

THE ACT GAME

ACT: ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TRAINING

A Social Skills Training Program for Children Grades 3 - 6

MODULE 4: FRIENDSHIP

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase use of open-ended questions.
2. Increase specificity in requests.
3. Increase use of checking on accuracy of message.
4. Increase appropriateness of posture, eye contact, and facial expressions.
5. Recognize and evaluate alternative solutions to problems.
6. Recognize personal space needs and limits.

RATIONALE

Being able to initiate, establish, and maintain friendships is a critical component of social competence. A child's program for initiating friendships is much more direct than the typical step-by-step curriculum for adults. A child's approach is direct and straightforward: "Hi. Would you like to play with me?" Friendships are built around shared activities. The child's non-verbal behavior is the area most likely to need attention. Therefore, this module features initiating contacts in the classroom and with friends, and, as usual, provides practice opportunities.

For initiations with adults and for request situations, two different skills are emphasized: asking open-ended questions and developing specificity in the request. Children learn to check and reaffirm information.

Tolerance for physical closeness is also a key but an often ignored variable. Children learn to assess their own personal space needs and to be aware of the needs of others. Comfort with different degrees of closeness is considered. Personal space is related to assertive, aggressive, and passive behaviors.

We continue the process of learning the skills that make up social problem-solving. The emphasis in this module is on evaluating alternative solutions to problems. Means-end thinking is the skill that is required for fruitful determinations of an alternative's effectiveness.

Session 1, Module 4: Asking Open-ended Questions

TEACH

Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach and the Trainer, and mention what the session is about. Pretend you are holding microphones for the skit.

Example: I am the Super Coach and this is the Trainer. We are big TV stars. I am sure that you have seen our show: “Life With the Stars.” We are very popular. We are also good friends, and speaking of friendships, that is what today’s lesson is about: how to make friendships. We will start with how to ask open-ended questions so that you can learn about the person.

Step 2: Have the students introduce themselves, say one good thing about themselves, and say one good thing about the person sitting on their right. The purpose of this step is to continue practicing making positive remarks about oneself and others.

Example: Before we get into the lesson, let’s go around the room. Please tell us one good thing you did this past week. We are often told that it isn’t good manners to brag about oneself. It is not nice to brag to make yourself look better than someone else. But, it is not bragging to share something good about yourself. It is okay to feel good about yourself and what you can do and about how you are growing and getting better at doing new things. In here, we like to hear all the good things there are about you.

Step 3: Introduce the play. The Super Coach is Melvin Muscles, champion tackle for (insert your home team) and the Trainer is a “Life with the Stars” reporter. This play is designed to illustrate open- and closed-ended questions, and engage the students in a fun activity. Trainers may always substitute skits that you create that fit the topic. If you have a local sports hero whom you would like to use in the interview, that would be great. The goal is to demonstrate the effect of using open- versus closed-ended questions to share information.

Example: We are going to do a quick play. In this play, there is a reporter who wants to find out about what the sports superstar eats. The trainer will play the reporter. The reporter’s task is to find out what kind of food this sports star liked when he was a little kid. The sports star is Melvin Muscles, tackle for the _____ football team. Please pay attention to what questions are asked and what answers are given. Does the reporter reach his/her goal? Watch how the reporter gets information from Mr. Melvin Muscles.

DID MELVIN MUSCLES EAT GOOD FOOD?

REPORTER: Mr. Muscles, this is National Food Week. I am interested in knowing what you ate as a little boy. May I ask you some questions?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: Can you remember being in third grade?

MELVIN: No.

REPORTER: When you were in third grade, you lived in Topeka. Does that bring back any memories?

MELVIN: No.

REPORTER: I want to ask you, Mr. Muscles, did you eat meat?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: Did you eat fish?

MELVIN: No.

REPORTER: Did you like apples?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: Mr. Muscles, did you have a favorite food?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: Did your mother do all the cooking?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: Was she a good cook?

MELVIN: Yes.

REPORTER: (TALKS DIRECTLY TO THE AUDIENCE, AS IF MELVIN MUSCLES ISN'T THERE.) Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no. Something isn't working here. I am not finding out much about what Mr. Muscles ate when he was in the third grade. I guess I will try a new approach. I won't ask any questions that can be answered with a yes or a no. Watch to see if I can do it. We will see if it works any better. Mr. Muscles, I am interested in learning about the foods you ate as a child. May I ask you a question?

MELVIN: Of course.

REPORTER: When you were in third grade in Topeka, what was a typical dinner like at your

house?

MELVIN: We were a meat and potatoes family. When vegetables were in season, mother put them on the table also. Green beans, squash, peas, greens, and beets. No salads. But we had sliced tomatoes, cucumber, and peppers. There was pie for dessert. We always had good desserts. I had four brothers in my family. They could really eat up a storm. When I said we ate lots of meat, I should explain what I mean. You see... (INTERRUPTED BY THE REPORTER.)

REPORTER: OK, Mr. Muscles. Thank you for your answer.

MELVIN: We didn't eat pork very much. Most of the meat was beef. Sometimes we ate a deer someone had shot during hunting season. I remember this time that... (INTERRUPTED BY THE REPORTER.)

REPORTER: Thank you, Mr. Muscles. We know what was on your dinner table when you were a small boy.

MELVIN: But let me tell you about the pies. They were really delicious

REPORTER: If you don't mind, Mr. Muscles, I am sure people want to know about your favorite foods. Can you tell us what foods you enjoyed the most?

MELVIN: Pie. I loved apple pie with a piece of cheese. Berry pie. Wonderful. Blue berry was my favorite. Then my mother made the best pecan pie you ever ate. And my grandmother, her special pie was coconut pie. Oh, and what about chocolate cream pie.

