

TOOL SKILL LESSON 4

Concrete Object:	Inflatable shoe(s) Foot/shoe paper mazes (<i>originals provided at the end of lesson</i>)
Concept/Skill:	CLOSED DOOR EXIT
Cue to Use of Tool:	<i>“What do you do when the conflict heats up and the chance of compromise goes down?”</i>
Corresponding Value:	SELF-RESPECT

Tool Users' Instructions

- (1) Ask the students what can be done when the other people in a conflict situation are not willing to stop the put-downs or to see other people's points of view and work toward some type of a compromise. Write their responses on the board and have students categorize them as to which ones will escalate or inflate the conflict and which ones will deflate the conflict (as in the example below).

Inflate

Give back a put-down
Make a “YOU statement”
in a loud screaming voice
Stand your ground and get right in each
other's face until somebody wins

Deflate

Give a put-up
Make an “I statement” or “WE statement”
in a calm, clear voice
Walk away or “EXIT” to calm down and get
help if needed; return when it is safe to
resolve the conflict

- (2) If the students didn't give “walk away” or “EXIT” as one of their responses, make sure to add it to the list under the Deflate category. Hold up the inflatable shoe (and/or point to an EXIT sign in the classroom/school) and emphasize the importance of finding a “cool” way to “EXIT” an unsafe conflict situation when it starts to “heat up.” Point out that once the put-downs, “YOU statements,” loud voices and/or face-offs begin, the conflict is starting to escalate or inflate. At this point, blow air into the inflatable shoe to symbolize what happens when we stay stuck in the conflict and the situation inflates into a bigger and bigger confrontation. Then, squeeze the air out of the inflatable shoe to symbolize what happens when we walk away or “EXIT” the conflict situation in order to deflate further confrontation.
- (3) Have the students discuss different ways to “EXIT” a conflict, in “cool” ways that deflate rather than inflate the original conflict. (e.g., A silent, swift closed-door EXIT away from the other people involved in the conflict will often deflate a confrontation; a noisy EXIT with shouting and shoving while pushing past the other people will only inflate a confrontation further.) Encourage the students to come up with their own criteria for an EXIT that deflates, rather than inflates, the conflict.

TOOL SKILL LESSON 4 (cont.)

Sample EXIT Criteria:

- The EXIT is made right when the conflict starts to escalate or “heat up.” (An easy way for the students to remember this is by using this reminder: “EXIT WHEN IT ESCALATES.”)
- The EXIT is made with the feet not the mouth. Once the conflict situation has started to “heat up” to an unsafe level, get to a safe space first and explain later (if an explanation is needed to repair the relationship and resolve the conflict).
- The direction of the EXIT is away from, not towards, the other people involved in the conflict situation.
- Once the EXIT decision is made, it is important to “close the door” (turn your back) and not turn around to hear or give further put-downs.

- (4) Let the students role play conflict situations in which the put-downs and “You statements” are starting to escalate or inflate. First have the students demonstrate the wrong ways to EXIT (e.g., running towards the bully gives further opportunity for shouting and shoving when they pass each other; staying present for too many put-downs before choosing to EXIT). Then have the students role play the right ways to EXIT, using their own EXIT criteria or the criteria above. If time allows, let each student practice the “closed-door EXIT” to experience how hard it is not to turn around and re-open the door.
- (5) Especially for older students, encourage them to continue to brainstorm other ways to EXIT high-pressure situations when they need more sophisticated “face-saving” and “life-saving” EXIT strategies (e.g., back up silently and swiftly to situate oneself in a safer place near an adult or other groups of students; say that you have to go the bathroom right this second; suddenly remember someplace else you promised to be and EXIT with a simple “See you later!”). Help the students think of pre-prepared “one-liners” to get out of dangerous dares or high-risk situations (e.g., “My parents would ground me for life if I did that so I’m out of here!”). Have the students rehearse selected “one-liners” to use as tools that help them keep their “cool.”