
 - a. Self-awareness and self-management.
 - b. Responsible decision-making.
 - c. Resiliency.
 - d. Relationship skills and conflict resolution.
 - e. Understanding and respecting other viewpoints and backgrounds.
 - f. For grades 9 through 12, developing leadership skills, interpersonal skills, organization skills, and research skills; creating a resume, including a digital resume; exploring career pathways; using state career planning resources; developing and practicing the skills necessary for employment interviews; workplace ethics and workplace law; managing stress and expectations; and self-motivation. Health education and life skills instruction and materials may not contradict the principles enumerated in subsection (3).

According to Dawn Capes, director of student wellness programs, Bay District Schools chose this curriculum to Life Skills taught by mental health professionals and trained teachers who are part of the Mental Health TRIAD teams. The curriculum is available for Pre-K through 12th grade and is taught in classrooms the TRIAD team and teacher determine there is a need. In 5th -8th grades, the social studies time is used.

SUMMARY

Our Moms for Liberty-Bay County chapter is concerned about the curriculum chosen to meet these standards. **In our opinion the curriculum reveals too much personal information and does not include the family or their values in the discussion. It leaves the child vulnerable and open to suggestions from the facilitator and peers.**

The curriculum chosen also relies heavily on social emotional learning (SEL).

SEL is being used nationwide to sexualize children and open their minds to gender fluidity. The use of this curriculum is grooming children away from their families and creating gender confusion.

While the use of SEL in teaching has been used for many years, Transformative SEL takes it to a new level that crosses into critical race theory and social justice. <https://casel.org/events/building-culture-equity-sel-conference/>

- SEL can help adults and students have courageous conversations about race, privilege, and the power dynamics that have dispossessed minorities for centuries.
- Transformational SEL offers a means for addressing social justice and the underlying cultural and political structures that have long promoted inequities (race, class, gender, etc.).

CASEL is the organization pushing this agenda into the schools and created Merrell Strong Kids which is being used at Bay District Schools.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

A group of 5 local parents reviewed the Merrell Strong Kids Curriculum and Botvin Life Skills curriculum during the month of September. All reviewers are residents of Bay County with children and some with grandchildren. One reviewer is a writer. One reviewer has nursing experience. One was a teacher for over 20 years. One has experience directing and recommending mental health services to employees. One participated in individual and group mental health therapy.

Each person chose which workbook and teachers guide to review. Each person provided their summary and observations of the curriculum. The reviewers liked the no-smoking/no-drugs/no-alcohol message of the Botvin Life Skills training but disagreed with how the curriculum teaches the child with role-playing situations. The reviewers liked the identification of emotions for PreK and Kindergarten. None of the reviewers

appreciated the lack of parental participation, the role playing, personal information and the emotional triggering of students in grades 1-12.

OBSERVATIONS OF SEL CURRICULUM – BELOW ARE ACTUAL COMMENTS FROM THE REVIEWERS.

Kids explore their truths, which is training in moral relativism.

SEL teaches kids to navigate this world based on how they feel, without critically thinking through a problem. The danger of SEL is placing emotions before facts and truth.

These teachers are not trained psychologists and are not equipped to deal with issues or reactions that could come up in these “psychotherapy” sessions. Could be dangerous. Doesn’t belong in school. Also, this makes the children so vulnerable to manipulation.

No mention of seeking out parents for help

The whole curriculum is about FEELINGS which is problematic on many levels.

Botvin Life Skills was written by psychologists and psychiatrists and crossed the line into child group therapy. When the curriculum has the teacher tell the students they must keep the information in this class confidential, right there is a red flag.

Merrell Strong Kids curriculum also has a teacher warning to make sure kids practice confidentiality. There are parent letters explaining what the teacher is doing with the child, so there is some visibility to the parent, but you do not hear the questions from the kids and their answers. You do not participate in the role play with your child. There is a lot of role-playing in these lessons that puts your child into situations they may or may not be experiencing. Kids are asked to share their own experiences and are asked to help their friends instead of seeking help from their parents.

Lastly Merrell Strong Kids has strategies for cultural adaptations. <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/policy/provider-guidelines>

"Psychological service providers need a sociocultural framework to consider diversity of values, interactional styles, and cultural expectations in a systematic fashion. They need knowledge and skills for multicultural assessment and intervention, including abilities to:

1. recognize cultural diversity;
2. understand the role that culture and ethnicity/race play in the sociopsychological and economic development of ethnic and culturally diverse populations;
3. understand that socioeconomic and political factors significantly impact the psychosocial, political and economic development of ethnic and culturally diverse groups;
4. help clients to understand/maintain/resolve their own sociocultural identification; and understand the interaction of culture, gender, and sexual orientation on behavior and needs."

In the intro I learned that staff training and professional development should have occurred and that the PreK Level involve ten lessons, done once a week for about 30 minutes over the course of ten weeks. That immediately set off the following questions:

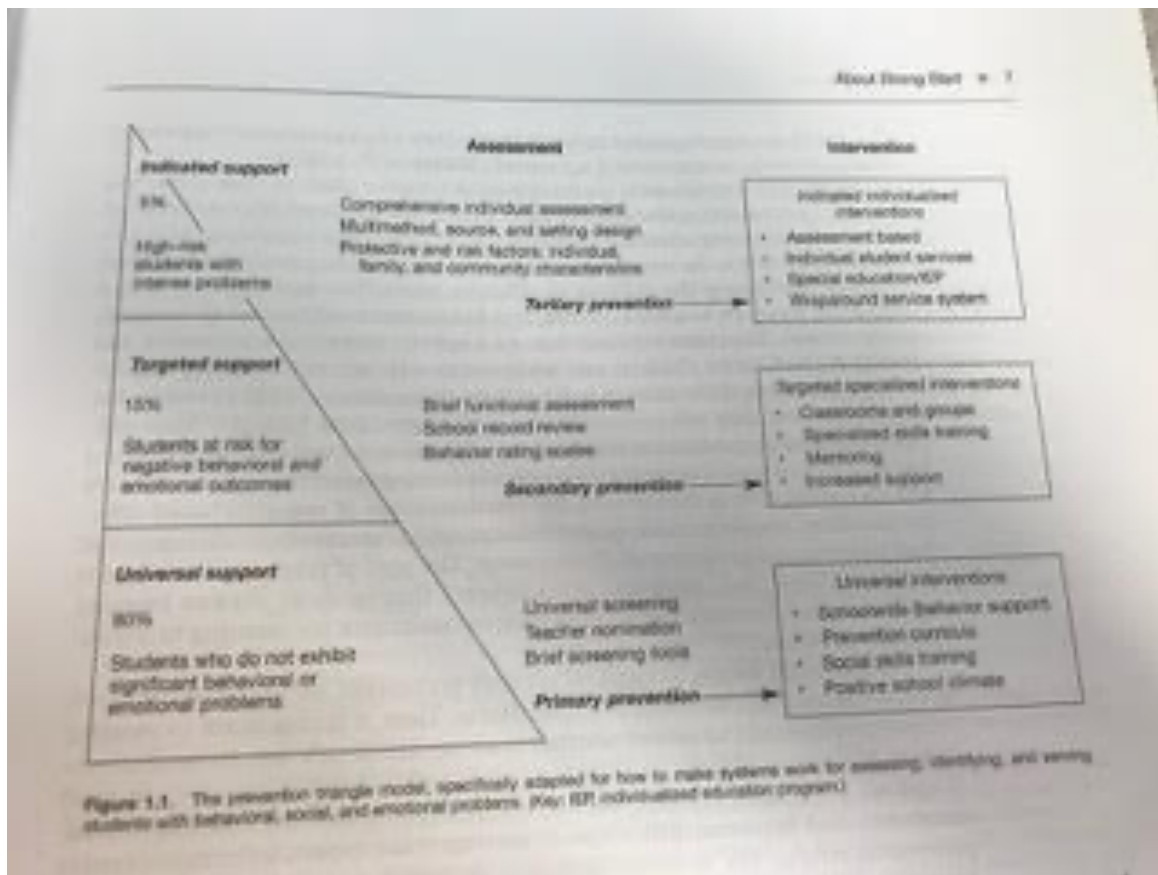
1. How much training did teachers receive? (one hour, a day, etc.)
2. Who did the training? What were their credentials?
3. What did the training involve? (Sit & get, online module, interaction, discussion etc.)
4. Was the training grade-level specific, or a general training?
5. Has there been any follow-up since the initial training?
6. Are teachers seeing an impact on students by using this curriculum?
7. Is the curriculum still being used? (If I walked up to a teacher and said tell me about the Strong Kids curriculum, would they be able to discuss it)
8. Is this an area that has been checked off the must-do list and is now sitting on a shelf?

