

empower!

Leaders' Guide

Empowerment Curriculum
For the Freshman Academy

Joliet Township High Schools
Pilot Program, 2008-2009

YESS youth experiencing success in school

Developed for YESS by Pamela Woll, MA, CADP

emPOWER! Leaders' Guide

YESS—Youth Experiencing Success in School
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Overview of emPOWER!

emPOWER! is an “empowerment curriculum” developed for high school students through the YESS program—Youth Experiencing Success at School—in Joliet Township High School (JTTHS) District 204. It’s being piloted in self-selected Freshman Advisories, part of the Freshman Academy program at Joliet Central and Joliet West High Schools.

Leaders for the pilot emPOWER! sessions are counselors in the YESS program, with assistance by teachers in the Advisories. Plans for future sessions also include the use of Senior Mentors as assistants. Leaders will collect feedback from each class as the curriculum progresses, to see how it can be improved. Any others who read or use this curriculum are also welcome to contribute feedback.

YESS is an important source of support for JTTHS students. With many school-based services and community-based partners, YESS addresses a wide variety of challenges that students encounter in their lives and school careers.

The ultimate goals of the emPOWER! curriculum are to foster empowerment, to prevent the development and escalation of problems, and to reach the many students who might never seek specialized services for the challenges they face. emPOWER! pursues this goal by providing broad-based empowerment and psychosocial wellness activities and resources to general audiences of students. When students are more aware of their true strengths and the many resources available to them, they are more likely to:

- Relate to others in healthy ways
- Develop their potential and perform well in school
- Stay away from dangerous and destructive activities
- Seek help if they need it

Although it’s called a “curriculum,” emPOWER! is not a series of lessons, but a series of tools for group and individual exploration. The four emPOWER! documents include:

- The emPOWER! Leaders’ Guide, a collection of activities and discussions designed to help students explore and understand themselves, their strengths, and their options
- The emPOWER! Students’ Guide, a collection of resources on related topics that students can read if and when they choose
- The emPOWER! Strengths Inventory, a detailed tool that students can use to explore and identify their own internal and external strengths and resources
- Where to Go For More Resources, a list of written resources available to students, designed to be updated frequently as new resources become available

Tips for Leaders

Looking for Strengths: Though it isn't written into the curriculum in specific places, you'll always want to be on the lookout for students' strengths, and to point them out whenever you see evidence of them. Your doing that regularly will help students learn to do it, too.

Social Safety: The potential cliquishness and social turbulence of high school students is legendary. These undercurrents can make group activities psychologically unsafe for some students, and less than productive for others. It will be up to you to work with the group to set up an atmosphere in which students actually feel like they're all part of one group—even if it's only for the 20 minutes devoted to emPOWER! each week. You will need to challenge and inspire each student to suspend judgment and comparison of self and others and look for the things we all have in common.

Confidentiality: The group will be setting up and signing common guidelines for conduct within the group, and one of these guidelines should be confidentiality—the admonition not to repeat outside the group anything other students say within the group. However, the one big exception to this is your duty as a mandated reporter. You need to make it clear to all students that you're required by law to report any information about a student: 1) being hurt, 2) hurting him- or herself, or 3) hurting others. You'll need to make this clear in the guidelines session, and you may need to bring it up again, if the discussion warrants.

Non-Teaching: In a classroom setting, it may be a bit tough to remember that you're not in a teaching role, teaching a course. But for the purposes of this curriculum, it will be important to call these "sessions" instead of lessons, and "activities" instead of "exercises." **NOTE:** Italicized goals and comments are only for the Leaders' information.

Strengths Inventory and Resources: Each week, at the end of the session, you'll want to take a minute to point out the individual resources that are available in the corresponding section of the *Students' Guide*, and to ask how things are coming with the Strengths Inventory. But you'll also want to emphasize that the Strengths Inventory and resources are **not** "assignments." They're "resources," which students are encouraged—but not required—to use. You can offer help and encouragement, but the rest is up to them.

