

## **THE ACT GAME**

### **ACT: ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TRAINING**

#### **A Social Skills Training Program for Children Grades 3 - 6**

### **MODULE 1: ASSERTIVENESS**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Familiarize students with the operation of the ACT Game.
2. Increase discriminations among passive, assertive, and aggressive behaviors.
3. Increase assertive requesting skills.
4. Increase assertive refusing skills.
5. Increase awareness of problem-solving steps.
6. Increase goal clarification.

#### **RATIONALE**

Social competence involves cognitive, behavioral, and emotional factors. This first module in the social competence curriculum contains cognitive and behavioral factors. The cognitive factors are required to understand the learning process embodied in the ACT Game - a structured way to solve problems in a team setting. The cognitive factors are also used in being able to discriminate among aggressive, assertive, and passive behaviors. Acting out role-plays and adopting assertive postures encompasses the behavioral aspects of social competence.

Underlying the concept of social competence are two basic skills: social problem-solving and assertiveness. There are frequent opportunities to practice and receive feedback on these two skills. This first module sets the stage by explaining how the ACT Game works and tries to increase the likelihood that children will use assertive approaches in dealing with others.

## Session 1, Module 1: Playing the ACT Game

### TEACH

**Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach, the Trainer, and briefly describe the course.** It is helpful if they wear silly clothes or hats to catch the attention of the class and to signal that this time together is going to be fun.

**Example:** I am the Super Coach and this is the Trainer. (Or, I am the school counselor, some of you know me. For this class, I am the Super Coach.) We are here to play the ACT Game. In the ACT Game, we will practice social skills. We practice by having little skits called role-plays. You will take turns being actors and directors. We will explain things as we go along and help you when you need our suggestions. If we see you doing something that we appreciate, we will give you a token, like this one (hold it up) just to tell you, “Hey! That’s great.” We will often do a skit or role-play to start a session. These little role-plays tell us something about the day’s lesson. Here is an example.

**Step 2: Introduce the play.** The Super Coach plays the part of Sam and the Trainer plays the part of Ann. If there is only one adult present, a student could be asked to play the other part. The play is called “The Loan.” Introduce the characters, exaggerate voice tone.

**Example:** The name of our skit is “The Loan.” In this mini-play, the Super Coach plays the part of Sam and the Trainer plays the part of Ann.

### THE LOAN

SAM: I lent you my book, and now I need it back.

ANN: Oh, no!

SAM: Oh, yes!

ANN: But I am still using it.

SAM: I am sorry, but I have to have it back.

ANN: Let me keep it one more night.

SAM: I need it now. Tomorrow will be too late. I have to read a story in the book and write a book report tonight. I’ll be really upset if I don’t make it on time. You have the same assignment and need the book. I know that.

ANN: You are a rat.

SAM: Ask Charlene. I think she is finished with the assignment.

ANN: I hope you die in your sleep.

SAM: I don't like it when you are so angry with me.

ANN: Here is the stinking book.

SAM: Thanks.

THE END

**Step 3: Point out that the play deals with problem-solving and assertiveness.** The problem is that Sam needs the book and Ann wants it too. Assertiveness deals with how Sam gets the book back. Begin to use tokens to shape children's behavior and to model how tokens will be used during the ACT Game. (See Notes on Key Elements in Each Session for explanation of token use.) Give tokens to reinforce participation and elicit specific statements about what students liked and did not like about Sam's behavior.

**Example:** In the play, there was a problem. Sam wanted his book back, but Ann did not want to give it to him. We are going to learn how to solve the many problems that you experience in your everyday lives. Also, you are going to learn how to get what you want and stick up for yourself without hurting other people. What did you like about the way Sam got his book back? What didn't you like?

(Give tokens to students who participate – “Thank you for sharing what you liked about Sam's behavior.”)

**Step 4: Explain what the course in social competence is all about.** What does the course cover? Why is it important? Emphasize the range of topics that the class will work on, from friendship to controlling angry feelings.

**Example:** In school, you have taken many courses such as reading, writing, language, and math. This course is on how to deal with other people. We will cover things like: how do you get what you want; how do you deal with your feelings; how do you give and receive compliments; how do you make friends; what do you do when you feel angry; what do you do when others criticize you; and how do you solve problems between yourself and other people. It is a course for everybody. We live with other people – parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, friends, classmates, and strangers. We can all benefit from learning ways to be successful in our relations with others.

## PRACTICE

**Step 5: Give compliments.** Feeling good about oneself is a critical attribute for the competent person. There will be more in-depth sessions later about self-esteem (that is, feeling good about oneself). For now we want to demonstrate how to feel good about oneself and its importance by including it in the first session. If students are in small groups, have them give a compliment to the person sitting to their right. If you are introducing this as a whole class lesson, determine the most effective way to assure that every student has someone to compliment who is sitting near you. Use tokens to reinforce participation and delivery of compliments.

**Example:** It is really important that we like ourselves and appreciate others. So, I want you to compliment yourself and to say something good about the person sitting next to you.

First, tell us one thing you like about yourself. Then tell us something you like about the person sitting on your right (or across from you, or sitting in front of you). For example, a student might say, "I like the way I answered questions in class today." She turns and looks at Betty who is sitting to her right and says, "I like your new shoes."

(Initially, children will compliment external attributes such as clothes and hairstyle. With practice, children will learn to compliment specific acts and behaviors of others.) The teacher/trainer can model giving compliments by selecting students to compliment on their effective compliments and by giving tokens. "Arturo, you looked right at Stephanie when you said she was friendly. Looking at the person lets them know you really mean what you say.")

## THE GAME

**Step 6: Explain the ACT Game.** This game demonstrates how to get along with others and take care of oneself. Students will learn and practice new skills by role-playing as actors and directors. The actors will practice solving a problem, the directors will start the action and give feedback, and the Super Coach will help students along the way. Actors and directors switch roles to give everyone a chance to practice. Practicing comes in the form of a role-play about the problem. The Super Coach will assign roles to the actors and tasks to the directors. There is a pattern to the feedback. First, directors ask the actors what they liked about what they did in the role-play. Second, the directors state what they liked and what they would change on their next role-play.