REPORTER: These days, certain foods like fats are not supposed to be good for you. What do you think about that?

MELVIN: When I was in fourth grade, I was fat, fat, fat. I was a big as a barn. I ate eggs, and butter, and heavy cream, and tons of bacon. I loved all kinds of bread. I could eat a whole loaf of bread with honey on it at one sitting. Once I ate five hot dogs and drank six cokes. I got sicker than a dog. But look at me. I am a sports star now. I exercise all the time. That's why I look so good. Let me tell you...

REPORTER: Mr. Muscles...

MELVIN: Let me tell you about fat.

REPORTER: Please, Mr. Muscles. I really want to ask you about fruits and vegetables. What do you recommend about kids eating more fruits and vegetables?

MELVIN: I still like apples the best. Bananas are good too. Kids should eat them. I don't know too much about other fruits. Blueberry pancakes. That's good.

REPORTER: What about vegetables?

MELVIN: Are you going to quote me on what I say?

REPORTER: Probably.

MELVIN: Well, let me tell you about vegetables. I mean, I am a sports superstar. I don't have to like vegetables.

REPORTER: Which vegetables do you like and which ones do you dislike?

MELVIN: I can't stand any of them. Well, no. Onions are good with other food. Garlic is awful. Peas are not so bad. Squash is horrible. Spinach is sick. Asparagus makes you smell funny. Beets, I can't figure them out.

REPORTER: Thank you, Mr. Muscles.

MELVIN: I said before that I had four brothers. Let me tell you a funny story about them and vegetables. Potatoes are not vegetables.

REPORTER: Mr. Muscles, I don't need to ask you more about your eating habits.

MELVIN: You're right, eating is a habit with me. But let me finish what I was telling you about my brothers and vegetables.

REPORTER: (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE: I can't shut him up. Instead of asking him an open-ended question like, "What was the best meal you ever ate?", I will have to use a close-ended question.) Mr. Muscles.

MELVIN: Yes?

REPORTER: When is this interview ending?

MELVIN: It should end in one minute, but I want to tell you this story about my brothers and vegetables.

REPORTER: Yes, Mr. Muscles. Unfortunately, we have run out of time. This ends our interview with Melvin Muscles, Sports Superstar.

THE END

Step 4: Tell the students how to form open-ended questions. Tell the students about the value of friendship, that friendships are based on shared activities, and that open-ended questions provide important information about the other person. It is easier, then, to know if you want to have that person as a friend, and it is easier to maintain a friendship if you know the person well.

Example: Open-ended questions provide more information about people than closed-ended questions. If you know what someone likes to do, you can tell if that person might make a good friend. Having friends is very important to all of us. Friends help you, they enjoy doing things together, they can make you feel better, and they can enable you to know yourself better. Closed-ended questions usually give you one-word answers. They start with “when,” “where,” “did you,” “were you.” Often, closed-ended questions produce “yes” or “no” answers.

Open-ended questions begin with words like “how,” “why,” and “what.” In the play about Mr. Muscles and the reporter, what questions were asked and what kind of responses were obtained? How well did the reporter make up open-ended questions? What kind of question is this?

“Did you give someone a compliment today?” That is a closed-ended question.

Next: “When does the group meet again?” Another closed-ended question.

“Why are people uncomfortable about making new friends?” That is an example of an open-ended question.

PRACTICE

Step 5: Divide the class into small groups (6 to 10), and in each small group appoint actors and directors. Have the small groups practice using open-ended questions. There should be an equal number of actors and directors in each small group. The actors will practice the skill being learned - in this case, asking open-ended questions. The directors will start the practice, using a role-play, and they will signal when to stop the practice. In each small group, select a TV star or sports personality to be interviewed. Have a reporter interview the star using open-ended questions. Directors will get feedback by asking what the actors liked and did not like about their performance. Then have the directors indicate what they liked and what they would have done differently. Switch roles frequently so that everyone has a chance. Use tokens throughout.

Example: First, I will divide the class into small teams of from 6 to 10 people. Then within each team there will be an equal number of actors and directors. I will tell you which role you play. After a while, you will switch, and the actors will become directors. The directors will become the actors.

Now we are going to practice using open-ended questions. In each small group, one of you will play the role of a TV star. Another person will be a reporter who will interview the star. Then the reporter will be asked what one thing you liked and one thing you would change that you did. Then the directors will state what they liked and what they would have done differently. Keep switching roles so that everyone has a chance to play the reporter.

Step 6: Demonstrate evaluating possible solutions to a problem. We have practiced different skills in social problem-solving. Those skills have included defining the problem, setting up goals, and generating alternatives. This module includes practice on how to evaluate alternatives. Use a previously presented problem to illustrate how to assess alternatives.

Example: We have worked on solving a problem in every session. Recently, we emphasized generating alternative solutions. Now we want to learn how to evaluate the different alternatives. Remember the problem of the boy whose mother waited in the car outside the grocery store. He ran in to buy milk, but there were long lines. His objective was to get out quickly. Here are some of his alternatives:

1. Stealing the milk under his coat.
2. Waiting in line.
3. Asking someone near the front of the line to buy the milk.
4. Asking to step to the front of the line.
5. Not buying the milk here and going to another store.
6. Yelling “Fire!!” and having everyone run out.
7. Asking the manager to open a new check-out line.
8. Not buying milk at all.
9. Asking his mother to come in and buy the milk.

In your teams, look at each alternative and discuss what would happen if you took that approach. For example, stealing might get you into big trouble. Waiting in line is easy but won't allow you to meet the goal. Asking someone to go in front of them might meet the goal with no negative consequences. The team should consider each alternative. You want the goal to be met with no negative consequences. Also classify the actions involved with each alternative. Would they be aggressive, assertive, or passive?