Timing: If you're a YESS Counselor working in a Freshman Advisory, your time in each 25-minute Advisory will be very limited. emPOWER! sessions are meant to be 20 minutes long, to leave room for Attendance and Announcements, but those 20 minutes will go very quickly. So be sure to arrive in time to get set up and ready before each session begins. You'll also want to use your judgment in the timing of individual activities. They're assigned fairly tight time-frames, with the understanding that you'll have the leeway to stretch some out and condense or eliminate others, based on your group's response. So, for example, if your group is having a highly productive discussion in one activity, you can give the group the option to extend this activity and eliminate or shorten a subsequent one. And if a particular activity just doesn't seem to be working for the students, you can ask them if that's the case. If it is the case, you can give them the option to change it or abandon it, substituting another activity or spending more time on a subsequent activity.

Session One: Strengths

(1) Prep for Session One

1. *Have paper ready for "Group Guidelines"*
2. *(Optional) Prepare a "Worry Box" (gift-wrapped cardboard box with a slit for putting in folded pieces of paper).*

(2) Class Intro to emPOWER!

Presentation and discussion (3 minutes)

1. This is the first session in a 12-session empowerment curriculum.
2. What are some of your definitions of "empowerment"?
3. There is no one "right" definition. Empowerment is about giving people information and resources so they can be as strong as they can be, make decisions, solve problems, and have more influence on what happens in their lives. So, since people are different, empowerment might be different for different people.
4. The 12 sessions include: Strengths, Questioning, Thinking, Feeling, Listening, Talking, Getting along, Families, Relationships, Stress, Coping, and Purpose.
5. This is different from any other class you have. This is not about grades or competition or having the right answer. This is about you and your life. This is about finding your power.
6. We'll be talking as a group, doing activities, and getting handouts you can read if you want to. The handouts will include lists of other sources of information and help.

7. Questions and comments are welcome. They're an important part of this class. We want your feedback to help improve this class in the future.
8. This is part of the YESS Program, an important source of support for you.
9. *Pass out the emPOWER! student notebooks.*

(3) Group Guidelines

Presentation and discussion (5 minutes)

Goal: To set up a safe and respectful atmosphere that will encourage students to participate.

1. Think of a group or class you've been in that successfully built trust and open communication. How did it work?
2. What guidelines can we set up that will help us create that type of trust?
3. *Ask a student to write out a list of the guidelines with markers as they go along.*
4. *Even if the students don't bring it up, make sure confidentiality is included in the list. Other than that, use the EXACT words of the students*
5. *When the list is done, have each student sign it, and post it in the room.*
6. *If the group decides to add to the list in a later session, they can do it.*

(4) Worry Box
(Optional)

Introduction (2
minutes)

Goal: To give students an option that might help lower their stress levels and clear their minds so they can concentrate on and participate in emPOWER! sessions.

1. *Bring out the Worry Box.*
2. *Many students' lives are hard, and we all worry sometimes.*
3. *The worry box will be a safe place where you can choose to put your worries while you focus on emPOWER. At the end of the year, we'll destroy the worries, **without reading them.***
4. *Show them where you'll keep the worry box.*

(5) Stuff

Activity and Discussion
(8 minutes)

Goal: To help students become aware of the relative levels of ease and comfort with which they identify their strengths and deficits.

1. *Turn to Pages 1-3 and 1-4 in your Students' Guide, "Stuff"*
2. *On Page 1-3 ("Positive Stuff"), take 2 minutes to write down as many positive things about yourself as you can think of.*
3. *On Page 1-4 ("Negative Stuff"), take 2 minutes to write down as many negative things about yourself as you can think of.*

4. Show of hands: Who found the positive things easier to think of, and who found the negative easier to think of? (*Count the hands.*)
5. Pair up (*groups of 3 are also okay*).
6. Talk about why people might sometimes find it hard to think of a lot of positive things to say about themselves. (*Give them 2 minutes.*)
7. *Bring the group together again, and ask the group to talk about what they learned in their discussions—but not to repeat anything their partners said about themselves.*

(6) Strengths Inventory

Introduction (5 minutes)