The PreK lessons are very concrete - teaching students to name and understand how they might react when having these feelings. It works on teaching them to use their words, instead of just acting out. Much classroom misbehavior stems from internal

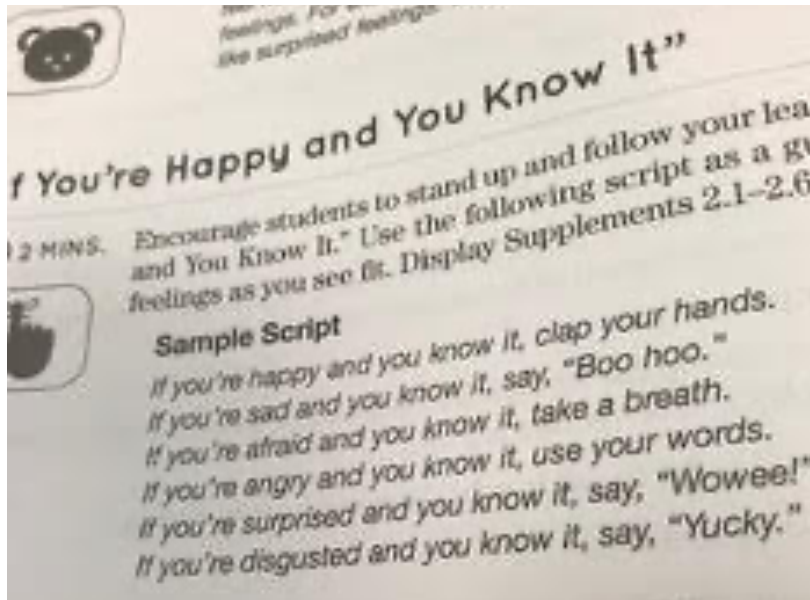
conflict students are having and they are crying out for help - they want a teacher to ask, "Hey, what is going on? Talk to me".

EXCERPTS FROM THE CURRICULUM

CASEL – Merrell Life Skills teachers guide. This is the Prevention Triangle Model upon which the curriculum is based. The classroom lessons need to stay at the primary prevention level but should never include students sharing personal information.



CASEL – Merrell Life Skills teachers guide. “If You’re Happy and You Know It Song, redone for PreK - I like it, Kids need to know they have other emotions than just happy and sad.



Botvin Life Skills Student guide. This is the middle school workbook. Botvin hits the same topics in each grade level with different questions. Each year, the child is encouraged to act based on a decision not made with their parents, but with their peers.

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Read each situation. **Clarify** (identify) the problem, list and then **consider** the possible solutions (choices) and their likely consequences, and **choose** the best solution.

WORKSHEET 3

Putting the 3 Cs into Practice

Situation 1
Two good friends, Sue and Maria, stopped by the school office on their way home. Sue spotted a wallet on the secretary's desk. She searched through it and removed \$20 and quickly put it into her pocket. Maria confronted Sue, who said she needed it to buy her mother a birthday present and added that she didn't think the person would notice that it was gone anyway.

Problem: _____

<i>Possible Choices</i>	<i>Possible Consequences</i>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

My Decision: _____

Situation 2
You're at the basketball court in the park with friends. One of your friends takes out an e-cigarette and asks the two of you if you want to vape. Your other friend says, "Yes." You don't really want to, but since both of them do, you're not sure what to do.

Problem: _____

<i>Possible Choices</i>	<i>Possible Consequences</i>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

My Decision: _____

8 Student Guide 2

Use the 3 Cs model to make a decision for your practice situation.

WORKSHEET 4

Group Decision-Making Planner

Describe the situation:

Clarify the Problem: _____

<i>Consider Possible Choices</i>	<i>Possible Consequences</i>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

Choose Group Decision:

My Decision:

Making Decisions

Botvin Life Skills teachers guide. This curriculum needs training. How often do the TRIAD teachers and mental health professionals receive training?

Curriculum Materials

The *LifeSkills Training* curriculum includes:

- **Teacher's Manual:** A comprehensive, step-by-step manual with instructions for implementing the program.
- **Student Guide:** An informative guide that provides students with the material necessary to complete the program. The guide includes activity worksheets for use throughout the program.
- ***Stress Management Techniques* CD:** This audio CD is for use with the Coping with Anxiety unit. The audio walks listeners through the five stress-reduction exercises.

Students and teachers can also access a companion website (www.lifeskillstraining.com/msweb). This optional resource provides teachers with additional information and other resources. Students can complete interactive exercises designed to reinforce key concepts.

Training and Technical Assistance

It is highly recommended that those delivering the *LifeSkills Training* program receive training. This informative and interactive workshop provides teachers with the necessary skills and background information to successfully implement the *LifeSkills Training* program.

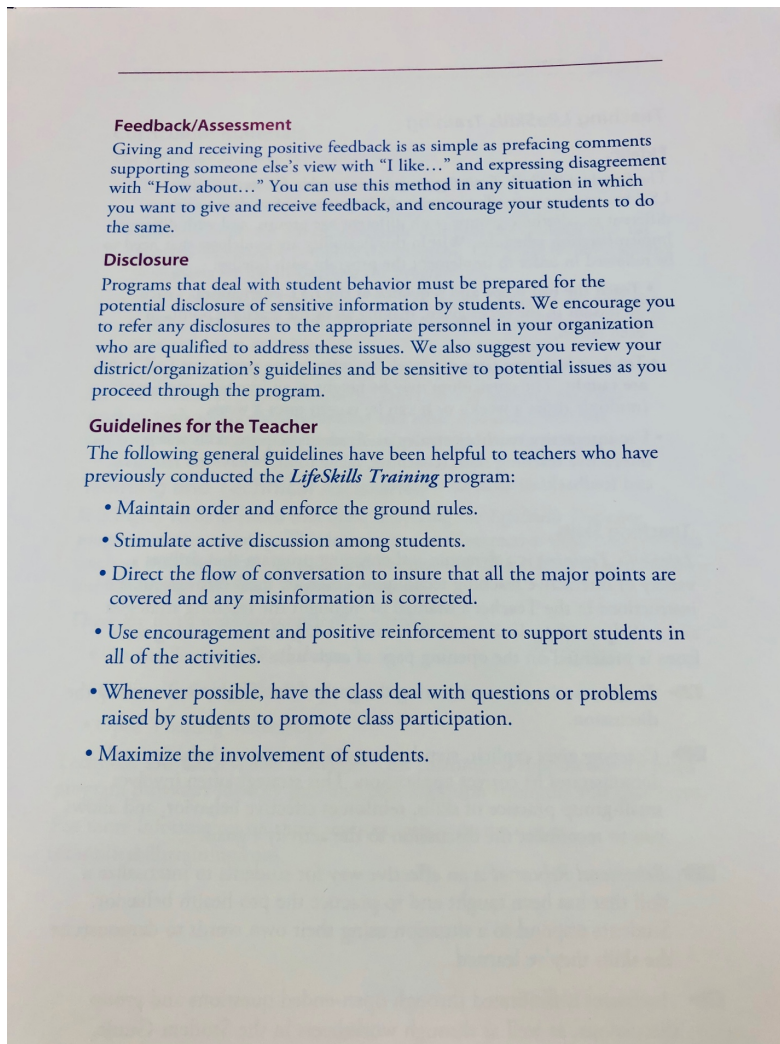
There are three workshop options available:

- On-site Training Workshops
- Online Training Workshops
- Open Training Workshops

Technical assistance is also available. This customized support service helps program providers identify pre- and post-adoption strengths and challenges.

For more information on these services, please contact us at info@lifeskillstraining.com.