**Example:** Every time we have a lesson we are going to play the ACT Game. Like in football or basketball, we will have a Super Coach. The purpose of the ACT Game is to solve the problem that the Super Coach gives to you.

First, the class is divided into teams. Half of the team will be actors, and the other half

will be directors. There will be equal numbers of students on each team. The actors will act out a scene in which they are to solve a problem given to them by the Super Coach. The Super Coach can also give roles to the actors and tasks to the directors. Each director watches for something different. For example, directors observe eye contact, voice level and tone, posture, and gestures of the actors.

When the scene is over, the directors will give feedback and make suggestions for the next role-play. The directors will ask the actors what they liked about the way they acted in this role, and what they would do differently next time. Then, the directors tell what they liked and what they would change for the next role-play. I will be the Super Coach. My job is to help you learn how to solve problems. When I think it would help, I will give you some ideas about what to do. We will switch every once in a while. Everyone will have a chance to practice solving a problem.

Before we can play the ACT Game today, we need to learn a little more about problem-solving. Then we will have a small group act while the rest of us observe. In the next session, we will divide into groups and have a chance to act and direct. I think you are going to enjoy acting and directing while you learn about social skills.

**Step 7: Explain the steps in problem-solving.** Problem definition, goal clarification, alternative setting, evaluation of alternatives, implementation, and feedback are the problem-solving goals.

**Example:** What do you do when you try to solve a problem?

In good problem-solving, there are some steps that you take. I will write them on the board.

DEFINE THE PROBLEM.  
SET A GOAL.  
MAKE A LIST OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS.  
EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES.  
SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE AND IMPLEMENT IT.  
EVALUATE HOW YOU DID.

Something is wrong. What is it? This process is defining the problem.

Setting a goal means how you want this situation to end.

How many different ways can you think of to fix the situation? That is what it means to generate alternatives.

What are the consequences of doing these alternatives? How would you actually perform the one you chose?

**Example of an initial whole class discussion on problem-solving:** Your friend borrowed \$3 to go to the school store. It was your lunch money for the next 2 days. The next day she does not give it back. What is the problem?

(Student: you will be hungry.)

OK, there is no money for lunch. What do you want to do about it? That will be your goal.

(I want to yell at her.)

(I would tell the teacher.)

These sound like solutions. We call solutions, alternatives. But we still do not have our goal. Should our goal be to get back at her or to eat?

(I would want to get lunch, first, then get my money back.)

Is that an important goal, to get some lunch?

(Yeah.)

OK, now how do we get our goal?

(You could borrow from the lunch fund.)

Umhm, what else?

(You could tell the teacher and he could get your lunch money back.)

Any more alternatives?

(I would take her lunch. She took my money, so I would make her give me her lunch.)

OK, what else?

(Well, you could borrow some lunch from different kids.)

These are all alternatives or possible solutions. Good.

Figuring out the consequences means deciding what would happen if we acted on any of these solutions. For example, what would happen if we yelled at our friend? Would that help us meet our goal of getting some lunch?

(No, it would just get us in trouble for yelling in the class.)

That is one consequence. What might happen if we borrowed from the school lunch fund?

(You would have to take a note to your parents that you owed money and they would ask what happened to your lunch money, and then you would get in trouble.)

Good example. We are doing a good job of finding alternatives and what the consequences of the alternatives might be.

The last step is deciding what we want to do and doing it. In this class, we will practice lots of ways to solve problems and we will learn how to follow these steps. First, let us see if we can find some other problems that children have.

**Step 8: Identify some typical problems.** Give examples from the following areas: friendships, home, school, and stores. Ask the students to add a few to the ones provided.

**Example:** What is a problem? Here are some examples.

From home - You borrowed your sister's sweater and got it dirty.

From school - The children are so noisy that you cannot pay attention to your work.

From friends - Your friends want you to go to the park when your mom said to stay home.

From stores - Your mother sent you to a store for a specific brand, but you can't find it.

Let's hear your ideas. Can someone give me an example of a problem at home?

Can someone give me an example from school?

What about friendships?

What about stores?

(Use tokens to reinforce participation, coming up with a variety of problems, and attentive behavior. For example, hold a token up and say, "I'm looking for everyone to participate. Who else has an example of a problem?" Call on a student. When the student has finished speaking, give him/her the token and say something like, "Thank you for giving us another example.")

We came up with lots of problems that children have. I have one we can use to practice the steps in problem-solving.

**Step 9: Provide a situation for which the students can clarify the goal and identify ways to reach the goal.** Try to involve the students as much as possible, but the value of this exercise is also modeling the process. Therefore, do not hesitate to provide assistance. Continue to use tokens throughout the ACT Game to reinforce student participation and targeted behaviors.

**Example:** Let's say your mother is waiting in the car while you run into the store for a carton of milk. You are late for a club meeting, and your mother is upset about it already.

After you get the milk off the store shelf, you find that every checkout line has 10 people in it. What do you want? What is your goal? Give me some ideas.

What do you think about this as the goal? To get the milk into the car as quickly as possible.

What are some ways to reach the goal? Be creative. During this time we try to think of as many ways as possible. Then we decide which are the most reasonable goals. As you call out the ways to meet the goal, I'll list ideas, on our big chart.

- Run out with milk under coat.
- Push people aside and reach the head of the checkout line.
- Pay someone in line so you can go ahead of him/her.
- Ask people standing in line if you can go ahead of them.
- Put the milk in the first person's basket and pay him/her when he/she gets through.
- Give up and tell your mother the store ran out of milk.

Some of these ideas may have negative consequences. For example, running out with the milk hidden under your coat might get you arrested. Which action does not have strong negative consequences? How about this one— ask people if you can go ahead of them. What do you think of that one? In our next lesson we will practice asking to go to the head of the line.

**Step 10: Divide the group into teams of 6 to 10 students with equal numbers of actors and directors.** Small teams provide greater learning opportunities because of increased participation, sharing, and dialogue.

**Example:** Throughout the course we will work in teams. Let me tell you who is on each team for today.

(Do not have all the aggressive children in the same group. Mix them with assertive children. Do not have all the passive children in the same group. Mix them mainly with assertive children. Have the lists of team members prepared before beginning the session.)

