

Social and Emotional Learning

Lesson Title: **When... I Feel... I Need..., Part 2**

Grade Level: **Middle School**

Project and Purpose

Students practice using “When...I feel...I need” statements to communicate their emotions and desires.

Essential Question

How does a “When...I feel...I need...” statement help us communicate better and avoid a tense situation?

Materials

- 3 completed A-Z charts for “Sad,” “Mad,” and “Happy” from previous session
- “When I...” Starter Statement sets

Teacher

1. Review the previous session and have students once again examine the charts full of emotion words. Have them pay close attention to the circled and boxed words on each chart and allow them to confirm the meanings of any of the words they do not readily recognize.
2. Tell students they will use these charts to specifically name emotions in the exercise today about a kind of “I” statement.
3. Say: If you think about it, we can only speak for ourselves and control ourselves; therefore, we need language to communicate our feelings and our needs. When in a conflict, telling the person we are upset with “You should...” or “you need to...” only makes the person angry or ready to argue: defensive. It’s hard to argue with someone who only speaks their own truth, and it can help calm down confrontational situations.
4. Explain that students will practice using this “I” statement: “When...I feel...I need...” to communicate feelings and what they really want. Show the examples (see provided handout/slide) and do the samples together.
5. Form groups of four, have the foursome sit in a circle and count off 1-2-3-4 in order. Tell students they will practice completing “When I...” statements in their small groups. They may use the emotion charts to search for a word that suits the situation, but they may also use other emotion vocabulary if they feel the statement needs something more suitable.
6. Give each group a set of four “When I...” starter statements and explain the order of the exercise:
 - Person 1 says the opening “When I...” statement; Person 2 completes the second part “I feel ___”, filling in the blank with what they consider an appropriate emotion; Person 3 completes the third part of the statement: “I need...,” explaining what the person can do to help solve the problem.
 - Start a second round with Person 4 saying the second “When I...” statement; Person 1 completes the “I feel...” phrase; Person 2 completes the “I need...” portion.
 - Third round: Person 3 starts a new opening statement; Person 4 completes the second part; Person 1 completes the third part.
 - Fourth round: Person 2 starts a new opening statement; Person 3 completes the second part; Person 4 completes the third part.

7. Have the groups select two of their completed statements to share with the class.
8. As the groups share their completed statements, discuss how the exercise worked within their small groups.
 - Does everyone respond with the same emotions?
 - Does everyone respond with the same needs?
 - Did people within your group have different ideas? How were those ideas expressed?
 - Were there any conflicts among the members of the group? How were the conflicts solved?
 - Did anyone think to use an "I" statement such as "When I give my suggestion and people say my idea is dumb, I feel infuriated; I need to take a deep breath and ignore the person." How could this have helped you?

Conclusion

Close with a discussion: How can this exercise help us communicate our needs better and help us avoid tense situations?

Notes

“When...I feel...I need...” Examples

- “When I don’t understand the assignment, I feel frustrated. I need to ask someone for help.”

Notice:

- “When I...” is followed by a situation that usually has a negative context.
 - “I feel...” is followed by a strong emotion word.
 - “I need...” is followed by an action the speaker should do to help themselves.
- “When I am called names, I feel angry. I need to ask a teacher to get involved.”
 - What is the situation?
 - What is the emotion?
 - What action does the speaker need to take?
 - How will this help?
 - Finish these “When I...” statements:
 - When I am called on and don’t know the answer...

- When I am late...

- When I am in a bad mood...

When I...Starter Statement Sets

- When I see my worst enemy...
- When I don't get enough sleep...
- When my teacher gets upset with me...
- When I get laughed at...

- When I don't like what's for lunch...
- When I am lied to...
- When I am in a fight...
- When I am misunderstood...
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- When I am insulted...
- When I already know what we are learning in class...
- When my head gets pushed in to the water fountain...
- When I trip over somebody's foot...

- When I spill my lunch tray...
- When I have something taken from me...
- When I see someone being treated unfairly...
- When I lose something...

- When I wake up cranky...
- When I don't get a chance to see my friend...
- When I miss my ride...
- When I notice people staring at me...

- When I do something embarrassing...
- When I don't get called on...
- When I notice other people cheating...
- When I get slammed in the hallway...

- When I am accused of doing something I did not do...
- When I wear the wrong clothes...
- When I have a ton of homework...
- When I am called names...

- When I say the wrong thing...
- When I don't have warm enough clothes...
- When I can't keep my phone...
- When I get called down to the principal's office...