Botvin Life Skills teachers guide. The guide warns that “sensitive information” will be disclosed by the student.



Botvin Life Skills teachers guide. These ground rules are similar to ground rules for group therapy. Note: Anything discussed in the class remains confidential. Parents must be aware and allowed to be present when this type of discussion is happening with their child.

Ground Rules

It is generally a good idea to establish ground rules for classes conducted as part of the *LifeSkills Training* program in order to differentiate these classes from more traditional academic classes. The following ground rules were used in the evaluation studies:

- Have students sit a configuration that allows for interaction.
- Everyone should be given an opportunity to participate.
- Everyone is free to express their opinions or participate in class activities without being subjected to criticism.
- Respect your fellow students; listen to them and their ideas.
- Anything discussed in the class remains confidential.

These ground rules may not be appropriate to every class. Thus, they may need to be modified to suit your particular situation.

Botvin Life Skills student workbook. This exercise labels the student as a passive, aggressive or assertive person. It implies that "C" is the correct answer. There is no value system explained that guides you to the appropriate response. For question 4, my child was taught not to stay at a party where other 12 year-olds are drinking beer so none of the responses are correct.

Do you tend to respond to situations passively, aggressively, or assertively? Answer the questions, and then look at the scoring guide to determine your style.

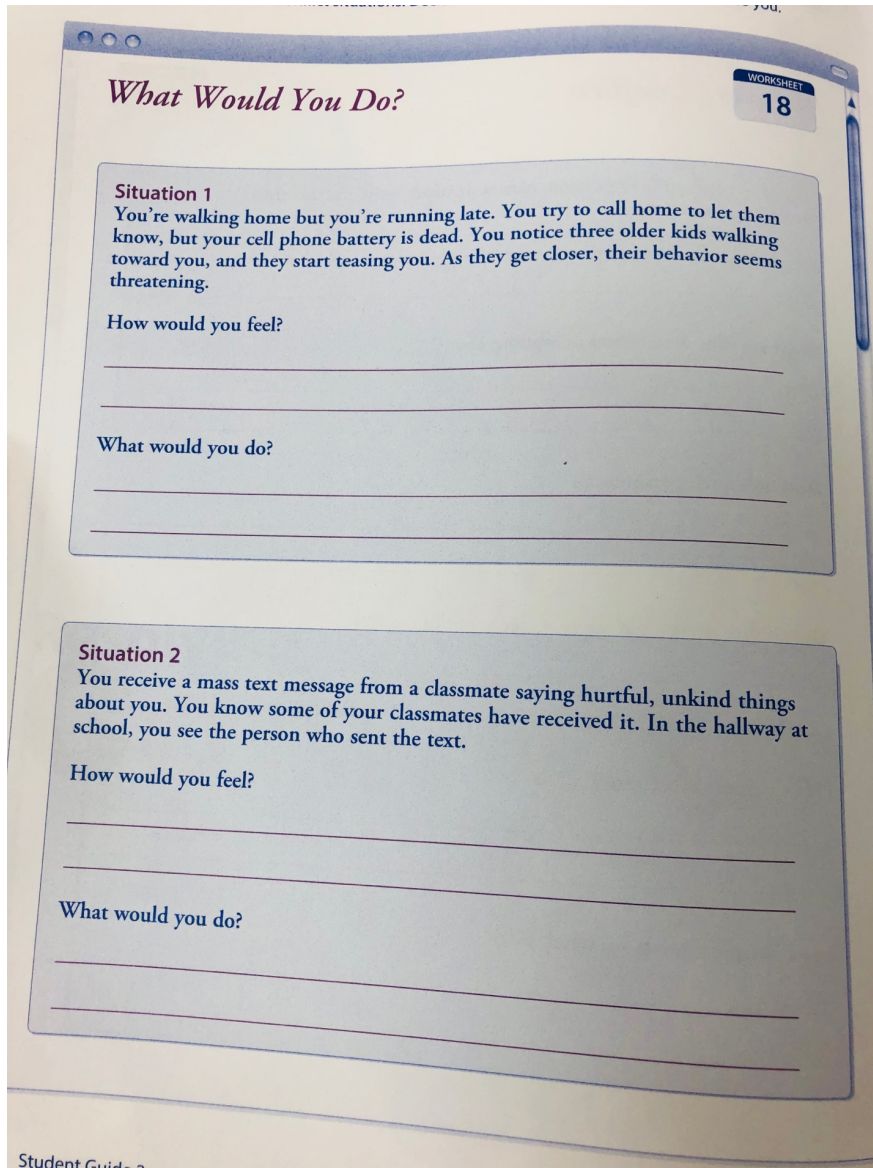
What's Your Refusal Style?

WORKSHEET
15

1. You overhear one of your close friends talking about you behind your back. Your feelings are really hurt. You:
 - a. act as if it never happened.
 - b. go right over to your friend and start to yell.
 - c. tell your friend that you feel upset and would appreciate it if she didn't talk about you behind your back.
2. You are at a baseball game and the people sitting next to you start smoking cigarettes. Their smoke is blowing directly in your face and making you feel sick. You:
 - a. decide to move to another seat in the stadium.
 - b. tell them they had better put out their cigarettes or else.
 - c. point out that they are sitting in a no smoking area and politely ask them to stop smoking.
3. Your friend borrows your headphones. When they are returned, the earpiece is damaged and doesn't work. You:
 - a. fix the earpiece yourself and hope it works.
 - b. post a message on a social media site saying something mean about your friend.
 - c. tell your friend that the earpiece is damaged and that you expect them to get it fixed.
4. You are at a party and some of your friends are drinking beer. They keep asking you to join them, even though you have told them you are not interested. You:
 - a. decide to take a few sips so that they will leave you alone.
 - b. tell them that if they ask you one more time you will hit them over the head with the beer can.
 - c. say no once again and tell them that if they are really your friends they should respect your feelings.

Scoring Guide:
Mostly "a" answers: you tend to react passively, accepting things without objection.
Mostly "b" answers: you tend to respond in an aggressive manner, being unnecessarily hostile, forceful, and just plain obnoxious.
Mostly "c" answers: you know how to respond assertively, standing up for yourself and expressing your feelings.

Botvin Life Skills student workbook. What is the purpose of having a child addressing these issues without parents and values that help to guide decisions? Again, these questions are for 12 year-olds, not adults.