Goal: *To help students become happier, safer, and more effective by giving them a framework for exploring, identifying, valuing, and developing their strengths.*

1. *Ask students to find the "Strengths Inventory" included in their emPOWER! materials, so they can look through it as you talk.*
2. One thing you'll be doing this year is making your own Strengths Inventory. You'll get time to work on it in Advisory sessions, and you can keep it here, to keep it safe. It doesn't have to be done right away. And if you really don't want to, you don't have to do it. But I encourage you to do it.
3. This is a private exercise. We'll never ask you to show your inventory to anyone.
4. The Inventory is organized in 10 areas of life:
 - The first 5 areas look at some of the strengths and skills you'll be exploring in emPOWER! sessions.
 - The next 5 areas are other areas where you may have strengths.

5. Each area lists a whole bunch of possible strengths. Nobody has all of them, or even most of them. But for every strength you do have, there are two levels:
 - Already "Good at" this strength, or
 - "Getting better at" this strength
6. This is just an inventory, to show you how strong you are. It doesn't compare you with other people. You might have 100 little strengths, and your friend might have 5 big ones, but there's no way to tell who's "stronger." Everybody's strong in different ways.
7. You should work on this in whatever order works best for you:
 - We'll be talking about some of these things in emPOWER! sessions, so that will help you think of things for those areas.
 - But you don't have to do the Areas in order.
 - You can take time to really think about these.
 - Again, you shouldn't mark something in all the strengths, just the ones you have and the ones you're working on.
 - There are also spaces in each Area for other strengths that aren't listed.
 - You can start by going through and marking whichever page seems easy to you, starting wherever you want to start.
 - You can always go through later and add stuff, or change a "getting better at" to a "good at."
8. At any point, you can have more copies of this handout, or you can get it in Microsoft Word and do it on the computer.
9. Any questions? And if you think of questions later, just ask them.

(7) Session Wrap-Up

1. *Ask students to turn to the resource guide called "Where to Go for More Resources," included with their emPOWER! materials.*
2. These are resources you can find in the library, on web sites, or through the YESS Program. You'll be learning a lot more about YESS in the emPOWER! sessions.
3. Next week's topic is "Questioning." It's about looking carefully at our thoughts and judgments, and the things we hear, to:
 - See if we think they're really true
 - Figure out what else we need to find out
 - See how the answers to our questions might affect our beliefs and decisions
4. *End Session One.*

Session Two: Questioning

(1) Intro to Session Two

Discussion (8 minutes)

1. One of the first steps toward empowerment is to get some power over:
 - What we think
 - What we believe
 - What affects our thoughts and beliefs
2. This doesn't mean the power to believe things that are lies, or the power not to believe in things we know are true. It's the power to tell the difference.
 - Do you think most of us have power over what we think and believe? Why or why not?
 - Once we get that power, what we feel and what we do fall into place a lot better.
3. And an important first step toward that power is the ability to question the things we hear, see, think, believe, expect, etc. It's the power to think for ourselves. Why would questioning things help us get power over what we believe?
4. Some of those questions might be "out loud" questions that we ask other people. Others might be questions we just ask ourselves, if it wouldn't be safe or respectful to ask others.
5. No matter how strongly we think or believe something, we have the right to question it. If it's an important belief, called a "conviction," questioning will just make it stronger. How do you think questioning an important belief might make it stronger?
6. No matter how intensely we feel something, we have the ability to question where that feeling came from and decide what to do with it. How easy is that to do when you feel something strongly?

7. No matter how loyal we are, no matter much we like, love, or admire someone, and no matter how much we fear them, we have the right and the ability to question what they say.
 - How easy is it to question what somebody says if you really admire them?
 - How easy is it to question what somebody says if you fear them?
 - If you don't believe what someone says, but you think he or she might hurt you if you question it out loud, can you just raise the question in your head and not say it out loud? How might that help you?
 - It's important to know when it's safe to ask questions out loud, and when we should just ask them in our heads.
8. The rest of this session is about practicing questioning, so you can get the habit of doing it.

(2) Game: What's the Question?