**Step 11: Give instructions for the ACT Game and start it.** Explain the rules of the ACT Game: it is a fun opportunity to act out different social situations. Students will be actors and directors. Actors will be many different kinds of characters and practice different ways to behave. Sometimes scenes will be funny and sometimes more serious. It will be fun to be an actor. Directors will start and stop the action and they will closely observe the actors. After the action, everyone will give feedback. That means they will tell what they saw happen. They will tell one thing they liked and one thing they would like to change or do differently. Instruct the directors on what to observe. Be very specific. One director will watch eye contact, one

will watch body posture or personal space, another will watch gestures, and one will listen for voice tone and quality. Set up the director's role in starting and stopping the role-play. Make it fun and interactive. Some groups may choose to use terms like, "Lights, Camera, Action." During the ACT Game, the Super Coach generously reinforces with tokens, shapes the student's or team's behavior, and reinforces approximations to desired behaviors. **Today, we will have one team demonstrate a role-play. The other students will observe, as if they are watching a fish bowl. Next session everyone will join in the ACT Game.**

**Example:** (after the rules of the ACT Game have been explained and students have a general knowledge of what to expect)

Here is the problem situation to work on and solve. You are in line at school and someone cuts in. Has this ever happened to anyone in here?

(Lots of hands go up.)

Looks like this is a big problem. When someone cuts in line what do you want to happen?

(I want them to go to the end of the line.)

Yes, that is something we might want to happen. We call that a goal. What are some other goals we might have, you know, some other things we might do?

(We could tell the teacher.)

Yes, what else?

(I would hit him, if he cut on me.)

That could be a goal, too. Anything else?

(If she is my friend, I might let her stay.)

(Select the team to role-play. Assign actors and directors roles.)

OK, these are all goals someone could have. A goal is a choice of what we want to happen. Let us act this out. For the first role-play, I will choose the goal. Later on, the actors will help choose the goals.

First, we will assign the roles. Let me tell you who will be the first set of actors. These students will be in the line. Mari will be the one who cuts, and she will cut in front of Caleb. The rest of you will be the directors. I want you to carefully watch the actors and how they behave.

Caleb, your goal is to ask Mari to go back to her own place in line. Do you have any question about how to do that?

(No, I can ask her.)

OK, let's act it out. When we're ready, directors say, "Lights, Camera, Action!"

(After the students act out the situation for 1-2 minutes, shape giving feedback by asking clear and specific questions.)

Caleb, what did you like about your acting?

(I liked that I asked Mari to get out of the line.)

OK, what would you do differently if we role-played again?

(What do you mean?)

Is there anything about your acting that you would change?

(Yeah, I would ask her faster.)

You would not wait so long.

(Right.)

Great. (Give a token.) I like how you told us what you liked and what you would change about your performance. Stuart, I saw you nodding while Caleb was talking. I could tell you were really listening to him. (Give Stuart a token.)

OK, now for the directors. Raul, what is something you liked?

(I liked the way Mari moved when Caleb asked her to.)

What would you suggest that Caleb do differently?

(I think he should ask her as soon as she cut in the line.)

Yes, that is what Caleb said, too. Thank you for telling us what you liked and did not like. (Give a token.)

Did any directors see where Caleb or Mari were looking?

(I did. Mari was not looking at Caleb.)

Where was she looking?

(She was looking at Maria, her friend in the line.)

Great. I really like that you noticed exactly where Maria was looking. (Give a token.)  
In fact, that is what the director's job is. The directors watch certain ways the actors behave.

Jesse, what did you see that you liked?

(I liked that Maria moved.)

OK. Is there anything you would change about how Caleb asked Maria?

(No.)

Thank you, Jesse, for telling us what you saw. (Give a token.)

Caleb, I liked that you looked at Maria when you told her to move. (Give a token.)

Next time instead of asking her to get out of line, ask her to go back to her own place in line. Let us role-play this again. First, I am going to give each director a job. Let's pretend each director is filming the scene. You are going to point your camera at one part of the action.

Susie, you watch how Caleb is standing. Is his back straight or hunched over? Where are his arms, at his side, or crossed? Got that?

(OK.)

Eduardo, you watch the eyes. Where are Caleb's eyes looking? What about Mari? Do they look at each other or away, or at someone else?

Stuart, listen carefully to how their voices sound. Is Caleb's voice soft or loud, or angry or normal?

Katy, listen carefully for exactly what Caleb asks Mari to do.

After the role-play is over, I am going to ask the directors to tell one thing they liked and something they would change. I want you to tell me only about the part you watched. Ready?

(Students answer yes.)

OK, directors, start the action.

(Lights, camera, action!)

When the scene is over, ask Caleb first, and then the directors, to give specific feedback. Each person only comments on one thing he/she liked and one thing he/she would do differently. Reward the students with tokens, commenting on the different qualities of their feedback – it was specific, it was about the part they were assigned to watch, it was a suggestion for change rather than a criticism. Give your feedback. Then, reward the actors for their efforts, with tokens and a positive comment.

The time may be up at this point. If not, you could let all the teams practice a situation. Follow the directions for switching roles below or skip to Review and Closing.

**Step 12: Give new situations and switch roles.** As time permits, let new actors try to solve other problems. After a while, switch so that the actors become directors, and the directors become actors. Stay actively involved as Super Coach, shaping the roles of actors, directors, and giving of feedback.

At this time, the focus is on selecting a goal and role-playing ways to achieve that goal. Assist the students in the goal selection process for each new situation.

New Situations (Place situations in a bowl or bag. Randomly select one from the bowl for teams to role-play or choose a problem appropriate for your students.)

Have teams define the problem, set a goal, select alternatives, and role-play some of the alternatives as previously described. Give feedback and role-play again.

- You forgot to give your mother a Mother's Day card. She is hurt.
- Your friend is upset with you but will not tell you why.
- The teacher will not let you sit next to your friend.
- Your dad works at night and sleeps all day. You have to be totally quiet all the time.
- Your mother wants you to babysit your little sister. You cannot stand doing it.
- Your homework is very boring.
- All of your friends can stay out later in the afternoon than you can.
- The teacher blames you for shouting in the hall.
- You lost your lunch money.
- You left your homework on the kitchen table.