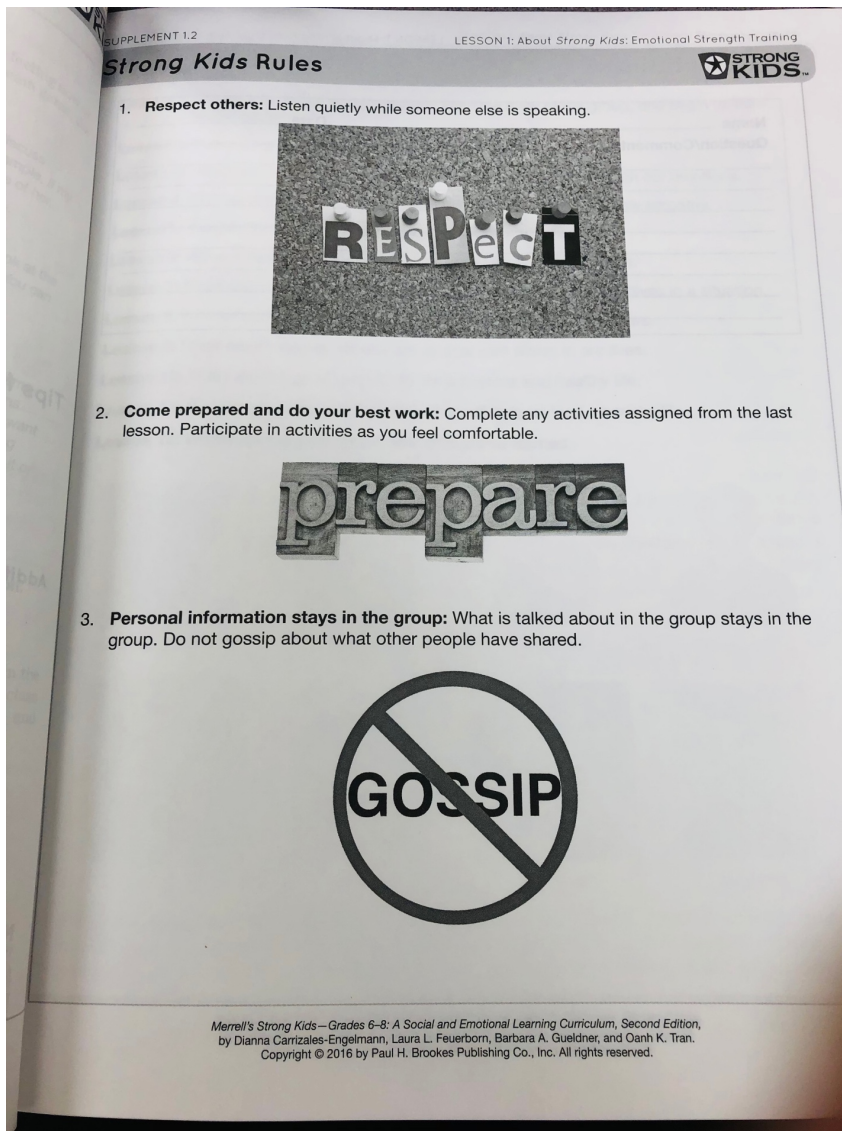


Merrell Strong Kids teachers guide. Each year builds on the next for the Merrell Strong Kids curriculum. Here are contents for the 6th-8th grade. Approx ages 11-13 years old.

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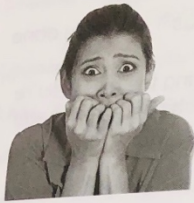
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Merrell Strong Kids student workbook. Like Botvin, Merrell Strong Kids has group rules. Personal information will be shared in the group and to keep it confidential. Again, parents need to be informed and be allowed to be present with their child or be able to opt out of the curriculum.



Merrell Strong Kids student workbook. In this section children aged 11-13 are asked to pinpoint emotions when they happened, what they were doing, what does it tell about yourself? This is a group therapy session with self-evaluation, without parental involvement.

List of Emotions



Afraid



Confused



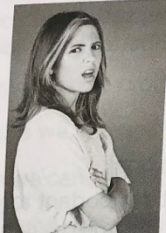
Bored



Angry



Disappointed



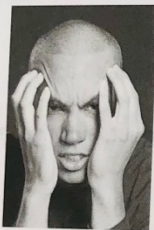
Disgusted



Embarrassed



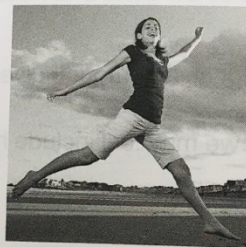
Excited



Frustrated



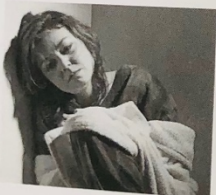
Happy



Joyful



Overwhelmed



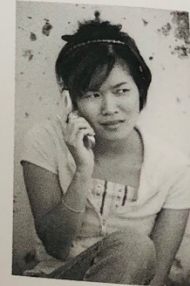
Sad



Stressed



Surprised



Worried

Other emotions: annoyed, ashamed, brave, calm, cautious, compassionate, confident, curious, doubtful, ecstatic, empathic, enraged, grateful, guilty, hopeful, horrified, ignored, impulsive, inspired, jealous, lonely, optimistic, peaceful, rejected, relaxed, relieved, scared, sorrowful, startled, sympathetic, upset, withdrawn

My Emotions

Directions: Think of to answer the next fe
1. What was the e

2. Using the cir
ple is provid

3. Where

4. Ho

5.

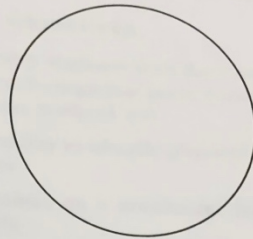
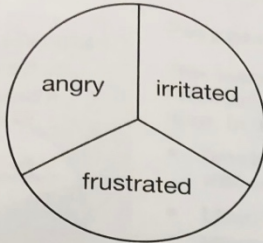


My Emotions

Directions: Think of a time when you felt one emotion or several all at once. Use this memory to answer the next few questions.

1. What was the emotion, or what were the emotions that happened at the same time?

2. Using the circle below, indicate how much of the emotion or emotions you felt. An example is provided.



3. Where were you? What was the situation?


4. How did you know you felt the emotion or the emotions?

5. How did the emotion or emotions act like a signal? What did it tell you about your situation or yourself?

Merrell Strong Kids teachers guide. Please note paragraph 3. In small groups, have students talk about situations in which they noticed an emotion and the physical feeling they think they are experiencing at this moment. This makes a child vulnerable and open to the suggestions of the facilitator. This is done in front of peers and without parents.

If your body feels relaxed and calm, you might be feeling happy or content. If your stomach hurts, your body feels shaky, your breathing is shallow, and your heart is beating faster, you might be feeling stressed or afraid. When this happens, the part of your nervous system that prepares you to fight, flee, or freeze is activated. Different people can feel different things, but we all experience physical sensations with our emotions and with varying intensities. Let's do an activity so you can see how your body experiences emotions.

Activity A: Identifying Physical Feelings

 4-9 MINS. Use Supplement 1.6 (List of Emotions, Lesson 1) as a guide. Choose *one* activity below to give students an opportunity to practice identifying physical sensations associated with emotions. Examples of emotions and corresponding physical sensations are listed below.



Sample Script

Let's practice noticing any physical feelings we may experience when we have an emotion.

1. Play songs or sounds that can evoke emotions (e.g., “Happy” by Pharrell Williams, “Don’t Worry Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin). Discuss the emotions students felt and what their bodies were experiencing.
2. Ask students to close their eyes and take three breaths. Instruct them to recall a situation, perhaps being on the beach, going to a party, or being at their favorite place. Instruct them to imagine where they were and what they were doing, saying, or thinking. Ask them to notice any physical sensation they detected related to the emotion and ask them to describe it.
3. In small groups, have students talk about situations in which they noticed an emotion and the physical feelings they think they had. Students also can talk about the emotions and physical feelings they are experiencing this moment. If students are not talkative, consider using art (e.g., sketching), poetry (e.g., haiku), song, or dance to express emotions and physical feelings.

Below are example emotions with possible corresponding physical feelings. Students can also suggest other physical sensations. It can be helpful to prompt students to use creative or less common language to describe the way their bodies feel in response to emotions, such as “skin feels prickly” as a reaction to irritation or impatience or “heart feels fluttery and buoyant” in response to excitement or joy.

- Worry: Stomach discomfort, headache, muscles feel stiff, shallow breathing, restless, tired
- Stress: Aches and pains, stomachaches/upset, tense muscles, heart beats fast, shallow breathing, clenched jaw and face
- Regret and sadness: Tired/fatigued, ache in the chest or heart, lump in throat, stomach upset, general pain.
- Fear: Heart beats fast, breath is rapid, dry mouth, tingling

- Confusion and irritation: Dizzy, head feels fuzzy, body is tense and jumpy
- Embarrassment or awkwardness: Face feels warm, body feels warm, heart pounding or beating fast

Experiencing Emotions on a Continuum from Comfortable to Uncomfortable

🕒 5-10 MINS. Emotions are felt on a continuum from uncomfortable to neutral to comfortable.

Sample Script

Emotions can feel really comfortable, really uncomfortable, and somewhere in between. Really comfortable might feel like, "I love this feeling and I want to feel this way all the time!" Really uncomfortable might feel like, "Make it stop! I don't want to feel this way anymore!" If it's somewhere in between, we might not even notice the emotion. One way is not better or more normal than the other way to feel. Depending on the situation and the circumstances, it can be totally normal to feel comfortable in some situations and uncomfortable in others. Some situations can even make us feel both comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time. Also, sometimes something can artificially cause us to feel a certain way, or even mask our true emotions, like alcohol, drugs, food, or other things we do to our bodies that can hurt us in the long run. Sometimes, these substances are taken to avoid feeling uncomfortable or to escape. Doing this is not helpful to learning about and coping with our emotions; it only makes things worse. Understanding how we feel gives us more information about ourselves and our experience.