Interactive Game (10 minutes)

Goal: To help students get in the habit of questioning their thoughts and the things others say to them—whether those questions are internal (questions they ask themselves but don't voice) or external (questions they pose to people who make claims, criticisms, demands, invitations, etc.). The purpose of repeating "What's the question?" each time is to get that question imprinted in students' minds, so they're more likely to "hear" it and remember to question what they think and hear.

1. We're going to play a game called "What's the question." I need a volunteer.
2. Give the volunteer one of the examples on pages L-2-4 through L-2-7. Choose the one you think your class might enjoy most or relate to most easily.

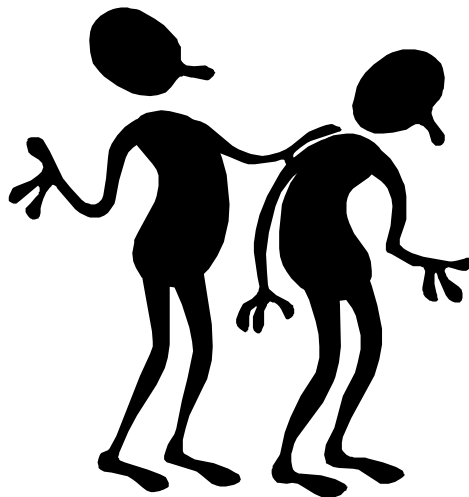
3. The volunteer is going to play a role and read several statements from a sheet. Each time (he/she) reads a statement, I'd like you to do two things:
 - First, all ask together, "**What's the question?**"
 - Then, think of some questions you might ask this person based on what (he/she) just said. The volunteer doesn't have to answer the questions. This is just to give you practice thinking of questions.
4. *(To the volunteer):* Read the handout up through the first bullet point.
5. *(To the class, after the volunteer stops reading):* Now everybody ask yourself, all together, out loud, "**What's the question?**" *(Wait while they do that.)*
6. Now start asking the volunteer questions that challenge what (he/she) just said. These can be questions you'd ask this person out loud, or questions you'd just ask yourself, as a way of keeping yourself from believing something that might not be true.
7. *If they answer the things the volunteer says with statements, that's okay. But then ask them if they have any questions, too.*
8. *If everybody's participating, you can keep it unstructured. If people are hanging back, you might call on people.*
9. *When people run out of questions, ask the volunteer to read the next bullet point, and repeat the process.*
10. *Keep going until he/she has read all the bullet points and people have asked all their questions.*
11. The whole point is for you to get the words "What's the question" etched into your brain, so you'll remember to question things. It's also practice in questioning things.
13. So, what about this questioning process?
 - How did it feel?
 - How many people thought it was hard?
 - Why was it hard? What was hard about it?
 - How many people thought it was easy?
 - Why was it easy? What was easy about it?
 - What could you do to make it get easier?

I am . . .

Your Favorite Gossip

I'm here to tell you the truth about the person you just **THINK** is your best friend.

- He really isn't your friend.
- I heard he was talking about you behind your back, and it was really bad.
- I don't know what he said, but I heard it was really bad.
- I also heard he was messing around with you-know-who!
- What do you really know about him, anyway?



I am . . .

An Electronics Salesman

I'm here to tell you about a new product you can't do without!

- This is no primitive little thing like an i-phone. This makes the i-phone look like a box of crayons.
- Of course our product takes pictures and makes phone calls and uses the internet and plays songs and movies—all at the same time. Just like an i-phone.
- But our product also unlocks your car, opens your garage door, turns up the heat on your electric blanket, works as a remote for your TV and DVD player and cable box, gets cash from an ATM machine, shaves your legs, squirts toothpaste, and fires real bullets. All at the same time, if you want it to.
- You can't do without this. You know you can't. Are you ready to sign on the dotted line?