I will ask each team to pick an alternative with a good consequence and one with a bad consequence to share with the other teams.

THE GAME

Step 7: 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 for 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 being assertive, giving compliments, and giving and receiving feedback. The Super Coach needs to assign actor parts and director tasks. The Super Coach provides the situation to work on.

Example: Now we are going to play the game. Here is the situation: You brought your card collection to school and showed it to your friend during class. Now the teacher

wants to take it away. You feel yourself getting angry. How can you handle this situation?

Make sure you develop a big list of alternative actions that you could take. Have the teams work together to generate many alternatives and consequences for the alternatives before they role-play the situation.

One of the directors will tell the actors when to start and finish. Each director will have one behavior to observe. Those behaviors are posture (straight, slumped over, leaning toward the speaker), gestures (large, small, threatening, withdrawing), voice level (soft, loud), voice tone (pleasant, whining), and eye contact (direct, away). Pay particular attention to eye contact, positive facial expressions, and posture.

When the role-play is over, the directors will give feedback to the actor. Feedback starts with asking the actors what one thing you liked and what one thing you would do differently. The directors give feedback on what they observed. Role-plays will last 2-5 minutes with 3 minutes for feedback. We will try to give as many actors as possible a chance, and after a while, the actors and directors will switch roles.

Step 8: 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. The new parts grow out of the situation described.

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 others compliments.

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.)

- Your parents say you cannot sleep over at your friend's house this weekend because you haven't been doing your chores.
- Your friend is upset with you but will not tell you why.
- The teacher will not let you sit next to your friend.
- 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.
- You want to learn to cook but your mom says you are too young.

REVIEW AND CLOSING

Step 9: End with group affirmations. Reinforce approximations. For example, if a student

could only think of two alternative solutions to a problem, show appreciation for those two, and emphasize there is only one more to go. Also continue reinforcing with tokens. Have the group compliment each other.

Example: Now it is time to end the session. Everyone did a great job in learning how to think of alternatives and in how to obtain information through open-ended questions. This week, be aware of how your face shows feelings.

Let's end the session with sharing something you have learned during the ACT Game or during class. We will see you again at the next session.

END OF SESSION 1, MODULE 4

Session 2, Module 4: Being Specific

TEACH

Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach and the Trainer, and the session on being specific.
Comment on not being specific and the confusion that can arise.

Example:

TRAINER: Am I late?

COACH: Yes.

TRAINER: You didn't tell me what time to be here.

COACH: It must have slipped my mind.

TRAINER: Don't I look good in my party clothes?

COACH: I didn't say to come to a party. Your clothes are all mixed up.

TRAINER: Well, you didn't tell me what to wear.

COACH: I said to come to school today.

TRAINER: But you didn't say when to come, where to come, what we were doing, what costume to put on, how to act or anything. That's all I know. What are we going over today?

COACH: We are going to learn how to be specific.

TRAINER: We need it!

We are sorry for the confusion between me, the Super Coach, and the Trainer. That shows you how important it is to be specific. The poor Trainer didn't know which end was up.

Step 2: Have the students tell the group one thing they did that they are pleased with and also have them give the student on their left a compliment. Because giving compliments is such an important skill to learn, we will practice it every session. Tokens should be used to reinforce strong self-compliments and those given to others.

Example: Before we go any further, we want you to tell us one thing you did that made you feel good, and then give a compliment to the person sitting on your left. For example,

someone might say, “I liked the way I helped my Dad wash the car. I appreciate the person sitting next to me because he/she is always smiling.” So, let’s go around the room.

Step 3: Do the play on a lack of specificity. The Super Coach and Trainer play the roles of the travel agent and Mr. I. Go, the traveler.

Example: Now we are going to see a brief play. The Super Coach will play a travel agent. Travel agents fix trips for people. They make reservations in hotels and on airplanes and set up your sightseeing. The Trainer will play a traveler named Mr. I Go.

THE TRAVELER

AGENT: Mr. I. Go, this is your travel agent. Everything is all set for your trip in September.

MR. I. GO: September! Didn’t I say I wanted to go in October?

AGENT: No. You didn’t say anything, but you wanted to go in the fall. Italy is very nice in the fall.

MR. I. GO: Italy? Who said anything about Italy? Spain might be nice. I also like Greece. I don’t remember saying Italy.

AGENT: You said you wanted to go to the Mediterranean. Italy is in that area. I already have you booked on Regal Airlines.

MR. I. GO: Oh, no! Any airline, but not Regal.

AGENT: How about Moron Airlines?

MR. I. GO: No, I don’t like them either.

AGENT: All you said to me was, “Any airline as long as it serves vegetarian meals.” Is eating fish vegetarian? That’s OK, isn’t it?

MR. I. GO: No, I meant to tell you that I don’t eat any flesh. Sometimes I eat eggs and cheese. By the way, what does the airline ticket cost me?

AGENT: \$600 per person.

MR. I. GO: That’s way too much. I didn’t want to spend more than \$450 per person.

AGENT: All you said was not too expensive. Other tickets might cost you \$975.

MR. I. GO: Let's hear about the hotels.

AGENT: I have nice big, clean, modern, hotels where most Americans stay.

MR. I. GO: That's terrible. I only wanted small little hotels where no Americans go.

AGENT: All you said was "nice hotels." Can't you stand it for 3 weeks? The reservations are all made, and I have made some deposits.

MR. I. GO: Did you say 3 weeks? I only wanted 2 weeks. Didn't anyone tell you that?

AGENT: No.

MR. I. GO: What a big mess you made.

AGENT: You didn't give me any information. How could I plan a trip with so little information?

MR. I. GO: It was your job to ask me.

