

LIFE SKILLS LESSONS FOR REMOTE LEARNING



OVERCOMING OBSTACLES®

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INTRODUCTION

Within Overcoming Obstacles' *Life Skills Lessons for Remote Learning*, you will find brief and engaging activities secondary school students can do while learning from home. These life skills lessons, which are presented in a recommended teaching order, will help your students identify their strengths, make better decisions, achieve their goals, develop a positive attitude, respect themselves as well as others, and handle the stress in their lives.

If you have questions or need help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at info@overcomingobstacles.org. And for additional free resources and materials, visit overcomingobstacles.org.

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IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS 1

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students own their strengths.

Have students reflect on why it's important to know their strengths (*because it helps us keep our self-respect, because it helps us make decisions*). Then, have them list their strengths and post them where they can see them every day. Explain that reminding ourselves of our special qualities will help us persevere when we're experiencing challenges.

IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS 2

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on their strengths.

Have students review biographical information of well-known, positive role models. Then, have them journal about what strengths they have in common with these people.

DECISION MAKING 1

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students learn about the decision making process.

Share with students the steps in the decision making process and point out that, sometimes, we may need to return to the beginning of the process or repeat a step several times:

1. Define the issue.
2. Gather information.
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Analyze the consequences.
5. Make the decision.
6. Consider feedback and evaluate.

After you have shared the six steps, provide the following scenario: your school board is trying to determine if students should attend school remotely. Ask your students to use the six steps to help the school board make the best decision.

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DECISION MAKING 2

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students analyze the decisions of a fictional character.

Have students watch an episode of their favorite television series. Have them write a paragraph about a decision the show's main character faced, whether the character considered all of their options, and what the character could have done differently.

DECISION MAKING 3

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on a past decision.

Have students write about a decision they're proud that they made. Have them describe how they made the decision, whether making the decision was difficult, and what consequences it had.

GOAL SETTING 1

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students identify future goals.

Have students write letters to themselves about where they want to be five years from now and the goals they must achieve to get there. Ask students to break down long-term goals into short-term and medium-range goals. Tell them to put their letters somewhere safe and to open them in five years.

GOAL SETTING 2

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students identify how they are spending their time.

Have students create a chart that divides their waking hours into 15-minute increments. Have them record their activities for one day. Have students journal about how they are spending most of their time. Are they accomplishing their daily goals? Is there anything they need to change?

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GOAL SETTING 3

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students learn how to prioritize tasks.

Have students interview a family member to find out how they prioritize tasks. Then, in their journal, have students write about the various ways this family member determines the priority of each task (e.g., time, ease, importance, values).

GOAL SETTING 4

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students prioritize tasks.

Have students list things they must accomplish tomorrow in the order they should be done. Have them revisit the list the following evening when they make another list for the next day. They should analyze whether their intended list was accomplished and if not, why.

GOAL SETTING 5

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students learn how to accomplish tasks.

Explain to students that all newspaper stories must answer these questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Have students make a list of a least five things they must do today and analyze them using these questions as a guideline.

GOAL SETTING 6

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on a past goal.

Have students write about a goal they had when they were younger. Did they achieve it? Why or why not? If they didn't achieve their goal, is it still worth pursuing? How could they redefine the goal to make it achievable?

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GOAL SETTING 7

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students identify the impact of technology on goal setting.

Have students list five inventions that help people finish work more quickly. To prompt them, have them compare a typewriter and a computer. Have students rank the inventions based upon their impact on everyday life and write a few paragraphs about how they help people achieve their goals more efficiently.

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE 1

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students learn principles of positive thinking and behavior.

Offer these steps on how to develop positive behavior:

- Positive behavior can be developed by forming positive habits.
- Think of yourself as successful and have positive expectations for everything you do.
- Remind yourself of your past successes.
- Never dwell on past failures, but learn from them and avoid repeating them.
- Surround yourself with positive people and ideas.
- Keep trying until you achieve the results you want. You only fail when you quit trying!

Ask students to write about experiences in which having a positive expectation produced positive results. Then have them create a “Positive Thinking” vision board or a series of photos and images using their favorite software or app, and display it where they can see it every day.

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE 2

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students examine a discouraging incident from a positive perspective.

Have students write a paragraph about an incident that felt discouraging when it was happening. Then, have them write a second paragraph examining the incident from a more positive perspective.

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DEVELOPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE 3

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students write about their feelings regarding the future.

Have students journal about the words “next year” identifying both positive and negative feelings about the year to come. Have students keep in mind that because the future is unknown, thinking about it can cause us to experience a mixture of emotions. Next, have them list three obstacles they have overcome in the past year, three skills or abilities they have used to overcome these obstacles, and how they can use these skills or abilities in the future.

RESPECT 1

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students will develop definitions of “respect” and “self-respect.”

Have students look up the definition of respect and self-respect and copy them into their journal. Then, students should write a one- or two-paragraph response to each of the questions below:

- What does it mean to respect others?
- What does it mean to respect yourself?
- Why is it important to show respect for your peers?

RESPECT 2

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on how people within a community show respect to each other.

Have students research various services available in their community (e.g., public libraries, food pantries, free health clinics). Ask students to write two or three paragraphs reflecting on whether we would have these services if we did not respect each other.

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HANDLING STRESS 1

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students will define stress.

Have students look up the word “stress” in the dictionary and note the definition with which they are most familiar. They should then identify situations in their lives that they find stressful and how they feel when that situation occurs (some common signals of stress are back, neck, or stomach pains; feelings of anger or frustration; retreating inside ourselves; talking loudly and/or quickly; and becoming quiet). Encourage your students to consider their emotional and physical reactions and how recognizing these can help reduce stress. Then, in their journal, have students write the following:

1. Their definition of “stress.”
2. Three physical and three emotional signs of stress.
3. A stressful situation in their life and how they can make it less stressful.

HANDLING STRESS 2

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students learn about and choose methods for managing or eliminating stress.

Remind students that stress comes from our reaction to a situation. Offer students these relaxation techniques that can help them gain control of themselves during times of stress:

- Slowly count backward from 10.
- Take three deep breaths.
- Stretch.
- Take a moment to gather yourself, think, and regain your calm.
- Call a friend and vent.
- Talk about the situation with someone you trust and ask for advice.
- Read a book, listen to music, or watch a television show that makes you happy.
- Make an action plan to avoid the stress—plan to study for your tests, for example.

Consider having your students keep a list of situations that make them feel stressed and what they do to relax (e.g., they got into trouble, and then called a friend to let off steam).

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HANDLING STRESS 3

15 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students research anger management tips.

Have students visit www.verywellmind.com/tentips-for-managing-conflict-tension-andanger-2330720 for anger management tips. When they are finished, have students select the tips they found most helpful and write about them in their journal.

HANDLING STRESS 4

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students will experience how writing can alleviate stress.

Inform students that writing is a great way to vent frustrations and clarify problems. Have students use their journals for this at least once each week.

HANDLING STRESS 5

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students will reflect on stressful events and how they responded to them.

Have students write in their journals a list of stressful events that have occurred during the week, assigning a stress level to each event from one to 10 (with 10 being the most stressful). Students should write about their responses to the events and if their reaction was helpful. If not, what techniques can they use in the future?

HANDLING STRESS 6

10 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Students will use writing skills to identify and respond to stress.

Have students keep track of the number of times they feel stressed in one week. Have them write what was happening when they became stressed and how their bodies reacted. Ask students to create a plan for avoiding these situations in the future.