Activity B: Identifying Emotions on the Continuum of Comfortable and Uncomfortable

🕒 4-9 MINS. Use Supplement 2.3 as a handout to practice identifying and exploring emotions in large or small groups.



Sample Script

Now let's practice not only identifying emotions and the physical feelings we have, but also whether we feel comfortable, uncomfortable, somewhere in between, or both comfortable and uncomfortable.

For each example, ask students the following questions:

- What physical sensations give you clues about how the student feels?
- What emotions might the student be experiencing? (*Hint: We can experience more than one emotion at the same time, and different people can have different reactions to a situation.*)
- Do you think the student feels comfortable, uncomfortable, or both? (e.g., *comfortable: I like feeling that way; uncomfortable: I don't like feeling that way; both: I felt uncomfortable but noticed that I felt better after a while*)

Merrell Strong Kids student workbook. This is from grades 9-12. Kids aged approximately 14-18. These scenarios do not have any value explanations. They pose a disturbing situation and ask for a level of feeling. Is the goal to get kids feeling comfortable in these situations? Is the goal to have them be uncomfortable and open to the right answer given by the facilitator? All scenarios are being done with peers and a facilitator, with no parental involvement.

LESSON 2: Understanding Your Emotions

SUPPLEMENT 2-4 Emotions In

SUPPLEMENT 2-3

Practice Scenarios

<p>Scenario 1: You want to go off campus for lunch today. You only have 20 minutes and you have money, but you're not sure it's enough. Being on time to class is important because if you're late, you'll get detention. You're really hungry. You decide to walk really fast to the food place you like. Your heart is beating fast, you are breathing quickly, and your legs ache. You pay for your food and eat fast. When a classmate tries to talk to you, you snap at him. You notice your stomach starts to hurt, but the hunger is going away. You get back to class just in time—you had to run to make it.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> You drop your drink on the way back to class.</p>	<p>Scenario 2: A friend just told you that her dad is getting married to someone she hasn't met. She doesn't know if she'll have to spend time with her dad's new wife and is concerned her dad is going to spend much time with her and her brother. He hardly sees them now. The friend says she has a headache and feels tired.</p>
<p>Scenario 3: You connected with someone from school through social media who you really like and want to go out with. The last message he sent sounded like he wanted to get together too, but he hasn't contacted you in a couple days. You feel like you have a lot of energy but can't focus.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> Someone on social media posted a photo of the person you like with someone else.</p>	<p>Scenario 4: You are in front of the school and you hear someone shouting. You jump a little and look around, trying to find where the shouting came from. You notice that the bus driver is shouting someone's name and has a backpack in his hands. You feel your body relax.</p>
<p>Scenario 5: You are working on a project that's due tomorrow and you just got started on it at 5 p.m. You're not sure where to start and are pretty sure you don't have all the information you need. You keep getting up out of your chair and you say something mean to your sister. It's hard to focus.</p>	<p>Scenario 6: Your coach tells you that you did better this game than the last. Your body feels calm and excited. It's important to you that the coach noticed how you did.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> On the other hand, your coach said this in front of your teammates. You wonder what they think because they did not get this same feedback. In fact, the coach was upset last game because of another teammate's performance.</p>

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Merrell Strong Kids student workbook. Different scenarios for Grades 3-5.




SUPPLEMENT 2.3

LESSON 2: Understanding Your Emotions

Practice Scenarios

<p>Scenario 1: A classmate said something to you that seemed mean. Your body feels jumpy; you think you might scream or even hit something. You've felt this way before. You wonder if this is a signal to do something about it or stay quiet. You've noticed that this classmate says mean things to other kids, and you watch how these kids react to that classmate.</p>	<p>Scenario 2: You just found out someone you know had a bad thing happen to him or her. You think you might cry and you want to be alone.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> You also notice that other people look sad, too, and you were told that feeling this way is normal.</p>
<p>Scenario 3: You watch a TV show or movie that has some scary parts. You really like the movie, you enjoy being with your friends, and you notice your body feels energized.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> You also feel your heart beating fast, you feel jumpy inside, and you think about scary things happening in real life.</p>	<p>Scenario 4: You are in the cafeteria and someone standing behind you yells really loud. Your body feels startled and you gasp.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> You turn around and see that another person is doing cartwheels and probably ran into the person who screamed. No one got hurt. Your classmates are laughing.</p>
<p>Scenario 5: You're working on a writing assignment that's due tomorrow. You can't think of what to write, and you don't understand the directions. You keep getting up out of your seat or fidgeting. Your thoughts are stuck on how you'd rather be doing something else, and it's hard to focus. You notice some people are writing fast and others are talking to classmates.</p>	<p>Scenario 6: Your teacher or coach gives you a compliment such as, "Nice work." Your body feels calm and excited. It's important to you that the teacher/coach noticed how you did.</p> <p><i>Twist:</i> On the other hand, the teacher/coach said this in front of other people and you wonder what they think because they did not get a compliment.</p>

←—————→

Really comfortable Really uncomfortable

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Merrell Strong Kids student workbook. Here is an example of small group roll play. Kids in Grades 3-5 are to act out the appropriate emotions for each situation in front of a group. Why put kids through this? After this lesson will kids go home asking for a puppy? There is no set of values or context.

LESSON 4: Understanding Other People's Feelings


SUPPLEMENT 4.3

Small-Group Student Role-Play Scenarios

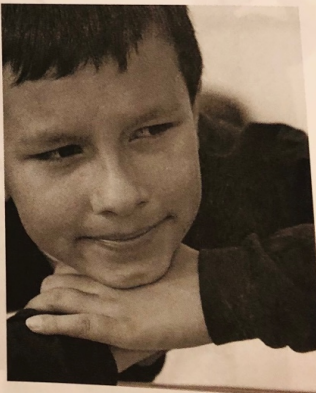
Situation 1: You are Maylee. Today is Friday. You were supposed to go to your friend's house over the weekend, but instead you have to work on a school project. You would have the whole weekend to play at your friend's house if you didn't have that project due on Monday. You know your parents will make you work on your project and won't let you go to your friend's house. If that project wasn't due on Monday, you could probably go to your friend's house! Act out how you think Maylee might feel.



Situation 2: You are Tamika. At the beginning of the year, your parents told you that if you finished all your homework every week for a whole quarter, you could choose a puppy for your family at break. Today is Friday of your last week and you just got your report to take home that shows that you did finish all of your homework. You know that when you get home you can tell your parents the good news. Act out how you think Tamika might feel.



Situation 3: You are Lakota. You are working with José on a social studies project. The teacher told you to make a poster for your project. You have some great ideas about how to do the poster but noticed that José is already starting on it. You really want your ideas to be included in the poster, but José doesn't say much when you tell him your ideas. Act out how you think Lakota might feel.