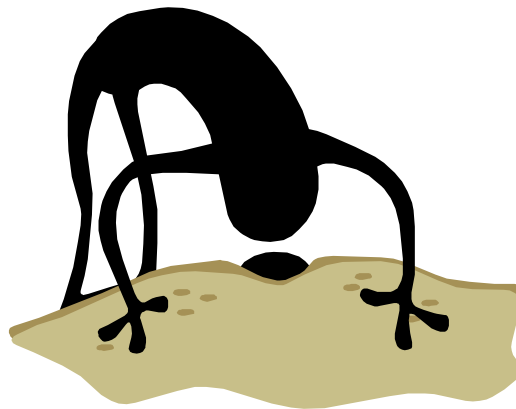


I am . . .

The Voice of Fear!

You're about to get up and give a speech to a large group of students, and I'm here to tell you:

- It's going to be a **DISASTER!!!**
- You're not prepared.
- You're not as good as the guy who just got up and gave his speech.
- Your topic is really stupid.
- You didn't get enough sleep last night.
- You're **UGLY!**
- You need to make some kind of excuse and get out of here before you make a complete fool of yourself.



I am . . .

Your Worst Teacher

I'm here to convince you that you can never make anything of yourself!

- You're the worst student in the class.
- You just don't have what it takes.
- It wouldn't be worth my time to help you learn this. You just can't learn it.
- You should drop out of school and go sell drugs or something.



(3) Session Wrap-up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. *Tell students about the resources in this section of their Students' Guide, for example:*
 - "Questioning" gives you some examples of questions you can learn to ask yourself when you're dealing with difficult feelings and situations.
 - These are not homework, just things you can look at if you want to.
2. Also, don't forget the sources of information and help in "Where to Go for More Resources" (one of the emPOWER! materials) and in the school library.
3. Has anybody had a chance to start on the Strengths Inventory that you got last Session?
 - What's that like for you?
 - Does anybody have any questions or confusion about how to do that?
4. Any questions or thoughts about any of this?
5. That's it for this week. Now that we've tackled "Questioning," next week's topic is "Thinking."

Session Three: Thinking

(1) Intro to Session Three

1. This session is about the ultimate empowerment: Thinking—the power over our thoughts and what we allow in our heads. We're going to think about thinking and talk about thinking.

(2) The Inside of Your Head

Drawing Activity (10 Minutes)

Goal: To encourage "metacognition" (thinking about thinking) in a creative way, by giving students a chance to draw and talk about representations of their thoughts. Combining the process of drawing and "thinking about thinking" also uses both hemispheres of the brain, which can help integrate brain activity.

1. Before we talk about thinking, we're going to draw about thinking. I'd like you to turn to Page 3-2 of your Students' Guide, the page called "Your Head."
2. On that page, I'd like you to draw the inside of your head. First you make a big outline of your head—it doesn't have to really look like your head.
3. Inside that outline, draw pictures that show the kinds of thoughts that float around in there.
4. *The Leaders should do the drawing activity, too.*
5. *Give them 5 minutes to finish.*

6. *Ask students to pair up and bring their pictures. (If there's an uneven number, one student can pair up with a leader.)*
7. *Give them 5 minutes each to show one another their pictures and tell why they drew what they drew there.*
8. *Bring the group back together again. Was there anything you learned about your own head that you'd like to mention?*
9. *You'll be looking at your drawing in the next session, "Feeling."*

(3) Thinking About Thinking

Discussion (8 Minutes)

***Goal:** To help normalize the confusion that students sometimes feel, help them identify some challenges to their thought processes, and give them a chance to try becoming observers of those processes.*

1. There are a few lucky people who have really orderly thoughts inside their heads. But most of us walk around with spaghetti in our heads, thinking that everybody else's heads must be better.
2. What are some kinds of thoughts that sometimes make it hard to be inside our heads, or hard to think clearly? I'll give you an example. *(Leader gives an example from his/her own head.)*
3. What role do feelings play in making it hard to think?
4. What are some things outside the head that can make it hard to think clearly inside the head? People? Noise? Stress?
5. How much influence do you have on what goes on inside your head?
6. What kinds of things have you found that can make it easier to be inside your head?
7. If you were going to leave your head for a couple of months and somebody else were going to take over and live in there, what kind of advice would you give that person?