## **REVIEW AND CLOSING**

**Step 13: Obtain feedback from the teams and close the session.** Use the same feedback approach to encourage sharing and learning from each other. Use tokens.

**Example:** Now that the ACT Game is over for today, I want the teams to share with each other what it was like to role-play. What was it like to be an actor or a director? Tell us what you liked about the way your team and you played the ACT Game, and what would you do differently if you could do it again.

**Step 14: End the session by congratulating, summarizing, and giving a view of the next session.**

**Example:** Everyone did a good job today. You learned about setting goals to solve problems. You practiced role-playing and giving feedback. That is a lot of work for one day. Thank you for participating and working hard. Let us take a minute and tell everybody on your team that you appreciated what they did, too.

In the next lesson we will learn about the differences among acting aggressively, assertively, and passively.

END OF SESSION 1, MODULE 1

## Session 2, Module 1: Understanding Assertiveness

### TEACH

**Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach, the Trainer, and the content.** The Super Coach and Trainer can wear outfits from assertive sports like football, basketball, and soccer, or hats from a local sports team. The lesson is on understanding assertiveness. At every opportunity, model assertive behavior and reinforce the student's assertiveness through the use of tokens.

#### Example:

COACH: I am the Super Coach and this is the Trainer. At our first session we mentioned that today we would tackle how to be assertive.

TRAINER: I want to get going. I want the students to like this class. I want the students to learn something in here. I do not want you to go too slowly.

COACH: Why are you saying "I" this and "I" that?

TRAINER: This session is on being assertive. So, I am practicing.

COACH: Practicing what?

TRAINER: Assertive people know what they want and say what they want. I am practicing making statements about what I want.

COACH: OK, I get it. I want to get started, too.

**Step 2: Have the students say something positive about themselves.** Building self-esteem is critical to the development of social competence. If children do not think highly of themselves, they are unlikely to behave in an assertive fashion.

**Example:** Let us go around the room and have each student tell us one thing he or she is proud of. For example, the student might say, "I am proud of being a kind person."

**Step 3: Introduce the play.** In this mini-play, the Super Coach plays Billy Big Mouth and the Trainer plays Tiny Tim. The play illustrates aggressive and passive behavior. The play is used to catch the students' attention.

**Example:** We are going to do a little play. In this play, the Super Coach is Billy Big Mouth and the Trainer is Tiny Tim. The play is called "Who has the Answers?" The scene takes place during a test in the classroom. This play shows you how not to behave.

**Step 4: Do the play.** Make it fun. Exaggerate gestures, voice tone, posture, and personal space to clearly demonstrate the non-verbal differences in passive or aggressive behavior.

WHO HAS THE ANSWERS?

BILLY BIG MOUTH: Give me your paper!

TINY TIM: Don't hit me.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: Listen, stupid, I asked you for your paper.

TINY TIM: I didn't do anything to you.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: Just give me your paper. I want to see your answers on the test.

TINY TIM: If the teacher catches me, I'll be in big trouble.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: If you don't give me the answers, you will be in even bigger trouble. After school I will hang you upside down on the fence.

TINY TIM: Please don't hang me upside down.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: I will enjoy every minute of it.

TINY TIM: You are going to beat me up, if I don't give you my answers.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: I'm going to fail this test.

TINY TIM: Well, don't copy my paper. I failed the last test myself.

BILLY BIG MOUTH: OK. OK. I guess next time, I'll have to study.

THE END

**Step 5: Explore how the play demonstrates passive and aggressive behavior.** Ask the students who was passive and who was aggressive. Ask them what they observed in the play. How did the actors stand? Were their shoulders slumped or straight? What did their voices sound like? Where were their eyes looking? Focus on non-verbal behaviors -- voice tone, gestures, and body language that goes along with passive or aggressive behavior. This models the kind of feedback that directors will be asked to give actors in later role-playing situations.

**Example:** We have not yet discussed what aggressive, assertive, and passive behaviors look like. From this play, can you guess?

Who was aggressive and who was passive?  
What did Billy Big Mouth and Tiny Tim do to make you think that?  
Try to be very specific. How was Billy Big Mouth standing? Was he close or far away from Tiny Tim?  
How did Tiny Tim's voice sound?  
Where were Tiny Tim's eyes looking?  
What about Billy Big Mouth's eyes?

**Step 6: Explain the terms passive, assertive, and aggressive.** Use many examples. Explain that there are times when being aggressive or passive is not a wrong thing to do.

**Example:** There are three ways you can relate to other people: passively, assertively, and aggressively. One way to think of someone who is passive is to think of the word shy. Passive people put everyone else first. They say they don't mind when they do. They say they are fine when they are angry. They don't want people to notice them. They want to disappear. Passive people invite others to step all over them. A passive person would let someone cut in line and not say anything.

Aggressive people put themselves first. One way to think of them is mean. Aggressive people say, "Gimme." They crowd in first. They are angry a lot. They feel like punching someone. They act like they should get whatever they want. Aggressive people often take, take, take. Aggressive people often make other people feel uncomfortable. An aggressive person would cut in line. Or he/she might yell at or hit someone else for cutting in line.

Assertive people consider what other people need and what they need. They try to consider other people as well as themselves. One way to think of them is talking straight. Assertive people share what they have. They can express how they feel in a non-hostile fashion. An assertive person would ask the line-cutter to move back to his/her own place.

People show you which type they are by what they say and by their actions. For example, a shy person might avoid looking you in the eye and might say everything is fine when he/she is angry inside. An aggressive person might shake her fist at you and scream, "I want it, I want it!" On the other hand the assertive person would look you in the eye and say, "I don't like it when you yell at me."

There are times when being aggressive or passive is the thing to do. If a stranger is trying to pull you into his car, be aggressive. If someone is chasing you with a bat, be passive—run away as fast as possible.

## **PRACTICE**

**Step 7: Ask the students to identify the verbal and non-verbal signs of passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors.**

**Example:** I want you to give me examples of how passive, aggressive, and assertive people would speak and behave. Let's start with a passive person.