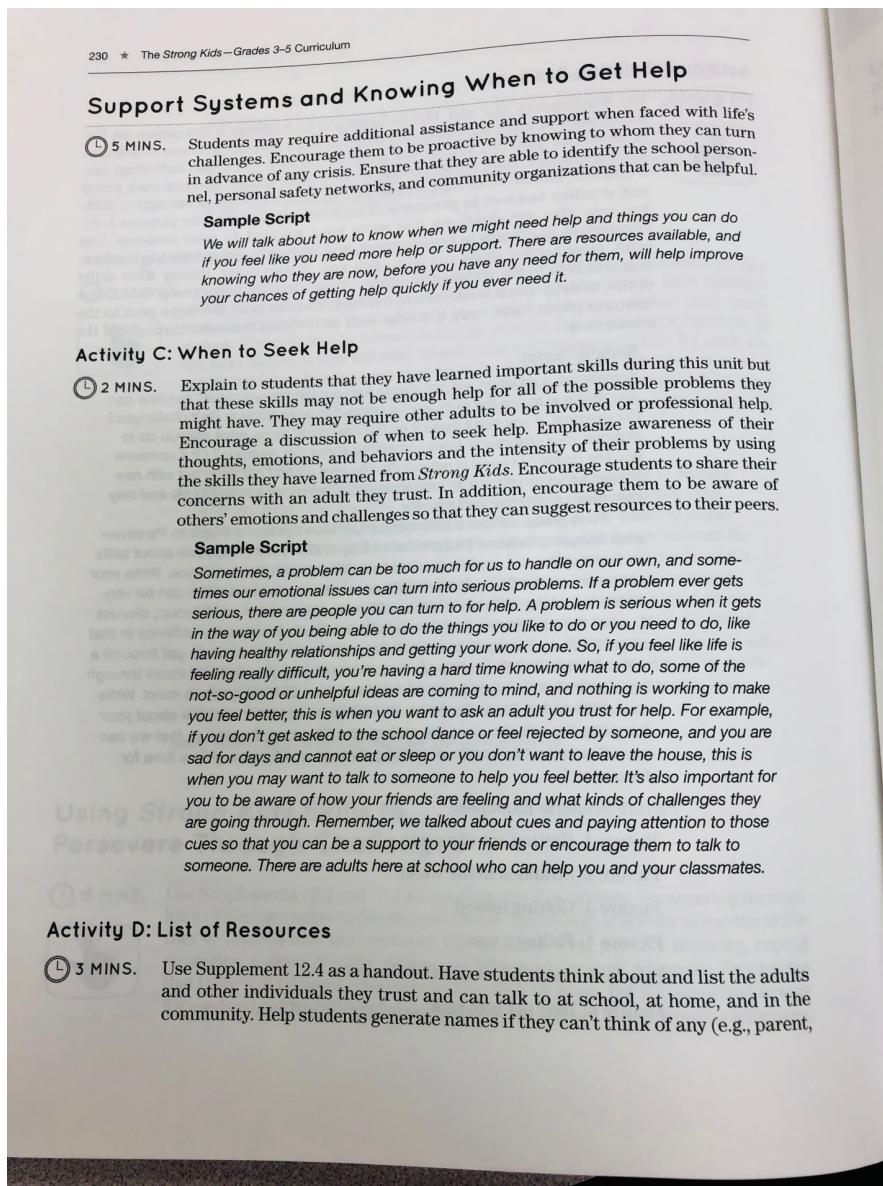


100

Merrell's Strong Kids—Grades 3-5: A Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum, Second Edition,
by Dianna Carrizales-Engelmann, Laura L. Feuerborn, Barbara A. Guedner, and Oanh K. Tran.
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Merrell Strong Kids teachers guide. In the beginning of the guide there are letters to parents that the school is supposed to send out, letting them know each lesson that will be presented. Are these letters being sent to parents?

Then, in the guide there is a section on support systems and knowing to get help. This is to guide the facilitator to let the children know where to seek help and how to put together a list of resources. A list of resources would be great for the parents. I disagree that children should be told to talk to other family members, neighbors, teacher, school psychologist before being encouraged to go to their parents.





other adult family members, a close adult friend or neighbor, clergy, principal, teacher, counselor, school psychologist). Have students also identify community resources or organizations that can be helpful when needed. Be familiar with your school's mental health referral process in case students have questions or if you ever need to make a referral.

Sample Script

Use this handout to discuss and write down the adults in your life whom you trust and can talk to when you need help. If you do not know anyone to contact, I will help you and give you some names of people who can support you. These people care about you, want you to be well, and can help you participate in life more fully. It is also important to know the resources within your community and to identify them before you ever need them [e.g., clergy]. Can someone share what other resources are in our community? [Allow time for sharing.] When you are in a situation and you need someone to talk to or you have problems, look at this handout. Keep it in a safe place so that you can use it when it's needed.

Optional Assessments

- 🕒 15-20 MINS. If you administered pretests from the *Strong Kids* web site during Lesson 1, now is the time to administer these tests again so that you can determine how effective *Strong Kids—Grades 3-5* was at increasing students' knowledge and enhancing their emotional resilience. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to take these tests.

Putting It All Together

- 🕒 5 MINS. Reiterate the importance of perseverance and overcoming adversity. Encourage students to continue to reflect on the *Strong Kids* skills to help them through life's challenges.

Sample Script

Let's practice what we've learned by putting it all together.

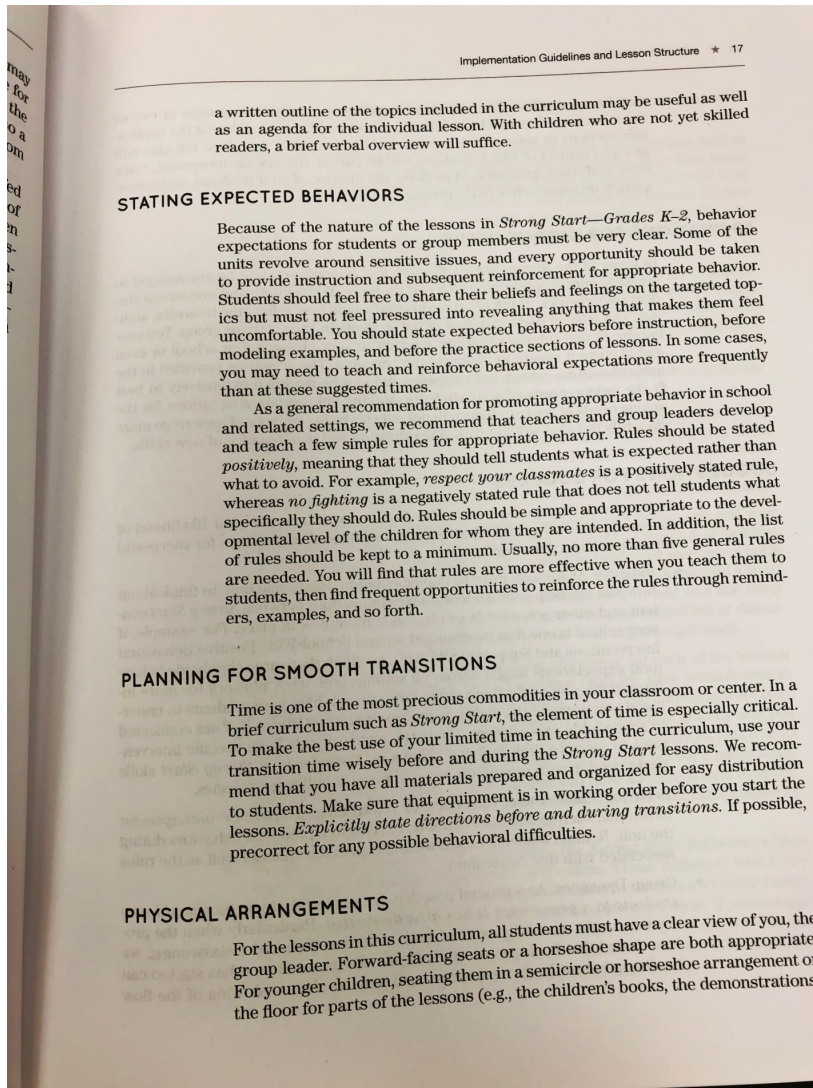
Use Supplement 12.1 to review any last comments or questions from the lesson discussion. Facilitate discussion on which *Strong Kids* skills can be used to build resilience. Allow time to hand out certificates for participation in *Strong Kids—Grades 3-5* if you choose to give certificates.