(4) Session Wrap Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. After this session would be a good time to start working on Area One of your Strengths Inventory, "Managing Thoughts and Feelings," if you haven't already.
2. Has anybody run into any questions in working on your Strengths Inventory?
3. There's a resource in your *Students' Guide* called "10 Things That Make it Easier to Think Better" (Page 3-2). It's not homework, but it talks about some things that might help you think better, and help make the inside of your head an easier place to be.
4. There are also a couple of other materials in there.
5. And as there is for every session, there are also some more resources you can find on the subject of "Thinking" in "Where to Go for More Resources" and in the school library.
6. *Give people a chance to ask questions, and close the session.*

Session Four: Feeling

(1) Prep for Session Four

1. Find a Koosh Ball, a Nerf Ball, a ball of yarn, an eraser, or some other thing that students can throw to one another and not get hurt or knock anything over.
2. Write at the top of the board: "Events . . . Thoughts → Feelings . . . Reactions → Results."
3. Just under that, print the heading, "How did it Work?" and two column headings: "Not so Well" and "Pretty Well."

(2) Intro to Session Four

1. Last time we talked about Thinking, so this session is about Feeling. If we know what we feel and choose how to react to our feelings, those feelings can be a big source of power. If we don't know how to do those things, we can lose power.
2. This session is about:
 - Noticing the connections between our thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Let's start by looking at the pictures of your thoughts that you drew last week.
 - Coming to understand that we really can choose our thoughts, and we really can choose our reactions, no matter how we feel.
 - Learning ways of managing our feelings—not changing them or getting rid of them, but managing them.

(3) Game: Bounce

Instructions (2 Minutes) *Goal: To make students aware of how thoughts lead to feelings and reactions lead to results, to introduce the option that they have choices concerning their thoughts and reactions, and to give them opportunities to practice choosing different thoughts and reactions.*

1. This is a game called "Bounce." We're going to use this ball to follow the ways our thoughts lead to feelings, and our reactions lead to results. *(Point to the board where you have all four written down.)*
 - What do you think about the idea that thoughts lead to feelings. Does that make sense to you?
 - What about the idea that our reactions lead to results? Have you seen that happen?
2. I'm going to name something that happens, we'll call it an event. I'll ask everybody to pretend it's happening to them.
3. Then I'll throw the ball to somebody and ask you for a thought that you'd have if that happened to you. We're not looking for the perfect thought we should have, just a thought that we might really have.
4. Then you'll throw it to somebody and ask them how they might feel if they had that thought. Again, we're not looking for the perfect feeling, just a feeling we might really have.
5. Then they'll throw it to somebody else and ask them how they might react if they had that feeling. And that doesn't have to be a perfect reaction either.
6. Then the person they throw it to comes up with a result—something that might happen if we had that reaction.
7. Then after we've tried that, we'll mix it up a little. I'll tell you how we'll do that when the time comes.

8. So, for example:

- An "event" might be when you look in your wallet and find out some money you thought was there isn't there.
- One thought might be "Somebody stole it!" Another might be "I'm always losing everything!"
- Feelings might include anger or shame or anxiety
- Some reactions might be to accuse somebody, or to cover up the loss by lying about where it went.
- Results might include getting in trouble or losing a friend.

Interactive Game (9
Minutes)

1. Let's try it.

2. *Read one of the Events from Page L-4-4, and throw the ball to someone.*

- *Ask that person to name a **thought** that (he/she) might have and throw the ball to someone else.*
- *Ask that person to name a **feeling** that (he/she) might have and throw the ball to someone else.*
- *Ask that person to name a **reaction** that (he/she) might have and throw the ball to someone else.*
- *Ask that person to name a **result** that reaction might bring.*
- *After you get a "result," ask the "result" person to throw the ball back to the person who named the reaction.*
- *Remind that student what the feeling and reaction were, and ask him/her for a different reaction to the same feeling.*
- *When he/she throws it to another student, ask for another result based on that reaction.*
- That's one example of the fact that it's possible to react to the same feeling in different ways. It's a matter of choice.
- Now let's try working backwards: Let's start with the result you'd like to get, then throw the ball to someone.
- What kind of reaction would be most likely to bring on that result?