(Have three pieces of chart paper or overhead transparencies with the headings passive, aggressive, and assertive. List the non-verbal behaviors.)

| <u>Passive</u>          | <u>Aggressive</u> | <u>Assertive</u>      |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Shy                     | Angry             | Standing tall         |
| Scared                  | Yells             | Looking at people     |
| Talking low             | Stamping          | Smiling               |
| Looking at floor afraid | Hitting           | Asking                |
| Embarrassed             | Words hurt others | Saying no             |
| Hunched over            | Mean              | Feels good about self |
| Quiet                   | Out of control    | Relaxed               |
|                         | Gets too close    | Confident             |
|                         | Glares            |                       |

### Passive

How would a passive person ask for something?

First of all, the passive person might not even ask for something he/she wanted. The passive person might be very awkward in asking, and might pause and stutter.

Asking in an apologetic or whining way is another sign. "Do you mind, is it OK, for me to come home at 4:00?" The passive person might ask for much less than was wanted.

What kind of eye contact would the passive person have?

That is right. The passive person would look at the floor.

Would the passive person speak in a loud voice or a very soft voice?

Soft is right. What kind of gestures? All tight and close to the body.

Guess what the passive person's posture would be like? He/she would probably stand hunched over.

Have you gotten the idea about how a passive person would speak and act? I am going to act in two different ways with my body. You tell me which one is the passive one.

Right, when I was looking at the floor and my hands were folded across my chest, I was being passive.

### Aggressive

How would an aggressive person ask for something?

You are right. The aggressive person would yell and demand whatever he/she wanted. He/she would be a “Gimme” person.

The aggressive person’s voice would be loud and harsh. It is more than likely that the aggressive person would be irritated or angry.

How close would the aggressive person get? Right up in your face is the answer.

The aggressive person would swing his arms around, point, and make threatening gestures. Her posture would be leaning forward with clenched fists.

Can you picture the way the aggressive person would speak and act?

### Assertive

Now, we come to the assertive person. The assertive person is clear about what he/she wants for himself/herself and what he/she wants from other people.

The assertive person expresses his/her wants. How would an assertive person ask for something?

Let’s say there was a big mess, and the assertive person wanted you to clean it up. What would that person say? “I would like you to clean up this mess.”

The voice would be loud enough to understand. The speech would be clear.

How close would they get? About 3 feet is a good guess.

What about the posture? Standing straight, hands loose but slightly raised. No wild gestures. Can you picture this person in your mind?

I will ask someone to clean up their mess in different ways. See if you can tell when I am being passive, aggressive, or assertive. (Act out the roles, exaggerate the gestures, and act out the nonverbal behaviors. Help students identify the behaviors that go along with each communication style.)

**Step 8: Have each student practice saying, “May I go in front of you?”** Remind the students of the situation where the student was buying milk and the lines were long. Have the students form a long line facing the Super Coach. (If there are two adults, students can form two lines.) The Super Coach will play customers in the store and stand in front of each

student. The student will say to the Super Coach, “May I go in front of you?” The Super Coach will move on to the next student until everyone has had a chance.

**Example:** Please form a long line facing me. I will be a person in the store where the student was buying milk. Remember that situation. The student had to get out of there immediately. Mother was waiting in the car, but there were long lines at the check-out counters. The student was going to ask the other people in line to go first. I want you to practice asking that. I will come up and stand in front of you. You say to me, “May I go in front of you?” Each student will have a chance.

## **THE GAME**

**Step 9: Divide the group into teams of 6 to 10 students with equal numbers of actors and directors. Give instructions for the ACT Game and start it.** Small teams provide greater learning opportunities because of increased participation, sharing, and dialogue. This means to provide the team with a situation to work on; instruct the directors in what to look for; instruct the directors in starting and stopping a role-play; switching roles; and giving feedback. During the ACT Game, the Super Coach reinforces with tokens, shapes the student’s or team’s behavior, and reinforces approximations.

**Example:** These are your teams for today.

Here is the problem situation to work on and solve: You promised to clean up your room by 4:00. You get absorbed in watching TV and forget. It is 4:05 and your mother comes home from work. She will be very angry if she sees your room dirty and messy. To begin with, let me tell you who will be the first set of actors. This student will be the one who promised to clean up the room. This other student will play the mother, and the third student can be a brother or sister.

The first step the actor takes is to tell the team what his/her goal is. Then come up with at least three actions you could take, and act one out. The directors say when to start the role-play and when to stop it.

The directors need to watch closely. Each director should have something to watch for. Those things might include posture, gestures, voice loudness, voice quality, asking for what is wanted, saying ‘no,’ dealing with feelings. When the scene is over, each director will give feedback to the actor who was picked. First, the actor will be asked what he/she liked about the performance and what he/she would do differently. Then the director will share with that actor his/her own impressions of what he/she liked and what he/she would do differently.

Later, we will have new actors try to solve other problems. After a while, we will switch so that the actors become directors, and the directors become actors.

Let's go ahead and start the role-play.

**Step 10: Give new situations and switch roles.** As time permits, let new actors try to solve other problems. After a while, switch so that the actors become directors, and the directors become actors. Stay actively involved as Super Coach, shaping the roles of actors and directors, and giving feedback.

New Situations (Place situations in a bowl or bag. Randomly select one from the bowl for teams to role-play or choose a problem appropriate for your students.)

1. You bragged at school about getting a job cutting yards. Now the people gave the job to some other kid.
2. You were not holding on tightly to the family dog and it ran away.
3. You broke the blade on your father's saw.
4. The teacher says you have to stay after school, but you are supposed to meet your mother after school.
5. The math group you are in is too easy. You want something harder.
6. The teacher wants you to read your paper to the class, but you think you can't talk loudly enough.
7. Your mother is sick and cannot come to the parent conference.
8. The girl in front of you told the teacher that you poured water onto her hair. You did not.
9. The homework you were given is much too hard.
10. Your friend George was caught stealing. Whenever he calls, your parents say you are not at home.

## **REVIEW AND CLOSING**

**Step 11: Obtain feedback from the teams.** Use the same feedback approach to encourage sharing and learning from each other. Use tokens.

