

Unit 11: Lesson 1

What Do I Do Now?

PSYCHOLOGICAL COROLLARY: A person should try to accomplish goals independently before seeking assistance.

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will describe one reason why others expect us to try to solve problems on our own before we ask for help. For example, people don't mind helping when we do need help and when we express appreciation for their assistance.

SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

This lesson shows students that successful people:

- ASK FOR HELP
- EXPLAIN THEIR PROBLEMS
- EXPRESS APPRECIATION
- OFFER TO RECIPROCATE
- seek advice
- accept help and support
- identify and analyze their own problems

SOCIAL VOCABULARY

- "in a jam"

OTHER VOCABULARY

- tax forms
- IRS

SUGGESTED LESSON PLANS

INTRODUCTION

- Ask students to imagine that they have a math assignment. They haven't tried the problems yet, but they look very difficult. Ask the following:
 - What should you do first?
 - When should you ask for help?
 - How would your teacher react if you asked for help before you even attempted the problems on your own?
- Introduce vocabulary.

GROUP USE OF STUDENT WORKBOOK

(p. 110 in SOFT SKILLS)

- Read and discuss the method of solving problems described on the first page of "What Do I Do Now?"
- Ask students to read the cartoon about AI and explain why AI asked the woman for help instead of the man.
- Ask students to read about Sue's problem on the second page of this exercise. Ask students:
 - What is Sue's problem? (She can't complete her tax forms even though she read the forms and tried her best.)
 - Why might it be better for Sue to call George rather than Judy? (Judy is probably very busy, but George might have time to help.)
- After Sue solves her problem, what should she say to both George and the person at the IRS? (Thank you.)

FOLLOW-UP

- Ask students to volunteer to roleplay the following situation: You are at the IRS with the same problem Sue has. You waited in line to get help for over an hour, and finally someone on the IRS staff has called your name. Assume that:
 - You need to have people speak slowly and calmly, or you get confused and can't remember anything you've heard.
 - The IRS staff person is very busy, very tired, and under pressure to help as many people as possible. As a result, this person is talking far too fast.
- Ask students to roleplay a conversation in which they persuade the IRS person to speak more slowly (e.g., "I know that you have many people to help and that you are probably tired of hearing about the same problems again and again. I must ask that you be patient, though, since I can't understand things if people speak too fast. Would you mind if I ask you to slow down if things get too fast? No? Thank you!").

BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

To encourage students to *explain their problems*, *ask for help*, *express appreciation*, and *offer to reciprocate*:

- Have students roleplay the parts of AI and the other characters on the first page of "What Do I Do Now?" (AI, the lady who can give AI a jumpstart, and the mechanic who will fix AI's car).
- Have students who play AI explain the problem, describe what they've already done on their own, ask for help, express appreciation, and offer to reciprocate.
- Tell students to imagine that they are having problems with one of the following:

- ▶ Changing a flat tire
- ▶ Reading a train schedule
- ▶ Starting a gas lawn mower
- After students select the problem they'll work on, ask them to describe and/or model the following:
 - ▶ What they would do first to try to solve the problem on their own
 - ▶ Who might be able to help them solve the problem
 - ▶ How they would explain the problem, including a summary of what they've already done
 - ▶ How they would thank the person for his or her help
 - ▶ How they might offer to reciprocate (e.g., offer to do something they are good at to help the other person)

REVIEW

- Ask students to explain in their own words why people expect us to try to solve our problems before we ask for help. (People don't mind helping when we can't do something on our own, but when we ask for help before we've made any effort on our own, they get very frustrated.)
- Ask students to identify and apply or model the four steps they can use to get help with a problem, that is:
 - ▶ Do what you can on your own first.
 - ▶ If you still need help, ask a person who is not too busy to give you a hand.
 - ▶ Clearly explain the problem and your need for the person to talk slowly.
 - ▶ Thank the person and offer to reciprocate in some way.