3. Read the same Event again, and ask another student to come up with a different thought—one that might lead to a different feeling—then throw it to another student.
 - *That student comes up with a feeling that follows that thought, throws it, etc.*
 - That's an example of the fact that we can have different thoughts come out of the same experience. We can see or interpret the same event in many different ways.
 - *Go back and forth among the process points—events, thoughts, feelings, reactions, results—so students can get a feeling for trying on different choices in the same circumstances, and seeing their different outcomes.*
4. *If there's time, read another Event, and follow the same process.*
5. What did this activity tell you?
6. How much control do we have over events? Our thoughts? Our feelings? Our reactions? Their results?
7. You'll find that we have more control over our thoughts and our reactions, but our thoughts have a lot of power in shaping our feelings. Our reactions can also have a lot of power in shaping the results of our actions, and they can help shape events.

Events—A Few Examples

You can substitute other kinds of events for these, if you have others that would seem particularly relevant to your students.

- You get a bad grade on something you thought you were doing well in.
- Somebody you really like turns you down when you invite him/her out.
- Somebody tells you a nasty rumor that's going around about your best friend.
- Your little sister or brother messes up your favorite shirt.
- In a group of friends, somebody says something really nasty about your favorite recording artist.
- One of your parents is really angry about something that has nothing to do with you, and starts taking it out on you.
- You've been assigned to work with a partner on a class project, and your partner shows up for class and hasn't done his part of the work.
- A person in class tells you someone is spreading a nasty rumor about you and your girlfriend/boyfriend.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

(4) Handling Feelings

Discussion (7 Minutes)

Goal: To introduce students to the concept of managing feelings, and give them a chance to evaluate the relative benefits of different ways of managing feelings.

1. We can't control our feelings—they're just there. They are what they are.
2. It can cause problems if we try to escape our feelings, or try to make them go away, just because they're uncomfortable or we don't know how to handle them.
3. They don't really go away, they just go underground and cause more problems later.
4. What works better is just to learn how to handle them.
5. What are some ways of handling or "managing" difficult feelings that you've tried using?
6. *Leader: for each method mentioned by a student:*
 - *Ask how well that worked*
 - *Write the method down on the board, either on the "Not So Well" side or the "Pretty Well" side.*
7. Sometimes it's harder to handle our feelings when they're really intense and we have a lot of adrenaline going through our bodies. Last session you got a lot of good information on this and things to practice in your Students' Guide.
8. There are also a lot more suggestions in Session Four of your Students' Guide.

(5) Session Wrap-Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. After this session would be a good time to keep working on Area One of your Strengths Inventory, "Managing Thoughts and Feelings," if you haven't already.
 - Has anybody run into any questions in working on your Strengths Inventory?
2. There are some good suggestions for handling feelings in your Students' Guide. Again, they're not homework, but they might give you some ideas .
3. And there are resources that can help you in the list called, "Where to Find More Resources."
4. *Give people a chance to ask questions, and close the session.*

Session Five: Listening

(1) Prep for Session Five

1. *Have a board ready to write down some things from the activity.*

(2) Intro to Session Five

1. This session is about Listening.
2. We pay a lot of attention to developing our speaking skills, or our ways of using language to say what we want to say.
3. Most of us don't pay as much attention to the art of listening.
4. But many projects have failed because somebody didn't understand what somebody else said—but they didn't know it. If they knew how to listen better, they would have succeeded.
5. Friendships have broken up. Marriages have broken up. Students have flunked out.
6. Fights have started between people who basically agreed, but they didn't know it. People have died over misunderstandings.
7. So we're going to spend a session talking about Listening.

(3) Activity: I hear you—not!

Dyad and Large-Group Activity (8 Minutes)

Goal: To plant the seeds of good listening by giving students a visceral sense of what it feels like not to be listened to, and letting them compare that with what it feels like to be listened to.