**Example:** Now that the ACT Game is over, I want the teams to share with each other what happened as you worked on the problem. Tell us what you liked about the way your team approached problem-solving and what you would do differently if you could do it again.

**Step 12: End the session by congratulating, summarizing, and giving a preview of the next session.**

**Example:** Everyone did a good job today!

(Tokens should have been given all along to reinforce and encourage desired behaviors. Give tokens to students who share what they appreciated about their team and how they

worked together.)

Let's take a minute and tell everybody on your team that you appreciated what they did in the problem-solving. Today we learned about passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors, and we practiced being assertive. We learned more about how to play the ACT Game, and we played it also.

In the next lesson, we will learn how to make requests of other people.

END OF SESSION 2, MODULE 1

### Session 3, Module 1: Making Requests

#### TEACH

**Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach, the Trainer, and the content.** Again, role-plays, practice, instructional presentations, and mini-plays are employed. The Super Coach and the Trainer may wear silly clothing to catch the attention of the students and to communicate that the lesson will be fun. The session is designed to increase the students' skill of making requests assertively.

#### Example:

COACH: We are going to have another session about dealing with other people. Last time, we worked on learning the differences between being passive, aggressive, and assertive.

TRAINER: I want to get going. I want an apple. I want to have fun. I want to borrow 10 cents.

COACH: Why do you keep saying "I want" this and "I want" that?

TRAINER: This lesson is about asking for something assertively. Using "I want..." is a good way to do it.

COACH: Do you know what I want?

TRAINER: No, I do not know what you want.

COACH: I want you to sit down and be quiet. Then we can get started.

TRAINER: That's a good idea.

COACH: Thank you. We also play the ACT Game. Remember? Your team tries to solve a problem by role-playing. Some of you will be actors and others will be directors. Let's have fun again.

**Step 2: Have the students give each other compliments.** Without high self-esteem, it is difficult for a student to have social competence. Part of self-esteem is related to what students tell themselves. Being able to use self-compliments is important. Furthermore, being able to compliment others is a critical social skill.

**Example:** Before we get started, I want you to give yourself a compliment and to give a compliment to the student sitting on your right. In here, it is OK to brag about yourself. For example, a boy might say, "I am good at having fun. Bill, sitting next to me, is a great baseball player." So, go ahead and give yourself a compliment and give one to the person

next to you.

**Step 3: Introduce the mini-play after a quick review of assertiveness.** The mini-play is on making a request. Point out that last time the students learned the differences among being passive, aggressive, and assertive. Use charts you made with the students for this review.

**Example:** Let's review what we learned last time about being passive, aggressive, and assertive. Look at our charts and see if you can give an example of a person in each category. Here are some examples: The passive person does not look you in the eye. The aggressive person gets close and glares at you. The assertive person stands about 18 inches away and maintains eye contact.

We are going to see a mini-play. There are two scenes. In one scene, the student shows you how to make an aggressive request, and in the other scene, she shows you how to make an assertive request. The Super Coach will play the teacher who knows it all. In the first scene the Trainer plays Betty, and in the second scene the Trainer plays Betty Bright.

**Step 4: Do the two mini-plays.** Exaggerate the non-verbal behaviors. Make the role-play fun.

#### ASKING THE TEACHER: 1

TEACHER: Betty, what is two times three?

BETTY BLOOP: Six.

TEACHER: That is the wrong answer. The right answer is six. Five is not the right answer.

BETTY BLOOP: Yo, stupid. I said six. I didn't say five. Everyone knows that two times three is six. Take the wax out of your ears.

TEACHER: Go stand in the corner until you can talk better to me.

THE END

#### ASKING THE TEACHER: 2

TEACHER: Betty, what is two times three?

BETTY BRIGHT: Six.

TEACHER: That's wrong. The right answer is six. Five is not the right answer.

BETTY BRIGHT: (LOUDLY) Can we talk about this for a minute, Teacher?

TEACHER: What is there to talk about? You gave me the wrong answer.

BETTY BRIGHT: (LOUDLY) I know that two times three is six. I thought I said six. I want you to understand that I can do my math tables. Would you please give me another chance?

TEACHER: OK, what is two times six?

BETTY BRIGHT: (LOUDLY) Twelve is the right answer.

TEACHER: That's very good.

THE END

**Step 5: Ask students to determine which Betty was aggressive and which was assertive.** The mini-play clearly models the two ways of behaving. It also creates interest in the lesson and is fun.

**Example:** First, we saw Betty Bloop in action. Then we saw the way Betty Bright handled the situation with the teacher. Who made requests aggressively and who made requests assertively? What did Betty do that was aggressive and what did she do that was assertive?

**Step 6: Explain how to make a request.** Recommend one verbal behavior: "I want..." Recommend that non-verbal behaviors include standing up straight, eye contact, arms at side.

**Example:** How do you make a request? What are the words to use? The most important words are "I want."

What are the actions to use? Stand up straight, look the other person in the eye, and keep your hands and arms at your side - not waving up in the air.

Let's say you bought a T-shirt in a store, and after you paid for it, you found a hole in the T-shirt. What is your goal? To get a T-shirt without a hole. Who will play the clerk in the store? I go up the clerk and say, "I just bought this T-shirt. Here is my receipt. The T-shirt has a hole in it. I want a T-shirt without a hole in it. I really like this T-shirt. Please give another one."

When I get a new T-shirt without a hole, I say, "Thanks a lot. That really pleases me." I want to thank the person who played the clerk.

## PRACTICE

### **Step 7: Divide the class into teams of 6 to 10 students. Practice making assertive requests.**

Pair aggressive with assertive students, and shy with assertive students, and assign an equal number of actors and directors.

**Example:** After some more practice of assertive requests, we are going to play the ACT Game. First, I want to divide you into teams. Today's teams are as follows: within each team are actors and directors. These groups will be actors, and these groups will be directors. Each actor will face another actor and complete this sentence, "I want you to..."

The directors are to watch for signs of being assertive. Did the actor make a clear and direct request of what he/she wanted? What about eye contact, loudness of voice, tone of voice, posture, and gestures? Did the actor show the right space? First, the directors ask the actors what pleased them in their performance and what they would do differently. Then the directors give their own feedback. I will be Super Coach, giving suggestions, asking questions, and moving things along. Directors start and stop the action.