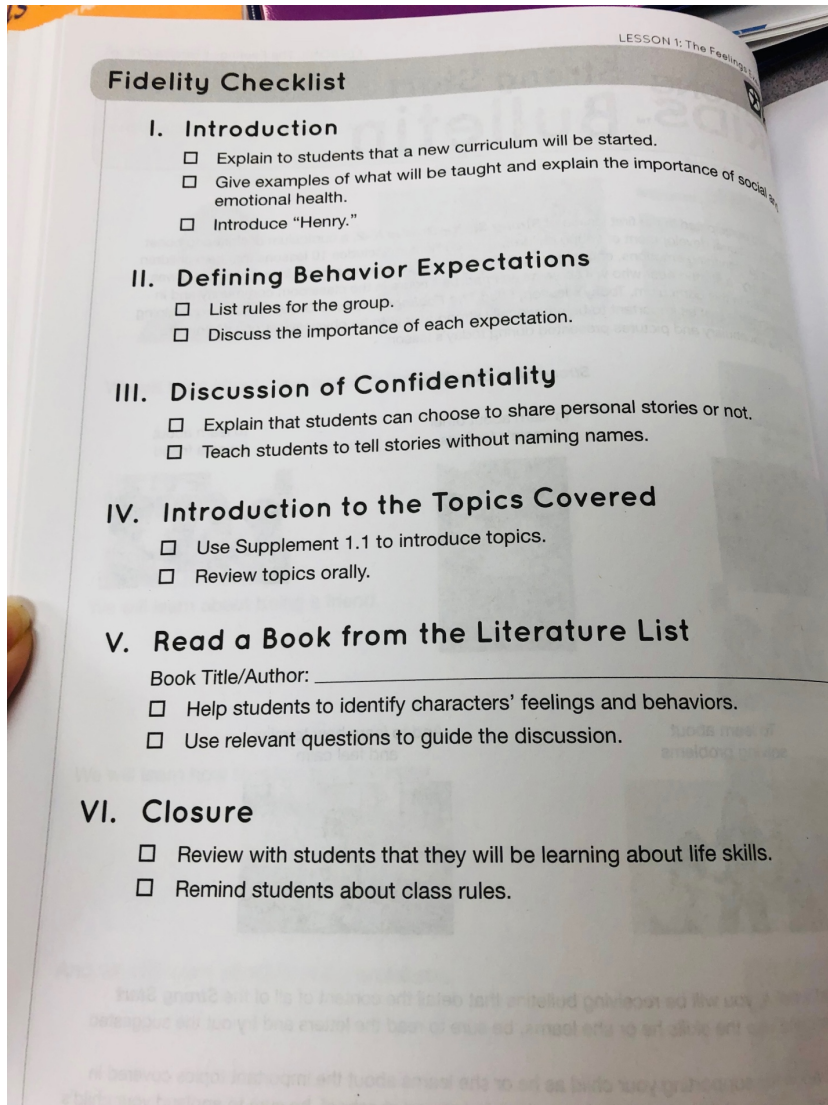
Sample Script

Today, we reviewed everything we learned in this program and created a tree to help us remember what we need to help keep us strong. In the review activity we did earlier, were there any questions or comments about the key points from the lessons? [Allow time for students to share.] Believe it or not, we will continue to work on these skills throughout our entire lives. You will make mistakes and

Merrell Strong Kids teachers guide. This curriculum has an expectation of behavior based on teachers and group leaders. Where are the parents in this discussion?



Merrell Strong Kids teachers guide. Here is a reminder to explain students can choose to share personal information or not. Teach students to tell stories without naming names. Students are expected to share and give out personal information while the parents are not present.



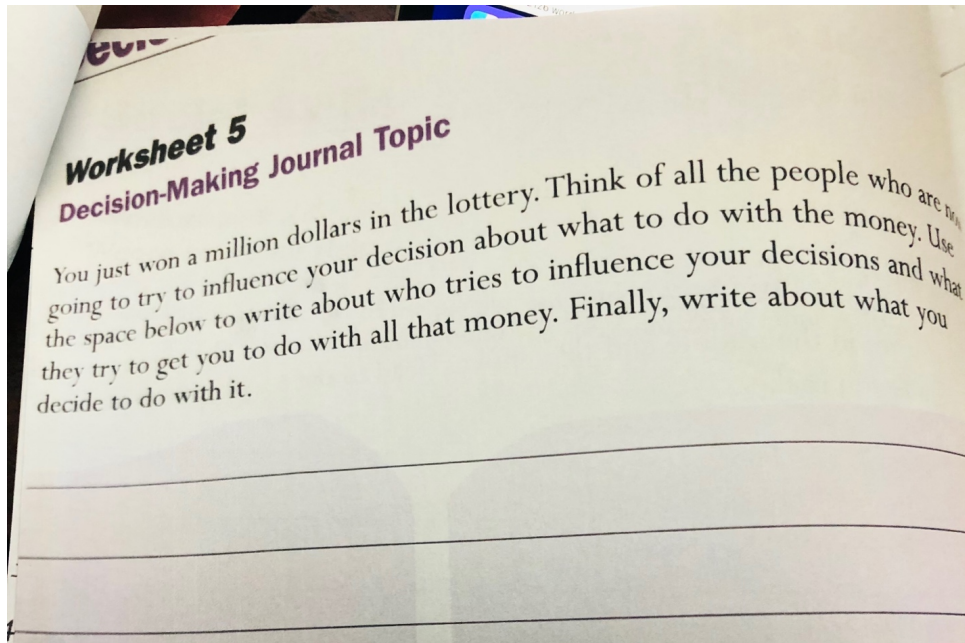
Botvin Life Skills student workbook. Grades 4&5. This is inappropriate for this age development. It puts the child in a confrontational situation or potential policing or management situation.

Smoking Information

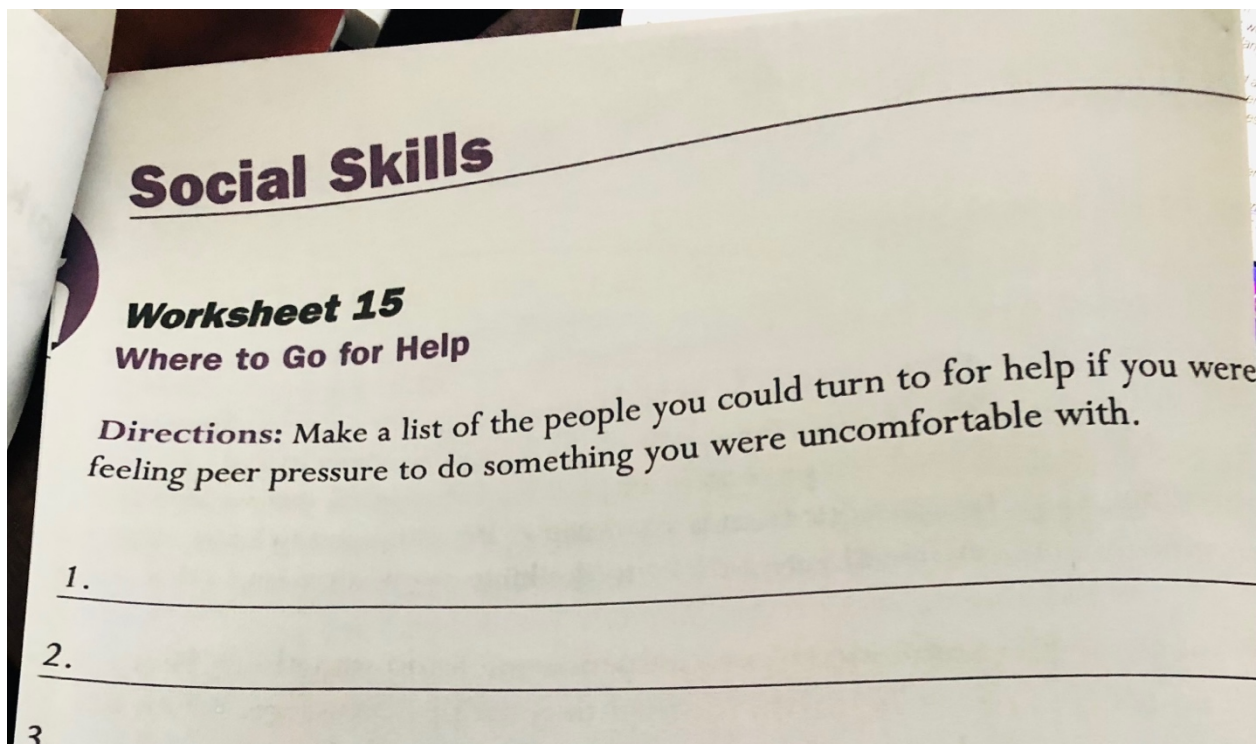
Worksheet 7
Smoking Information Journal Topic

You are sitting in the no-smoking section of a restaurant. The people at the table next to you ignore the no-smoking sign and light up cigarettes. You just finished learning about the effects of smoking in class and do not want to breathe in their smoke. What do you do and say to these people? Use the space below to explain what happens.