AGENT: It was your responsibility to tell me.

MR. I. GO: I didn't want to go on a trip anyway.

AGENT: Stay home. See if I care.

MR. I. GO: I'm not going to go out of my house.

AGENT: Get in bed and stay there.

MR. I. GO: How will I eat?

AGENT: Send out for pizza.

MR. I. GO: I'll never travel again

AGENT: Don't call me to order the pizza for you.

MR. I. GO: I want cheese, green peppers, garlic, and salami on top.

AGENT: Very good. You were specific for a change.

THE END

Step 4: Demonstrate and discuss being specific. Have the class locate examples of not being

specific in the play. Explain that being specific answers such questions as the following: When? Where? Who? What? How long? How much? How often? How attired? Illustrate some of the things Mr. I. Go might have said if he had been more specific. Explain the benefits of specificity.

Example: What does it mean to be specific? It means that you provide adequate information to the other person who you are communicating with. Being specific reduces misunderstanding and conflict. It allows people to know each other better. It helps you get what you want for yourself. It helps you know if you want to be somebody's friend, and it helps keep the friendship going along. You know what each other wants to do and have answered other questions about when and who. To be specific, provide the other person information such as: when it will happen, where it will happen, who will be there, how long it will take, how often it will be done, how much it will cost, what has to be done to get ready, and so on.

Give me some examples of what the travel agent should have known and did not know. When was Mr. I. Go specific? Did the lack of details that Mr. I. Go provided end up with his not getting what he wanted? Mr. I. Go should have told the travel agent that he wanted to travel in the second week of October to Spain for 2 weeks, staying in a small hotel where American tourists do not stay. He also should have indicated what he wanted to spend, the airlines he favored, the side trips he wanted to take, the food he preferred, and whatever else the travel agent needed to know to plan and execute a good trip.

PRACTICE

Step 5: Divide the class into small groups (6 to 10), and in each small group appoint actors and directors. Give the teams a task to work on related to being specific. Use friends going to the movies as the situation. Have the teams identify all the specifics involved with going to the movies: movie selection, location, time, date, mode of transportation, who, cost, and dinner plans.

Example: First, I will divide the class into small teams of from 6 to 10 people. Then within each team there will be an equal number of actors and directors. I will tell you which role you play. After a while, you will switch, and the actors will become directors. The directors will become the actors.

I want each team to figure out what are the specifics involved with this situation. Your friend calls you and says, "Let's go to the movies." What do you need to decide on to avoid confusion and misunderstanding with your friend? Discuss this in your teams.

THE GAME

Step 6: Assign actors in each team to check on the specifics. As mentioned earlier, learning

to check on the specifics of an agreement is another important step in building friendships. To practice that skill, first address the importance of checking. Then practice checking through role-playing. One actor plays the checker and the other the actor is the one who is questioned. After the role-play, the directors give feedback, starting with asking the actors who did the checking what they liked about their performance and what they would have done differently. Then directors give feedback.

Example: Checking on the specifics can avoid a lot of trouble. It is good to make sure that you and the other person have got it straight. You can say, “Now let me make sure I got this correctly,” or “I want to make sure I understand.” To help us learn to check, we will do a little rehearsing. In each team, I will appoint an actor to be the person checking and another actor to answer the questions. Use the specifics you developed for the situation of going to the movies. Pretend that one of the friends wants to go over the arrangements that were made earlier. When the role-play is over, the directors will ask the checkers what they did that they liked and what one thing they would have done differently. Then the directors will indicate one thing that they liked and one thing they would have done differently. Now I want to hear the actors and directors tell me what they are going to do.

Step 7: Give the teams a situation on evaluating alternatives, assign parts to the actors, and give tasks to the directors. Basically, this step sets up for 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 in evaluating alternatives in social problem-solving. The Super Coach needs to assign actor parts and director tasks. The Super Coach sets the scene.

Example: Now we are going to play the game. Here is the situation: Your best friend is going to spend the night over with a kid you don't like because he/she puts you down. Some alternatives: (1) tell your friend face-to-face that you don't like it; (2) write your friend a note explaining your unhappiness; (3) simply ignore it; (4) invite to your house a kid who your best friend doesn't like; (5) drop your friend from your list of friends; (6) ask your best friend's mother to stop the overnight visit from happening. The objective here is to learn to evaluate the alternatives. What are the positive and negative consequences of each alternative? Can you achieve your objective and not have unpleasant results as well?

Besides the main actor, other parts could be a friend or parents. You will tell the directors what your goal is and then act out what you will do in this situation. Act out different alternatives and look for the consequences. Be sure to check your Feeling Thermometer.

One of the directors will tell the actors when to start and finish. Each director will have one behavior to observe. Those behaviors are posture (straight, slumped over, leaning toward the speaker), gestures (large, small, threatening, withdrawing), voice level (soft, loud), voice tone (pleasant, whining), and eye contact (direct, away). Pay particular attention to eye contact, positive facial expressions, and posture.

When the role-play is over, the directors will give feedback to the actor. Feedback starts with asking you what one thing you liked and what one thing you would do differently. Role-plays will last 2-5 minutes with 3 minutes for feedback. We will try to give as many actors as possible a chance, and after a while, the actors and directors will switch roles.

Step 8: Do the role-play and give feedback to the actor. Substitute new situations as needed.

Practice and feedback are key elements in skill development. You want students to focus on eye contact, positive facial expressions, and posture. It is desirable for everyone on the team to have a chance to be the actor playing the inner self. Continue to use tokens throughout.

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.)