## THE GAME

### **Step 8: Prepare for and play the ACT Game. Assign situations, and identify actors.**

Review managing the feedback process. Select a problem from the bowl, identify a goal, select an alternative, and role-play. Super Coach and Trainer monitor role-play, give tokens, assist with feedback. Some assistance will also be needed for clarifying goals and alternatives at this stage.

**Example:** I will select a request situation from the bowl. The actors will select a goal and some alternative ways to reach the goal. The directors will start and stop the action and watch the actors' behaviors. We will give feedback at the end and then practice some more. Remember that feedback is very specific. Directors will tell one thing they observed that they liked and one thing that could be changed. After we role-play a few times, we will switch roles and directors will become actors.

### New Situations

- The classroom is noisy and you cannot study your lesson. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You want a new pair of really cool shoes. You do not think your parents will buy them and you do not have enough money.
- You are standing with a group of your classmates. One student removes another student's chair. That student is about to sit down, but the chair isn't there. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?

- You came back to school after being sick, but you have forgotten your absence slip. Your father works at night and you don't want the office to call him during the day because he will get angry. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You are doing a group project and not all the group members are doing their part on it. You are carrying the load. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You are in a reading group that is going too slowly, and you want to be in a faster one. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You were playing around and tore your new pants that your mother bought for you. What is your goal?
- Your mother says you watch too much TV and wants to cut the amount of time you can watch it to one hour per day. What is your goal?
- A new girl came to class. Everyone ignores her. You think that's wrong.

## **REVIEW AND CLOSING**

### **Step 9: Obtain feedback from the teams.**

**Example:** Now that you have finished working on problem-solving, we want to know what your experience was like. I want each team to tell us what you liked about what you did and what you would do differently next time.

### **Step 10: End the session with a summary and compliments.**

**Example:** Today we practiced being assertive when you had to make a request of someone. We also played the ACT Game and solved a problem. You decided what your goal was and what you could do to reach it. Then you practiced asking someone for some thing and problem-solving. You really did a good job today. We have a great bunch of actors and directors in here.

Let's go around the room with each person completing the sentence, "I am most assertive when..."

The next time we meet, we will work on being assertive in situations where we want to say "no" - to refuse.

END OF SESSION 3, MODULE 1

## Session 4, Module 1: Refusing Requests

### TEACH

**Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach, the Trainer, and the session.** This session emphasizes refusing assertively, rather than aggressively by being obstinate, hostile, and provocative, or passively by postponing and sabotaging. Refusing assertively is direct and based on the “I” framework.

#### Example:

COACH: We are going to have another session about dealing with other people. Last time we worked on learning how to make requests of other people. This time we are going to practice refusing people. We also played the ACT Game. Let’s have fun again.

TRAINER: Wait a minute.

COACH: I know what you are going to do. You are going to start singing “NO,” because today’s session is on refusing.

TRAINER: No, I am not going to practice “no.” I don’t want to do this lesson. I know how to say “no.” See: no, NO, NO, No, no.

COACH: Please stop saying, “No.”

TRAINER: But today’s lesson is about how to say “no.” You said so.

COACH: I agree, but there are some good ways to say “no” and some not-so-good ways. Please help.

TRAINER: Well, OK. I guess I will help out.

COACH: Thank you.

**Step 2: Have the students give each other compliments.** Building self-esteem is always important.

**Example:** Before we get started, I want you to give yourself a compliment and to give a compliment to the student sitting on your right. In here it is OK to brag about yourself. Tell us what you are proud of. “I am proud of …” For example, a boy might say, “I am proud of being on the first team.” Also tell us what the person sitting next to you is good at. “Maria is a good dancer.” So, go ahead and give yourself a compliment and give one to the person next to you (across from you, etc.).

(Trainers may use their judgment throughout and modify as necessary for the group. The important thing is the practice through structured role-play.)

**Step 3: Review the concepts from the last session.** Ask the students to answer questions about being assertive.

**Example:** Let's review what we learned last time. I am going to ask you some questions. It is OK to guess at the answers. This is not a test. It is a way to refresh our memories and check our understanding. Here we go.

1. Which is assertive? "Give me that money!" or "Please give me the dollar that I loaned you"?
2. Which answer is assertive? "I don't care if we go to a movie or not." "I would like to see Beauty and the Beast."
3. If you were being assertive, how close would you stand to the person you are
4. When Cindy asked her mother if she could stay out until 11:00 PM, she kept looking at the floor. What kind of behavior is that?

**Step 4: Introduce the play.** There will be three short skits on refusing. The Super Coach is going to refuse a request from the Trainer in three different ways. You decide which is passive, aggressive, or assertive. Super Coach will be Casper the Ghost, and the Trainer will be Fred, another ghost.

**Example:** We are going to act out three scenes between two ghost friends. One friend will make a request, and the other friend will refuse the request. See if you can tell which refusal is passive, aggressive, or assertive.

### THE REFUSAL

#### Scene One

CASPER: Hey, Fred, I need to borrow your rattles and chains. I'm going to spook some kids tonight over at the haunted house.

FRED: (AGGRESSIVELY) Forget you, Casper. You are always borrowing stuff.

CASPER: Come on, just this once. This is going to be a great spook event.

FRED: Casper, you couldn't spook anyone even if you wanted to. My rattles and chains couldn't help you. Nothing could help you. Get lost.

CASPER: I thought you were my friend.

FRED: So what, you think that should make me loan my rattles and chains to a pip-squeak ghost like you??

### Scene Two

CASPER: Hey, Fred, I need to borrow your rattles and chains. I'm going to spook some kids tonight over at the haunted house.

FRED: I'm sorry, Casper. I'm using them tonight.

CASPER: Come on, just this once. This is going to be a great spook event.

FRED: Casper, I don't loan my rattles and chains. I never know when I might want to use them. I hope you find some.

CASPER: I thought you were my friend.

FRED: I am your friend. But I am not loaning you my rattles and chains.

### Scene Three

CASPER: Hey, Fred, I need to borrow your rattles and chains. I'm going to spook some kids tonight over at the haunted house.