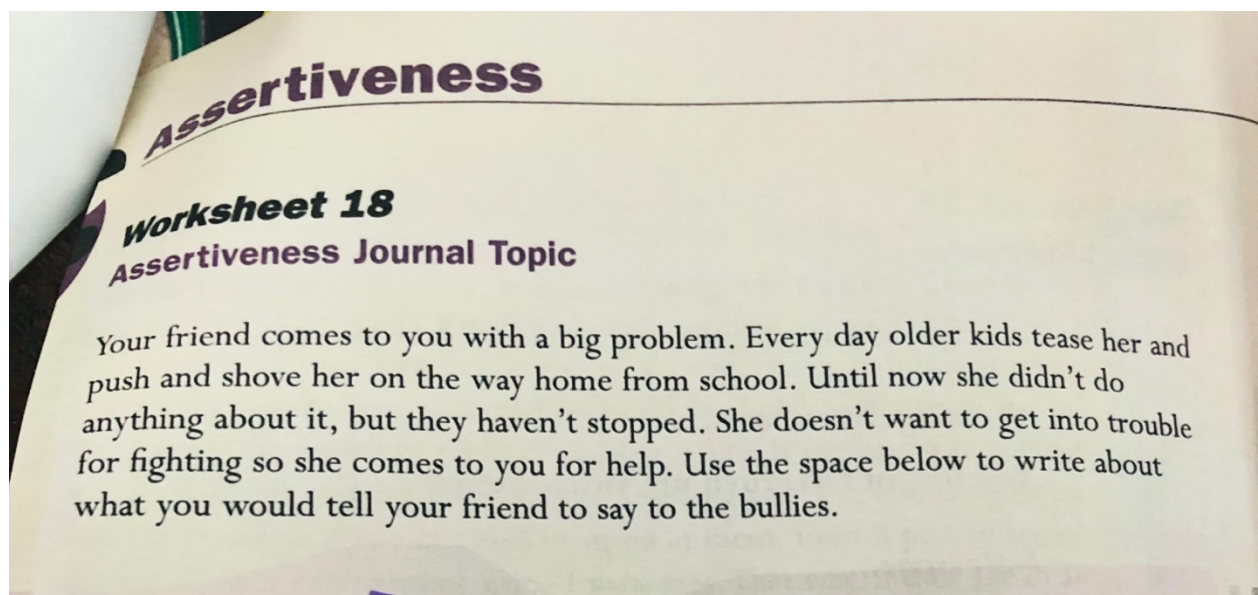
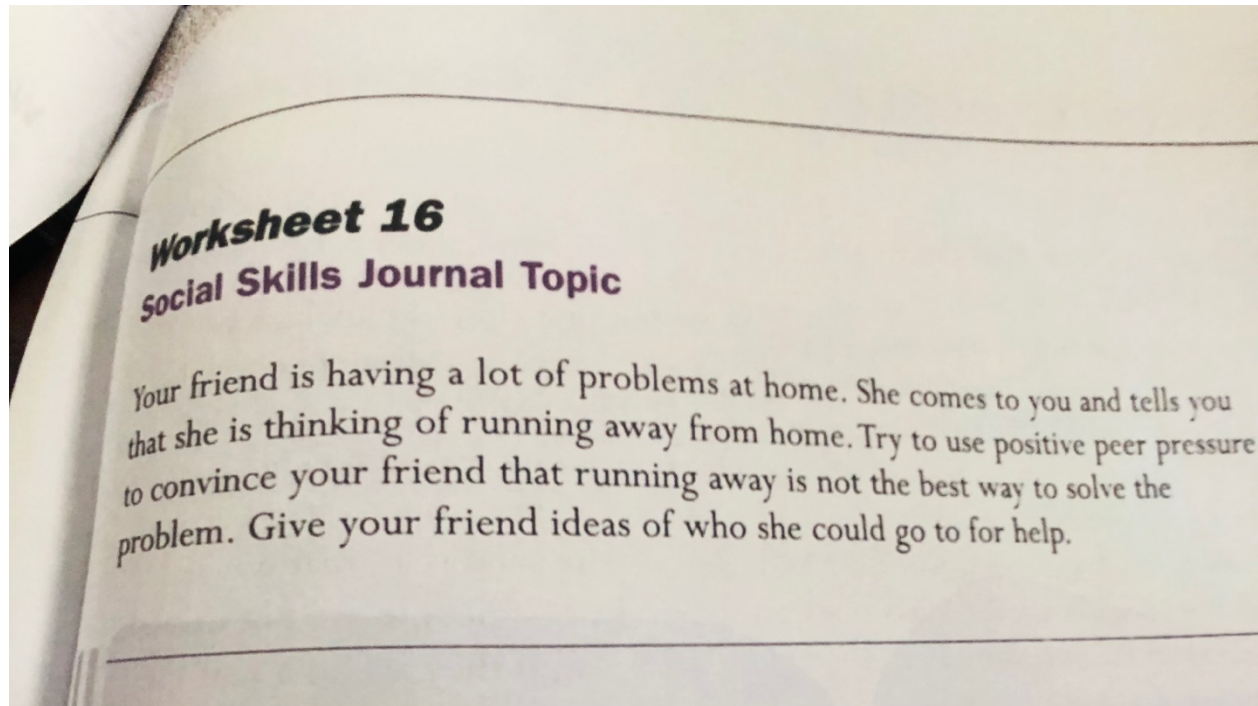
What is the purpose of this exercise? The 10- or 11-year-old needs to decide what to do with a million dollars on their own. Why are parents left out?



This feeds into the next worksheet. This is private information not for a school session. It speaks about receiving peer pressure.



Again not appropriate guidance from a child social worker. A child should not advise another child what to say to a bully. Where are the parents?



Botvin Life Skills student workbook. 6th grade. Violence and the Media section.

Why are we promoting our 12 year- old children to watch examples of violence and explain the acts?

➔ A. List the TV shows and movies you watch for a week. Check whether the main characters in each show smoke, drink, use drugs, or act violently.
B. Choose one or two TV shows. List any different violent acts portrayed in each one. Check whether an act shows physical or verbal violence. If it happens more than once, circle the act.

Watching TV WORKSHEET
14

A. Name of Movie or Show	Smoke	Drink	Drug	Violence
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Name of Show #1

Description of Act	Physical	Verbal
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The exercise is having children watch graphic verbal and physical violence and then write about it. Are they trying to shed doubt on the police and sympathy for criminals?



Do a reality check when you watch your favorite movies or TV shows. Here are some questions to ask.

Reality Checks

WORKSHEET

15

	Yes	No
1. Is this what happens in real life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do I agree with this image?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is there a good reason for this violence? Is it trying to make a point, or is it just there to give viewers a safe thrill?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
4. What would be the consequences of this violence in real life?		
<hr/>		
Are these consequences shown?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are the good guys always right no matter what they do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the bad guys shown as deserving what they get, even if it's vigilante, or illegal violence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is this the best way to resolve this conflict?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. How else might this conflict be resolved?		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		

These questions solicit a child's personal information or family information out without parental consent as if it is a counseling session.

Describe two situations that made you feel very anxious, and check off the signs of anxiety that you experienced.

WORKSHEET
16

Dealing with Anxiety: Situations That Made Me Feel Anxious

Situation 1

Anxiety Signs (Check off those you felt in Situation 1.)

<input type="checkbox"/> "Butterflies" in the stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweating hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid heart beat	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaky voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty holding hands still
<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating

Situation 2

Anxiety Signs (Check off those you felt in Situation 2.)

<input type="checkbox"/> "Butterflies" in the stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweating hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid heart beat	<input type="checkbox"/> Dry mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaky voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty holding hands still
<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating

What is done with the information on this page? Again, personal information can be given out without parental consent. It's a tattletale page.

Everyone gets annoyed by one thing or another. List and rate the situations that made you angry this week. Be specific.

What Really Bugs Me WORKSHEET
18

Situation	Rate Your Anger		
	Low	Average	High
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION

There is enough information found in our review that we feel the school board and other parents need to see this curriculum and determine if it is still appropriate for Bay District Schools. There are more straightforward curriculum choices not written by and for mental health professionals that can teach the life skills found in the state requirements. BDS can be more transparent with parents regarding this curriculum, allowing them to grant informed consent or to opt out for their child.