- Your parents told you not to hang out with one of your friends. (Parts: you, parents, friends.) Alternatives: (a) obey your parents; (b) argue with your parents; (c) sneak over to see this friend; (d) do whatever you want; (e) ask the friend to dinner at your house; (f) ask your parents to get to know your friend because he/she is really nice; (g) agree with your parents that this particular friend is a bad influence on you.
- A kid you don't like offers to buy you ice cream in an ice cream store. (Parts, you, other kid, clerk, friend.) Alternatives: (a) accept it; (b) say, "no thanks"; (c) ask the kid what is going on; (d) take the ice cream but then throw it out; (e) offer to buy the kid ice cream; (f) get to know this kid while you eat the ice cream together.
- One of your best friends moved to a different city. Your friend and you talk about how to keep in touch. Some alternatives: (a) write letters once a week; (b) write a postcard every day; (c) call him/her on the telephone once a week; (d) keep up with e-mail; (e) visit twice a year; (f) go to the same summer camp.
- You invited a friend to dinner at your house. The friend refused without an explanation. Alternatives are as follows: (a) ignore it; (b) ask the friend what the problem was; (c) don't eat at the friend's house; (d) eat out at a restaurant; (e) find a friend who will come to dinner at your house. (Parts: you, friend, your parents.)

Step 9: 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. The new parts grow out of the situation described.

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 others compliments.

REVIEW AND CLOSING

Step 10: End with group affirmations. Reinforce approximations. For example, if a student was could only think of positive evaluations of solutions to a problem, show appreciation for slightly critical assessments. Be careful not to leave out a child. Catch a student doing something right. Also continue reinforcing with tokens. Have the group compliment each other.

Example: Now it is time to end the session. Everyone did a great job in learning how to be specific and how to evaluate alternative solutions to a problem. Be aware of how your face shows positive expressions. This next week, be aware of how many times you were more specific than you had been in the past.

Let's end the session by going around the room. Tell us one positive quality of yours and then say one thing nice about the person sitting on your right. We will see you again at the next session.

END OF SESSION 2, MODULE 4

Session 3, Module 4: Getting to Know You

TEACH

Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach and the Trainer, and the content of the session. The Super Coach and the Trainer dress in matching outfits or hats. The theme of this session is making friends, and it pulls together both asking open-ended questions and being specific.

Example: Welcome to today’s lesson on making friends. We have practiced asking open-ended questions and being specific. Both of these skills are important in making friends. Now we are going to practice with the two skills put together. Asking open-ended questions helps you find out what kind of friend someone might make. Being specific avoids misunderstanding about what you are going to do together. I am the Super Coach and this is the Trainer. Because we are talking about friendships, we wore matching clothes (hats) today.

Step 2: Have the students introduce themselves by complimenting themselves and the person on their left. Thinking well of oneself and being nice to others are central to establishing and maintaining friendships. These two skills will be practiced throughout the training.

Example: Today, we are going to go around the room. When your turn comes, complete this sentence: “My friends like me because...”

Step 3: Introduce a scene from a TV police show. Ask half of the students to watch and listen for open-ended questions and the other half to pay attention to specifics. Indicate that in this scene both questions and specifics are demonstrated.

Example: Here is a scene from a TV police show. The action takes place in an alley outside a deserted building. A policeman is yelling into an open door. The male suspect is inside the building. I want half the room to watch for and listen to open-ended questions. The other half of the room should listen to how specific the dialogue was.

THE POLICE SHOW

An Episode from the TV Program of That Name

POLICE: Are you in there? I know that you are in there.

SUSPECT: No, I am not in there.

POLICE: Are you lying to me? To the police?

SUSPECT: Maybe.

POLICE: Do you know that the building is surrounded?

SUSPECT: No.

POLICE: You can't escape. Are you going to give up?

SUSPECT: No.

POLICE: You haven't got a chance.

SUSPECT: Come and get me.

POLICE: You will be sorry if we have to do that. We don't want to hurt you. We just want to ask you a few questions.

SUSPECT: Do you want to know my birthday and how old I am?

POLICE: No.

SUSPECT: Well, what do you want to know?

POLICE: Where were you last Tuesday night?

SUSPECT: I went to visit my grandmother.

POLICE: Will she say that you were visiting her on that Tuesday night?

SUSPECT: No.

POLICE: Why not?

SUSPECT: She wasn't home.

POLICE: Do you have an alibi?

SUSPECT: No.

POLICE: You had better come out with your hands up.

SUSPECT: I can't do that.

POLICE: We have a lot of questions to ask you.

SUSPECT: Like am I married and how many children do I have?

POLICE: No, no. Tell me the truth. Where were you last Tuesday night?

SUSPECT: I went to my grandmother's, waited, and came home from my grandmother's.

POLICE: Where was your grandmother?

SUSPECT: Out to dinner.

POLICE: You grandmother dates?

SUSPECT: No, she was at dinner with her best friend.

POLICE: Listen, just tell the truth, and come out with your hands up.

SUSPECT: I am telling the truth, and I can't come out with my hands up.

POLICE: There are no reporters here to take your picture.

SUSPECT: That's good, but I am still not coming out with my hands up.

POLICE: Think of what is good for you. There are other policemen here who don't want to waste time. They want to come and get you. I can't keep holding them off. Let's be sensible. Put your hands in the air and walk through that door.

SUSPECT: I can't come out with my hands in the air.

POLICE: I am losing my patience.

SUSPECT: I am sorry. I want to help you but I can't come out with my hand up in the air.

POLICE: Let's stop the funny business. Why can't you come out with your hands in the air?

SUSPECT: It's too embarrassing.

POLICE: I ask you again. You keep saying you can't come out with your hands in the air. Why can't you come out with your hands in the air?

SUSPECT: My pants will fall down.