FRED: I, ah, gee, Casper, I was kind of wanting to use them tonight. Are you sure you need them tonight?

CASPER: Come on, just this once. This is going to be a great spook event.

FRED: Oh, Casper, I don't know... I usually don't loan my rattles and chains, but well... let me see

CASPER: I thought you were my friend.

FRED: Well, I am your friend, so well, I guess I could stay home tonight. OK, here are my rattles and chains. Could you, ah, I mean, be careful with them?

**Step 5: Examine the skits.** Look at both the words used and the nonverbal behaviors. How did the refusals differ? Which was assertive? Why was it more effective? It was more respectful, yet the friend still said no.

**Step 6: Explain how to refuse a request.** Set a goal. Think of ways to meet the goal. Determine if refusing helps meet the goal. Refuse and review. Consider how close to stand, eye contact, posture, gestures.

**Example:** How do you refuse a request?

First, you need to decide what the goal is in the situation. Is refusing the way to go?

Then think of what you will say to refuse. Practice it and then review what you did.

How did it work out? What would you do differently?

Let the other person know how you feel now and how you will feel when you have denied their request.

Some rules for refusals:

Refusals should be honest.

Refusals often begin with “no.”

It is okay to say:

No, I won’t do that.

No, this is my lunch money. I will not give it to you.

I already have plans for Saturday. I cannot play that day.

When you speak to the other person, stand up straight, look the other person in the eye, and keep your hands and arms at your side - not waving up in the air.

## **PRACTICE**

**Step 7: Practice refusing a request.** Students form a line facing the Super Coach who makes a request of each student. The students then refuse the request, and the next student comes up to face the Super Coach. The requests can be used more than once if there are more students than requests.

**Example:** Now I want you to form a line. One by one you will come up and face me. I will request something from you. You refuse and give me a reason. For example, “Give me \$100.” “I don’t have \$100 and it is too much to give to you.” You can make up a reason for refusing me. As we refuse, listen to what other people say. Would you answer as they did? Let us begin.

Give me a nickel.

I want a quarter.

Give me a candy bar.

I want a dollar from you.

Come over to my house and clean the kitchen.  
I like your dog. Please give it to me.  
I know you don't know me, but I will give you a ride home in my car.  
Please baby-sit my little sister.  
Let's go see a movie.  
Let's go shoot basketballs.  
Please take care of my cat when I go away for a week.  
Come with me to see my mother who is in the hospital.  
Lend me \$5.  
Buy me a hamburger.  
Take out the garbage for me.  
I want to borrow your new bike.  
Buy me some ice cream.  
Let me copy your homework.  
I will give you a free haircut.  
Please come over to my house after school to watch TV

## **THE GAME**

**Step 8: Divide the class into teams of 6 to 10 students. Assign actor and director roles, explaining what each role's tasks are.** Mix aggressive with assertive students, and shy with assertive students. Divide each team into equal numbers of actors and directors.

**Example:** We are going to play the ACT Game in few minutes. First, I want to divide you into teams. Today's teams are as follows: ..." Within those teams will be an equal number of actors and directors.

In this team, you will be actors, and in the same team you will be directors. The actors will receive a situation. Tell us what your goal is in the situation and then tell us what you would do. Try to solve the problem.

The directors are to start and stop the role-plays. Each director has something to watch for. That includes eye contact, loudness of voice, tone of voice, posture, and gestures.

The directors are responsible for feedback. First, the directors ask the actors what pleased them in their performance and what they would do differently. Then the directors give their own feedback.

**Step 9: Give the teams the situation for playing the game, assign parts to the actors, and give tasks to the directors.** Basically, this step sets up the game. Actors and directors should be clear on what they do and on what the situation is all about. The purpose of the game is to increase skills through both practicing giving self-compliments and giving feedback. The Super Coach needs to assign actor parts and director tasks. The Super Coach provides the situation to work on. Practice and feedback are key elements in skill development. You want

students to know what a self-compliment is, be able to say one and come up with compliments as a situation is progressing, and know how to evaluate one's own performance. It is desirable for everyone on the team to have a chance to be the actor playing the inner self. Use tokens.

**Example:** The situation is as follows: a friend asks for 50 cents to buy a package of gum. The student did the same thing last week and didn't repay you. The student's not repaying has happened to other friends of yours. What is your goal? What can you do? What else? (Actor roles: student being asked, student asking, other friends.)

Use other situations as needed.

New Situations (Place situations in a bowl or bag. Randomly select one from the bowl for teams to role-play or choose a problem appropriate for your students.)

- A boy or girl asks to crowd in front of you in the cafeteria line. You don't want to let him/her crowd in. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- Your brother/sister wants to watch TV. You are already watching a program and would like to finish watching it. He/she starts to change the channel. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You are at the grocery store getting some bread for your mother. They don't have the kind your mother wanted, but the clerk gives you something like it. You don't want this kind of bread. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- The teacher sees you hitting another student, but he/she doesn't know that the student hit you first. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You are at recess. A number of friends want you to play hopscotch, but you don't want to. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?
- You have taken some bottles for recycling back to the store, and the clerk says that they don't take them. You have returned bottles there before and don't want to pull your loaded wagon all the way home again. What is your goal? What can you do? What else?

**Step 10: Have the students in each team switch roles when the actors have all had a turn.** If time is short, switch before everyone has had a chance. Practice is essential. If some actors do not have a chance to try their hand at the skills, make note and assign them roles in the next session.

**Example:** Now it is time for everyone to switch roles. Actors will become directors, and directors will become actors. Everyone needs to have a chance to practice giving oneself

compliments in the different situations.

## **REVIEW AND CLOSING**

|                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Step 11: End the session with a summary and compliments.</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

**Example:** Today we practiced being assertive when you had to deny a request of someone. You decided what your goal was and what you could do to reach it. Then you practiced refusing someone. You really did a good job today. We have a great group of actors and directors in here.

Before we stop, I want us to show appreciation to ourselves and each other. First, tell the person on your left one quality you like about that person. For example, "I like Janet's earrings." Also, complete this sentence about yourself: "I am good at..."

The next time we meet, we will work on recognizing and handling our feelings.

END OF SESSION 4, MODULE 1