



## ACTING IN FAVOR OF OUR COMMUNITY

### 1. TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

**Objective:** Students will be able to exchange ideas to find the solution to a problem applying active listening and assertive communication. They will also understand people's different perspectives.

#### WARM UP

Invite students to work in groups of three. Write on small pieces of paper some tasks that need to be done in teams. For example: *Make a list of ten sea animals. Write five sentences that describe environmental problems. Make a list of ten words that start with "F."* Give a piece of paper to each group and give them enough time to do the task. The first group that finishes has to shout *Hooray!* and wins a point. Then have teams exchange tasks. The winner is the group that earns more points. End this warm-up activity by reflecting on the importance of working as a team and how effective it is when we communicate empathetically with others.

#### STEP BY STEP

- A** Make sure every student has a copy of the printed material they will work with.
- B** Invite students to work in pairs and let them brainstorm all the problems they can find in their communities. If necessary, you can help students by writing some examples on the board. Ask students to write the ideas they brainstormed in the space provided in the handout and encourage them to choose a problem each.
- C** Once they have chosen a problem, invite them to write what they think about it and let them discuss a possible solution. Ask students to present their problems and their proposals to their partner and remind them that they have to communicate empathetically: one of them has to communicate assertively while the other uses active listening.

Don't forget to acknowledge your students when they are performing the activity empathetically so you can build a proper socio-emotional learning environment.

- D** Invite Students B to exchange roles and repeat the activity. Make sure they paraphrase what their partner proposed before sharing their own ideas. Finally, give them enough time to discuss what proposal they think is the best to solve the problems they presented.

#### WRAP IT UP

- E** *How fast did you find the best solution for your problem? Why? Do you think you would have found a better solution for your classmate's problem by yourself? Why? Why do you think it is important to make sure you understand what others say?*

Give them some time to discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Then ask some students to share their answers and discuss the questions as a class. Ask some volunteers to tell the group how they felt performing the activity. Remind them that social awareness is the ability to understand and respond to the needs of others. You could end this activity by eliciting ideas about the meaning of the phrase "two heads are better than one" and the importance of using strategies like active listening, summarizing, and assertive communication when solving a problem.

#### TEACHING TIP

Remember that you are working with teenagers and that you need to be their role model in order to establish the correct socio-emotional learning environment. The more you get involved with your students the more empathy you will build and they will be able to communicate easier. Don't forget to provide students with opportunities so they can practice how to listen attentively and how to communicate empathetically.

- IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.



## ACTING IN FAVOR OF OUR COMMUNITY

### 2. FINDING A WAY

**Objective:** Students will be able to handle their emotions and reactions when facing different opinions as well as to recognize how this affects their behavior towards others.

#### WARM UP

You will start this activity by showing your students some photos about global warming. Elicit from them what they think about global warming and how they think it has affected the environment. Ask students if they remember some news about global warming and let them share what they know with the class.

#### STEP BY STEP

- A** First of all, make sure students have all their material. Ask them to read the instructions carefully and invite them to ask any questions they have.
- B** Ask students to work in pairs and discuss the problems global warming has caused in their community. You can use the pictures as prompts. Have them write down their ideas in the space provided in the handout.
- C** Give students enough time to discuss the problems they wrote and have them rank the most important problem in their communities caused by global warming.
- D** Explain to them that now they are going to reflect on the ideas they shared, and that they are going to find a solution and make a proposal for each problem. Guide them to notice their emotions when the opinion of their partner is different from theirs. Give them time to discuss and make different proposals.
- E** Explain to the students that now they are going to focus on the problems and feelings that arose during the discussion. Let them discuss as a class how

important it is to have an open mind and not get upset when someone thinks differently. Encourage them to use the Guide to Resolving Conflicts so they can find the best possible solution. End the activity with a final reflection on how they felt when they listened to other points of view, and how important it is to show respect and tolerance to each opinion in order to solve a conflict or a problem.

#### WRAP IT UP

- F** *Did any conflict arise when you were trying to prioritize the main problem? Did you come to an agreement? Did you explain your points of view to your partner? Did your partner listen attentively to your arguments? When you were listening to a different opinion from yours, how did you feel? Do you think you tried to understand your partner's thinking from his / her point of view? Reflect on the way you behaved when you explained your point of view. Do you think your emotions affected your behavior? Did you try to fiercely change your partner's mind? Why or why not?*

Ask students to discuss the questions. Have some volunteers tell the group how they felt performing the activity and what they learned from each other.

#### TEACHING TIP

Managing emotions is an important skill in the process of problem solving. For teenagers, being able to develop this skill is a crucial step in their development because it enhances their social skills, the way they see the world, and their ability to listen to and comprehend other people. Some ways to teach students to manage their emotions and how to solve problems in groups is modeling and inducing constant reflection upon our daily reactions towards people and conflicts. Create a tolerant and open environment in class so students may feel free to share their feelings and opinions. Likewise, this will help the group dynamic grow and work better. It is really important that, as a teacher, you help your students understand how their emotions and feelings can influence their behavior and community.

- IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.



## ACTING IN FAVOR OF OUR COMMUNITY

### 3. A STORY OF SOLIDARITY

**Objective:** Students will be able to listen to and understand each other's feelings and accept them in order to create a community with a strong sense of comradeship and solidarity.

#### WARM UP

Start the activity by playing a game. Have students stand in a circle holding hands. Then drop a balloon into the circle and encourage students to tap the balloon into the air. Explain that they can tap the balloon using arms, hands, heads, shoulders, chests, or knees but they cannot lose their connection because they need to remain in the circle holding their hands. The aim of this game is to make students work cooperatively. If you want to make the game more difficult, you can add another balloon to the game. End this game by emphasizing the importance of working together.

#### STEP BY STEP

- A** Make sure every student has a copy of the printed material that they will need to work with.
- B** Start the activity by asking students to work in groups. Arrange each group into a small circle with a student in the middle. Ask each student in the middle of the circle to choose one of the characters from the second page of the handout. Give them time to read the story related to the character and invite them to role-play the situation. Remind the other students to listen to the story attentively and be as empathetic as possible.
- C** Once the student in the middle has finished role-playing the story, encourage the other students to offer a solution to the character's problem. Let them express freely so they can give reasons why that solution is the most helpful and kind.

**D** Make students repeat the activity until everyone has had the chance to be in the middle of the circle. It would be advisable if you participate actively in the activity offering other solutions. Remember your role as a teacher is to be a model students can imitate, so the more you get involved, the easier it is for them to develop the socio-emotional skill they are training for.

#### WRAP IT UP

**E** *How did you feel when you were the character in trouble? Why? Do you think your classmates understood your situation and offered help accordingly? Why? What do you think is important when helping others? Who was the person that gave the best solutions? Why?*

Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Give them some time and then ask them to discuss with another group. Ask some volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class. Ask them to share how they felt performing the activity, and if they felt that their classmates showed empathy and solidarity. End the activity by giving some tips for responding and helping with solidarity.

#### TEACHING TIP

Solidarity means working together to accomplish shared goals. Teaching in a cooperative learning environment allows students to work in groups to maximize their own and each other's learning. As a teacher, when you ask students to work in groups, you should focus on the way your students achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments. You must choose the size of groups, the way you make groups, how you arrange the classroom, and the tasks you will assign to your students depending on the activity performed. It is important to always emphasize cooperation in group activities. Don't forget to provide the necessary assistance to create individual accountability, participation, and cooperation.

**IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.



## ACTING IN FAVOR OF OUR COMMUNITY

### 4. UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify and understand other's backgrounds and experiences in order to discover how the diversity of perspectives can affect a community in a positive way.

#### WARM UP

Start the activity by telling students that they are going to play a game. This game is called *Make It Fit*. You will need a large piece of cardboard (if you don't have one, you can use a newspaper). Put the cardboard on the floor. The aim of the game is that everyone finds a place inside the area on the floor. It doesn't matter how they do it, but they need to fit in the area you set at the beginning of the game. The purpose of the game is that students work together to find a solution to the problem. Finish this game by reflecting on how important it is to consider others and how listening attentively to each other's ideas helps them solve problems better.

#### STEP BY STEP

- A** Make sure students have all their material.
- B** Ask students to work in groups of five and encourage them to read the instructions and look at the handout so they can get familiar with it. Invite students to choose one character and let them think about the argument in favor or against the situation, taking into account the context of the character they chose.
- C** Have students write their argument and the reason why they chose that viewpoint in the space provided in the handout.
- D** Once they have finished, let students present their arguments and give them enough time to discuss. Invite students to exchange ideas and give reasons to agree or disagree with their classmates. It is

important to encourage students to work in a cooperative learning environment so they can learn from other classmates' perspectives as well as build their own knowledge based on the experience and opinions of others. As they are performing the activity, walk around the classroom and monitor providing help when necessary.

#### WRAP IT UP

- E** Was it hard to reach an agreement? Why? *Did everyone respect each other's perspectives? Do you think the decision would have been the same if the committee was formed only by ecologists or merchants? Why? Is diversity important to help a community grow? Why?*

Ask students to discuss the questions. Give them some time and then ask them to discuss their answers in groups. Then, as a class, have students listen to all their classmates' answers and invite them to reach an agreement together. Remind them that understanding others is a life skill that they must learn and work on. Point out the importance of understanding different backgrounds and how they affect people's perspectives in order to learn to see things in a different way. End the activity by reflecting on how differences help a community grow.

#### TEACHING TIP

To get better results, encourage students to listen attentively to their classmates and think of what they can learn from others' perspectives. Explain that listening attentively means to set aside one's own thoughts, emotions, and intentions, and to consider the other person's contribution to a discussion or conversation. Once your students have mastered this skill, they will be able to interpret and understand the needs of others, show empathy to others, understand their classmates' perspectives, and engage in personal problem solving.

- IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.