THE END

Step 4: Have the children evaluate the use of open-ended questions and being specific. (Ask about alternatives to the pants falling problem, as well.) Point out that the policeman could have learned about the pants falling situation much earlier if he had asked more open-ended questions. Alternative solutions might include: Give him a belt. Give him suspenders.

Give him a rope. Have him crawl out. Have him walk out, holding his pants up. Give him tight pants. Give him a big towel to wrap around him. Lead the group in saying, “Come out with your hands in the air.”

Example: That was quite an embarrassing scene. Repeat after me, “Come out with your hands in the air.” Do it one more time. “Come out with your hands in the air.” How well did the policeman use open-ended questions? And how specific was he? What about the suspect? What contribution did the suspect make in clarifying the situation? While we are at it, what alternative solutions are there to the falling pants problem? What are your ideas?

Step 5: Review how to make up an open-ended question and how to be specific. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with one word. They usually begin with “why,” “how,” and “what.” Closed-ended questions start with “did you,” “when,” “where.” Being specific means providing information to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. For example, “I will meet you at 10:00 am this Tuesday in front of Jackson’s drug store at 250 Bell Street. I will be wearing an orange jacket.” That statement is specific. “Are you OK this morning?” is closed-ended. “How did Jack ever find the way to Lucy’s house?” is an example of an open-ended question.

Example: Here are the basics of asking open-ended questions: Start with “what,” “how,” “why.” It keeps people talking, and you can find out more about someone. “How can you tell if Mary could become a good friend?” That’s open-ended. Closed-ended questions bring out one-word answers. You cannot learn as much from them. “Did you watch TV last night?” That’s closed-ended. Closed-ended questions often start with “when,” “where,” “did you.” Give some examples of open-ended questions.

Why is it good to be specific? To avoid misunderstanding and confusion is an acceptable answer. If you were supposed to meet someone, what would a specific agreement include? When to meet (day, date, time), where to meet, with whom, to do what, at what cost, how often, for how long. Those are the kinds of things to include.

PRACTICE

Step 6: Divide the class into small groups (6 to 10), and assign the task in each small group. Get into trios. Students will act as if they just met, and will get to know each other by asking open-ended questions. Then they will set a time to get together. Ask them to be specific. The third student gives feedback about open questions and specific plans. Remember that this is a role-play. The commitments they make to do something are not for real. The points of the rehearsal are to practice asking open-ended questions in normal conversation and to practice being specific.

Example: First, I will divide the class into small teams of from 6 to 10 people. Then within each team, we will get into groups of three.

We will practice asking open-ended questions and making specific plans. The role-play will be that two of you have just met. Find out about each other. Then agree on something you will do together. Remember that this is a role-play. The commitment is to do some activity together is not real. Since you just met, and do not know each other well, you must be very specific about where you will meet, what time, etc. The third team member will watch for open-ended questions and specific plans.

THE GAME

Step 7: 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 for 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 practicing being assertive, giving compliments, asking open-ended questions, being specific, and giving and receiving 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 learn how to evaluate alternatives to a problem. “If I do this alternative, will it accomplish what I want without making things worse or creating more trouble?”

Example: Now we are going to play the game. Here is the situation. Many of your friends have tried smoking. Even 9-year-old children are smoking. They want you to join in and are really pressuring you. You don’t want to do it. You think your parents have guessed because they recently gave you a big lecture on the evils of smoking.

Talk as a team about what the goal is, and then act out what you will do in this situation. Some alternative actions that you could take include: (1) ask your parents for advice; (2) drop your smoking friends; (3) find new friends; (4) try to stop your friends from smoking; (5) tell your school guidance counselor what is going on; (6) tell your friends’ parents; (7) sit down with your friends and tell them where you stand; (8) get an older kid who is respected and who doesn’t smoke to help you. Your task is to evaluate the alternatives. Which alternatives accomplish your objectives without harming your interests or having negative consequences?

One of the directors will tell the actors when to start and finish. Each director will have one behavior to observe. Those behaviors are posture (straight, slumped over, leaning toward the speaker), gestures (large, small, threatening, withdrawing), voice level (soft, loud), voice tone (pleasant, whining), and eye contact (direct, away). Pay particular attention to eye contact, positive facial expressions, and posture.

When the role-play is over, the directors will give feedback to the actors. Feedback starts with asking you what one thing you liked and what one thing you would do differently. Role-plays will last 2-5 minutes with 3 minutes for feedback. We will try to give as many actors as possible a chance, and after a while, the actors and directors will switch roles.

Step 8: 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. The new parts grow out of the situation described.

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.)

- You went to a friend's house for dinner, and his mother served you fish, which you can't stand. Alternatives: (a) leave it on the plate; (b) give it to the dog under the table; (c) tell his mother you don't like it; (d) go have dinner at your house; (e) put it back on the serving dish.
- Some of your friends came to your house and started teasing you because your room was so neat. You don't like to be teased. Alternatives: (a) ignore the teasing; (b) tell them you don't like to be teased; (c) defend your clean room; (d) throw stuff on the floor; (e) call your friends "slobs."
- You went to a friend's house to play a computer game. First, he wouldn't play the one you wanted, and second, he hogged the computer. You hardly had a chance to play anything. Alternatives: (a) go home; (b) threaten to hit him in the stomach; (c) push him away from the machine; (d) tell him if he doesn't share and play other games, you will leave; (e) try negotiating with him on how much time you and he will play on the games you both like.
- A couple of times per week, this kid comes over and takes cookies out of your lunch box. You have asked him to stop, but he keeps it up. Alternatives: (a) don't keep cookies in your lunch box; (b) tell a teacher; (c) get a group of your friends to tell him to cut it out or else; (d) change the time you eat so he won't be there; (e) put some terrible tasting cookies in there for him to eat.

