

Skill Area(s):
 Feelings/Emotions
 Conversation
 Perspective Taking
 Behavior/Stress

S.O.D.A. Strategy

Level: beginner, intermediate, advanced

Goal: to provide a tool for students to use in a variety of problem solving situations

Materials needed: SODA chart, SODA can, scenarios to practice SODA

Activity:

This activity introduces a strategy that can be used in any problem solving situation. If you have not already explained to your group what an acronym is this is the time to do it. Give examples of other acronyms that they may be familiar with such as the one for their school name, USA, MN, DOL, etc.

- Have the SODA chart for each student &/or on the board. Review each letter and ask students to provide definitions for each word.
- Explain that this strategy can be used in any situation that a problem occurs.
- Brainstorm situations that this could be used.
- Possible situations/scenarios (use some that you know your students have experienced personally)
 - Someone bothering you at recess (taking something, pushing, etc.)
 - Calling you names
 - Coming late to class
 - Forgetting your homework
 - Forgot your key to get into your house
 - Missed the bus
 - Joining into a conversation or group
- Pick a scenario to role play. Break it down each step as it relates to SODA.
 - Ex. Someone taking your ball at recess
 - STOP – don't react just wait
 - OBSERVE – is the student alone or in a group, am I safe or in danger (we sometimes add the word OPTIONS to this step)
 - DECIDE/DELIBERATE – what could I do – what will happen if Irun, hit, cry, grab it back, find an adult
 - ACT – pick your best choice and act on it
- Talk about how you did this in slow motion time but in real life this strategy often happens quickly.
- Have students role play a variety of situations – have them talk out loud each step initially so all group members see the process – do this several times for different scenarios
- Continue role playing but have students act out situations w/o talking about each step. Have the other students talk about what the problem was and what the student decided to do about it.
- Be sure to take SODA breaks when necessary during any group activity. ‘I think we need a SODA break’ was said and the group stopped and decided what the problem was and then went through the SODA process.

Follow up suggestions:

- After talking about possible actions to take discuss what the possible consequences could be for each one. Ex- hit the other student might mean detention or suspension
- Be sure to role play situations that are not just negative behaviors – the kids need to learn to use this strategy in ALL life's little situations such as, my zipper is down, how to ask for help, how to ask someone on a date or for their phone number, introducing yourself to a new student or group, etc.
- Give students the SODA can to put on their desks, planner, etc. You can also write on the backs the words that are associated with each letter.



S



STOP

O



OBSERVE

D



DECIDE-DELIBERATE

A



ACT