



SOCIAL AWARENESS

Great Groups!

“We Can or the Trash Can!”



FACILITATOR NOTES

The DESSA indicators for Social Awareness (since you’re adding the indicators at the bottom of each lesson, I don’t think we still need a link to these – what do you think??) provide a roadmap for effective group interactions. As participants intentionally practice these skills of being respectful, contributing, sharing, cooperating, and engaging with others in a kind and friendly manner, they create group experiences that are enjoyable and productive.

The goal for this lesson, as with SEL instruction in general, is to make the teaching and practicing of these skills intentional, systematic, and transparent. To do this, we plan and deliver lessons that highlight specific positive behaviors and reinforce them on a regular basis over time, with the intention of promoting these behaviors, attitudes, and actions throughout the school day.



DURATION: 25 minutes

GOALS: [Teacher/Facilitator / Student/Participant](#)

MATERIALS:

- Small pieces of paper for writing individual words and phrases (approximately 10 per child, with more available if needed)
- Optional: Two hula hoops with paper signs to lay inside saying “helpful” and “hurtful”

PRE-TEACHING

- Teach the “Power Words” lesson, since it is the basis for this lesson. If possible, also facilitate the Power Words Book Marks lesson that is an extension activity for the main Power Words lesson.



MAIN POINTS: Connecting to prior learning, brainstorming, writing (15 minutes)

- Remind participants of the recent Power Words lesson.
- Brainstorm with participants about groups they’ve been a part of and what they like about being a part of a group.
- On small, separate pieces of paper, have participants write hurtful and helpful words that they have heard within our own group in the last few weeks.




SOCIAL AWARENESS



GUIDING LANGUAGE

Recently we talked about helpful and hurtful language, and you made your Power Words bookmarks. Today we're going to think together about what makes a group work well, and what makes it feel good to belong to a group.

What are some groups that people enjoy being a part of?

Listen to participant ideas, which may include: Cub Scouts, Brownies, playground buddies, community groups, sports teams, or faith communities.

Think about a group that you belong to. What do you enjoy about being in that group? What makes it work well and feel like a good group?

Participants may say things like: "good sportsmanship," "friendliness," or "good attitudes." Record participant responses on a brainstorm web with "What Makes a Good Group" written in the center.

Now each of us will write down some phrases we've heard in our own group during the last few weeks. They can be helpful words or hurtful words—write all that you can think of in the next few minutes. Write each word or phrase on its own small piece of paper. No names, just write the words or phrases on separate papers.



MAIN POINTS: Sharing and starting fresh (6 minutes)

- Gather participants in a circle to separate their papers into two communal piles: hurtful and helpful.
- Reflect with participants on the size of the piles, and how the comments might be influencing how well the group works together.
- Helpful comments represent how "We Can" work well together as a group.
- Hurtful comments are deposited into the Trash Can.
- Emphasis is on having a fresh start for the group.



GUIDING LANGUAGE

Next, please separate your pieces of papers into two piles: one for helpful words, and another for hurtful words.

After allowing sufficient time for participants to make their piles, bring them together in a group. It can be helpful to be seated in a circle on the floor. As they gather, have them put their pieces of paper into piles labeled "Helpful" or "Harmful." You can use two hula hoops to contain the piles, or write a sign to show students where you want each pile to go. Take time for them to notice the size of the piles.



SOCIAL AWARENESS

When we look at our piles and think about what we think makes a good group, what does this tell us about how we might help our group work better? When I look at all the comments in the Helpful pile, it makes me think, "WE CAN be a great group together." When I look at all the comments in the hurtful pile, it makes me think, "TRASH CAN!"

Bring over a wastebasket and throw the Hurtful words away. Wait until the participants are gone to throw the Helpful word slips away! Or, mount the Helpful words on poster board for a classroom display, or use them to make a border for a bulletin board.

As we know, we all need fresh starts sometimes. Let's make this a fresh start for the words we use with each other.



MAIN POINT: Reflection and closure (4 minutes)

- Provide an opportunity for private reflection and publicly sharing a positive intention.



GUIDING LANGUAGE

Think silently about one of the hurtful messages that you've heard or said, and make a pledge to yourself not to ever say that again. (Pause). Now, think of one of the helpful messages that you will try to say often, or would really like others to say. (Pause.) Turn to a neighbor and say those helpful words to them, and give them a high five if you'd like to add that!



NOTE: Having participants individually think about the hurtful words without speaking them aloud keeps that language out of the final discussion and puts the full focus of the group on positive, helpful language.



SOCIAL AWARENESS

Teacher / Student Goals

Social Awareness: The capacity to interact with others in ways that show respect for their ideas and behaviors, recognize our impact on them, and use cooperation and welcoming behaviors in social situations.

TEACHER: Social Awareness goals

My students/participants are able to:

- Say positive things about self and others
- Speak and act respectfully with all members of a group

I am aware of my individual students'/participants' abilities to:

- Notice and name language that is disrespectful, mean, or insulting
- Contribute to building and sustaining a positive group climate in which they neither use discouraging or disrespectful language, nor accept its use by others

The environment I create supports my students'/participants' growth related to:

- Developing their abilities to notice and name the power of words to help (encourage) and/or to hurt (discourage)
- Developing their abilities to notice and name their own ability to speak and act toward everyone in respectful, welcoming ways

Student/Participant: Social Awareness goals and demonstrated behaviors

Student/Participant will:

- Distinguish between encouraging (helpful) and discouraging (hurtful) words
- Contribute to openly using encouraging (helpful) language in the group

DESSA SOCIAL AWARENESS INDICATORS

Note: Highlighted indicators are directly addressed in this lesson.

I can:

Cope well with insults and mean comments
Get along with different types of people
Act respectfully in a game or competition
Respect another person's opinion
Contribute to group efforts
Resolve a disagreement
Share with others
Cooperate with peers or siblings
Forgive somebody who hurt or upset me