REVIEW AND CLOSING

Step 9: End with group affirmations. Reinforce approximations. For example, if a student had trouble evaluating alternatives, ask what kind of car he/she would choose, and then praise the process of evaluation that occurred. Be careful not to leave out a child. Catch a student doing something right. Also continue reinforcing with tokens. Have the group compliment each other.

Example: Now it is time to end the session. Everyone did a great job in learning how to think of alternatives and in how to obtain information through open-ended questions. Count up the number of times per week that you give specific information. Try to compliment someone this week. Look for alternatives.

Let's end the session by going around the room. Say one thing nice about the person sitting on your right, and then tell us one thing you did in this session that you liked. We will see you again at the next session.

END OF SESSION 3, MODULE 4

Session 4, Module 4: How Close Is Too Close?

TEACH

Step 1: Introduce the Super Coach, the Trainer, and the session. The Super Coach and the Trainer should wear costumes that communicate “Don’t get too close to me.” They should also indicate that in today’s session we teach about personal space.

Example:

COACH: I am the Super Coach and this is the Trainer.

COACH: Before I go any further. Trainer, would you mind standing over there? Away from me.

TRAINER: What is the problem? Do I have body odor?

COACH: No, but I just don’t want people to get too close.

TRAINER: What does that mean?

COACH: I have my personal space needs, don’t you know?

TRAINER: What happens if I stand right up in your face? (MOVES VERY CLOSE.)

COACH: I get scared and sometimes angry.

TRAINER: What happens if I move back a few feet? (MOVES BACK)

COACH: I feel much better. Let’s find the right space for the both of us and get on with the lesson. We will take a few minutes and look for our personal space.

(THEY WANDER AROUND LOOKING FOR SPACE.)

Step 2: Have the students compliment themselves and others. Students are to compliment one of their positive personal goals. They are to also compliment the person on their right on how that person is dressed.

Example: To begin the lesson, I want to go around in a circle. Tell us one goal that you have in school. Then turn to the person on your right and give that person a compliment about the way that person is dressed. By now you know that we consider giving compliments to others and to oneself important in being able to take good care of oneself. You won’t have the strength to carry out things you need in life if you can’t say to yourself, “That was really great,” or, “I can set goals and learn how to achieve my goals.” Let me give you an example of what a student might say as we go around the room today.

“I want to improve my handwriting. The girl next to me has on a pair of really cool earrings.” Has everyone got the idea?

Step 3: Introduce the mini-play. The Super Coach and the Trainer act the parts of elderly friends who see each other at the mall. This little scene is about individual space needs. It is designed to encourage students to become aware of personal space issues.

Example: Now we are going to see a mini-play on space: how close we want other people to be to us. Also, what does it mean if some stands close or far? Super Coach and the Trainer will play two elderly friends who see each other at the mall. They will act out some different ways they could talk together. Watch to see how far apart or how close they stand.

(MRS. SANCHEZ AND MRS. MYERS SEE EACH OTHER AT THE MALL.)

MRS. SANCHEZ: (SCURRIES UP TO MRS. MYERS AND GETS VERY, VERY CLOSE, PUTTING HER FACE RIGHT UP TO HER.) Oh, Mrs. Myers, it is so good to see you. I’ve been wanting to ask you for your recipe for that scrumptious coffee cake.

MRS. MYERS: (TAKES A BIG STEP BACKWARDS AND TRIES TO SMILE.) Yes, yes, I can get it for you. How are you, Mrs. Sanchez?

MRS. SANCHEZ: (WALKS BACK UP VERY CLOSE TO MRS. MYERS.) I am just fine. I am so happy to see you, Mrs. Myers.

(WHILE THIS IS HAPPENING, MRS. MYERS TAKES A BIG STEP BACK.)

COACH: Now we will see these friends greet each other from a different distance.

(MRS. MYERS AND MRS. SANCHEZ SEE EACH OTHER FROM ABOUT 10 FEET AWAY. THEY STOP AND BEGIN A CONVERSATION.)

MRS. SANCHEZ: Oh, Mrs. Myers, it is so good to see you. How are you? I have been wanting to ask you for your yummy coffee cake recipe.

MRS. MYERS: Of course, Mrs. Sanchez, I would be happy to share it. I am so happy to see you. It is great to see a good friend at the mall.

MRS. SANCHEZ: Yes, I know. Let me tell you about the church social. It was quite interesting.

MRS. MYERS: What happened?

Step 4: Analyze how the play shows what personal space is all about and obtain comfort ratings on different space situations. Ask the students what it is like to see two friends having a conversation from so far apart. How do far apart do friends who see each other at the mall usually stand? Use this to begin the discussion of personal space. Have the students identify what the personal space needs were for Mrs. Sanchez and Mrs. Myers in each scene. Next, use the Feeling Thermometer to determine how comfortable Mrs. Myers was when Mrs. Sanchez got so very close to her. Ask the students for examples of being too close, too far away, and just right. Have the students assess the comfort generated by different situations.

Example: I want to ask you some questions about the play. In the first scene, who wanted more space? Who wanted less space?

Here is a Feeling Thermometer. Who was uncomfortable and how much? Can you give the class some examples of people being too close to you and being too far away?

(WRITE ON NEWSPRINT) Here is a Feeling Thermometer with different space situations. Read it and decide how comfortable you would feel and how comfortable others in the situation would feel.

- A boy stands 12 inches from you, sticks his nose in your face, and wants to borrow your workbook.
- When your team is asked to present, a boy sits way in the back of the room.
- When a girl really concentrates, she won't let anyone get more than eight feet close to her.
- A boy always puts his arm on your shoulder when he talks to you.
- When the team won the championship, the players fell on the ground and jumped all over each other in a big pile.

