



Personal Responsibility

Problem Solvers

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

Problems will arise every day, regardless of how prepared we think we might be. Maybe you leave 15 minutes early to get to school only to discover that there is a huge accident, and you are going to be late anyway. Maybe you double and triple checked that you saved your homework on our tablet, only to open it at school and have everything deleted.

These types of problems will occur throughout our life regardless of how prepared we think we are. While we cannot avoid encountering these problems, we can make sure that we are handling them in the most effective way possible. Those who tend to avoid their problems will:

1. Push the problems onto someone else.
2. Create excuses about why something happened.
3. Ignore the problem all together.
4. Push problems off to the last minute and become too overwhelmed to solve them.

When we take problems head on, we can get to the root of the issue, have the confidence to ask for help, and seek out others who are able to be thought partners with us. A thought partner can be a friend, family member, teacher, or mentor who may have more knowledge in a specific area than us or is able to provide a different point of view to assist in solving a problem. Those who are problem solvers will:

1. Take a moment to assess the problem at hand.
2. Decide if it is a problem they can handle on their own, or if they need help.
3. Call on a thought partner if they deem necessary.
4. Make a plan for how to solve this problem, if it arises again.

This strategy reinforces the skills taught in the student-directed strategy ***Are You a Problem Solver or Problem Avoider.***

Key Takeaways:

- Students will understand the difference between a problem solver and problem avoider.
- Students will recognize when to take initiative to help solve a problem.
- Students will recognize the need for and importance of thought partners.

Duration + Materials:

- 20 minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Tendencies-** An inclination towards a particular characteristic or type of behavior.
- **Thought Partner-** Someone outside of your immediate circle who helps you to navigate and solve complex problems.



Activity:

1. Teachers will use the pre-teaching language to introduce how to be an effective problem solver.
2. Use the language to walk through the characteristics of “solvers” and “avoiders”.
3. Teachers can use the discussion questions to guide conversation about common problems students encounter and how they typically solve them.
4. Teachers can work with students to discuss who in their school community would be effective thought partners for students to reach out to in various scenarios.
5. Teachers can use their own scenarios, based on student answers, or use the scenarios provided under supplemental materials.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are common problems you encounter?
2. Do you typically try and solve problems alone or ask for help?
3. If you don't ask for help, what do you feel is preventing you?
4. Have you ever struggled to solve a problem?
5. How do you react when the problem isn't an easy one to solve?
6. Do you have someone you typically go to for help?

Supplemental Materials:

Scenarios:

- A student witnessed a bullying incident on the school bus.
- You want to try out for the swim team, but you are nervous about whether you are good enough.
- You got to school and realized you forgot your lunch at home.
- You are fighting with your friends and feeling lonely and upset.

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Provide students with opportunities to seek out thought partners.
2. Praise students for asking questions and encourage collaboration between students.