PRACTICE

Step 5: Divide the class into small groups (6 to 10), and in each small group appoint actors and directors. There should be an equal number of actors and directors in each small group. The actors will practice the skill being learned. In this session, we will learn about our personal space. The groups will change roles, so that everyone has a chance to practice. Use tokens throughout.

Example: First, I will divide the class into small teams of from 6 to 10 people. Then within each team, there will be an equal number of actors and directors. I will tell you which role you play. After a while, you will switch, and the actors will become directors. The directors will become the actors.

Step 6: Have each team determine how close members can approach others. Mark off a 6-foot square on the floor. Have an actor stand on each side facing the center. The actor in the center approaches each person and notes how comfortable he/she is at different distances. Directors give feedback.

Example: How close you can get when approaching someone is an important factor. For example, it would be hard to be assertive if you were not comfortable getting close to someone. Today we want you all to find out how comfortable you are in approaching others. We have marked off a 6-foot square on the floor. We want an actor to stand on each side. In the center of the square is the actor who will be approached. Sometimes the Super Coach or the Trainer will stand on the side of the square as well. Keep a record of how close you can get. Try to figure out what makes the difference. How close do you get if you are aggressive, assertive, and passive? While the actors approach each other, directors look for how comfortable the actors look. Did the directors agree with the actors' assessment of distance and comfort?

Step 7: Have each team determine how close team members can be approached. This time, the actors standing on the sides of the square slowly approach the person in the middle. The actor in the middle indicates when those approaching are too close. Directors look for signs of discomfort and react to the rating given by the actors. Questions are asked about factors such as position. Does approaching from the back result in less tolerance for distance? Is a side approach more comfortable than face on?

Example: We just explored what it felt like to get physically close when approaching others. Now we want to explore how many feet can be tolerated when others approach you. First, line up in the same way as last time: an actor in the middle and one on each side. This time, I want the actors on the side to approach slowly the actor in the center. The actor in the center will indicate when the approaching actor is too close. Using behavioral clues, directors will give feedback on the different comfort levels perceived. For example, do the directors' assessment match those of the actors? Does the direction of the person approaching make a difference? For example, is the response to someone approaching from behind the same as that to someone approaching from the front? One at a time, begin to approach the actor in the center. Does who the person is make a difference? Would a principal be kept farther away than a teacher? Or would a teacher than a student?

THE GAME

Step 8: Give the teams the situation for playing the game, assign parts to the actors, and give tasks to the directors. Actors and directors should be clear that they are now rehearsing how to evaluate alternative solutions to a problem. Actors do the evaluating, and directors provide feedback. Then the roles are switched. The Super Coach provides the situations, and

assigns actors their roles and directors their tasks.

Example: Now we are going to play the game. Here is the situation: Your friends tell you that one of your other friends tells lies about you behind your back. Alternative solutions: (a) confront the friend; (b) beat-up your friend; (c) go talk with the friend; (d) get your other friends to ignore this friend; (e) tell your parents; (f) be extra nice to the friend; (g) offer to work on a project together; (h) tell the teacher; (i) ignore it; (j) warn the kid that he/she will get it if he/she keeps it up.

Team members will discuss the possible goals and alternatives. Then the actors will choose what the goal is and then act. Be sure to evaluate the alternative solutions that you will do in this situation. Be sure to think out what the consequences would be of doing each alternative. If you did such and such, what would happen? One of the directors will tell the actors when to start and finish.

Each director will have one behavior to observe. These behaviors are posture (straight, slumped over, leaning toward the speaker), gestures (large, small, threatening, withdrawing), voice level (soft, loud), voice tone (pleasant, whining), and eye contact (direct, away). Pay particular attention to eye contact, positive facial expressions and posture.

When the role-play is over, the directors will give feedback to the actor. Feedback starts with asking you what is one thing you liked and what one thing you would do differently. Then the directors will tell what they observed. Role-plays will last 2-5 minutes with 3 minutes for feedback. We will try to give as many actors as possible a chance, and after a while, the actors and directors will switch roles.

Step 9: 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. The new parts grow out of the situation described.

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.)

- In a store, one of your smart-acting friends slipped a candy bar in your jacket pocket. When you got to the check-out stand, you were asked to empty your pockets. The store manager accused you of stealing and said he was going to call your parents. Alternatives: (a) offer to pay for it; (b) run away; (c) offer to work in the store without pay; (d) call your parents before the manager can; (e) try to convince the manager that your friend did it; (f) try to make the manager believe it was just a joke; (g) tell your parents what happened.
- You went to a birthday party where only one kid talked to you. Alternatives: (a) don't go to parties for a while; (b) go with someone; (c) check around next time to see who

- is going; (d) ignore the fact that no one spoke to you; (e) ask your friend if there is something wrong with you; (f) spread lies about the kids who didn't speak to you.
- Five of your friends keep picking on this new kid. It bothers you. Alternatives: (a) tell your friends to stop it; (b) show the kid how to avoid your friends; (c) tell the teacher; (d) get some older kids to threaten your friends; (e) become a friend to the new kid.

REVIEW AND CLOSING

Step 10: End with group affirmations. Reinforce approximations. For example, if a student had difficulty evaluating alternatives, have him/her try a easy problem such as choosing between two people to go to the movies with. Then praise the student for the process he/she went through. Be careful not to leave out a child. Catch a student doing something right. Also continue reinforcing with tokens. Have the group compliment each other.

Example: Now it is time to end the session. You all did a great job in learning about your personal space. Be aware of how your face shows positive feelings. This week, pay attention to how close or how far apart you stand from people in different situations.

Let's end the session by going around the room. Say one thing nice about someone in your team. Then, tell us what you have learned that will help you communicate more effectively.

END OF SESSION 4, MODULE 4