1. This activity is about telling the difference between listening and not really listening. Just because you hear somebody, doesn't mean you're listening to them.
2. Have you ever talked to somebody who wasn't really listening? Remember what that was like and pair up (if there's an uneven number, one student can pair with a Leader).
3. One person will be the speaker and the other will be the listener.
4. Speaker, talk for 2 minutes about some important event in your life—happy or awful.
5. Listener, practice the worst listening skills possible.
6. *Give them 2 minutes to do this.*
7. Okay, speakers, what kinds of things were the listeners doing, and how did you feel? *(Write responses on the board.)*
8. Okay, now switch roles. The old speaker is now the listener.
9. New speaker, do the same thing, talk about an important event in your life.
10. Listener, practice your **best** listening habits.
11. *Give them 2 minutes to do this.*
12. Okay, speakers, what kinds of things were the listeners doing, and how did you feel? *(Write responses on the board.)*

The materials in this section of your Students' Guide have a lot of examples of different ways of not listening, and ways of listening. Again, reading these is not an assignment, but it might be useful.

(4) Active Listening

Dyad And Large-Group
Activity (10 Minutes)

Goal: To introduce students to basic concepts and skills of Active Listening, and give them a chance to try it out.

1. As you may have noticed in the last activity, not being listened to is uncomfortable. We feel like we're not being respected. And it hurts when we're talking to someone we value, but we're not being heard.
2. Does anybody know what "Active Listening" is?
3. *(If nobody answers correctly):* Active Listening is a way of making sure we're listening and finding out if we really understand what other people are saying.
4. You do this in situations where it's important to get it right.
5. What can sometimes happen if you think you know what people said, but you really didn't?
6. There are four steps to Active Listening:
 - First you wait until they've said what they're saying.
 - Then you say something like, "Let me make sure I've got this."
 - Then you summarize what you think they just said, only in your own words.
 - Then you ask them if you have it right. If they correct what you said, you try summarizing it again in your own words, to make sure you have it right.
7. I understand how this might be a little awkward when you first try it, but it does get easier. You learn to do it in your own style.
8. So try this with your partner once. Switch roles again, so the last listener gets to be the speaker. Give the listener directions to get from here to your next class.
9. Listener, use Active Listening to make sure you get the directions right.

10. *(Give them 2 minutes.)*
11. Okay, switch roles. New speaker, give directions to get from here to your next class.
12. Listener, use Active Listening.
13. *(Give them 2 minutes.)*
14. How did that work?
 - Did it feel weird?
 - What was hard about it?
 - If you had more time to practice, could it get easier?

(5) Session Wrap-Up

- Discussion (2 Minutes)
1. How could poor listening skills cause problems in your life?
 2. How could good listening skills empower you?
 3. After this session would be a good time to start working on Area Two of your Strengths Inventory, "Communication," if you haven't already.
 - Has anybody run into any questions in working on your Strengths Inventory?
 4. In your *Students' Guide*, there are some resources to help you in this area. *(Name and describe briefly the resources in this section of the Students' Guide.)*
 5. *Give people a chance to ask questions, and close the session.*

Session Six: Talking

(1) Prep for Session Six

1. *Move the furniture away from the longest wall in the room, and put a desk or chair at either end of that wall, facing inward.*
2. *Above one desk/chair, post a sign with the word "Direct." Above the other, post a sign with the word "Indirect."*

(2) Intro to Session Six

1. Words are powerful. In this session we're going to talk about how you can increase your personal power by strengthening your communication.
2. There are a lot of things we could say, but we're going to focus on the differences between indirect and direct communication.
3. There are also materials in your Students' Guide on the idea of "boundaries."

**(3) Activity: Two
Kinds of Communication**

Activity Instructions (2
Minutes)

Goal: To make students aware of the differences between direct and indirect communication, aware of their own communication styles, and more understanding and accepting of people with other communication styles.

1. People don't really talk about this a lot, but there are really two kinds of communication: Indirect and Direct.
2. What do those two words mean? *(This is not about the grammatical rules for direct and indirect verbs/sentences.)*
3. Direct communication is when you come out and say, in words, exactly what you think, or exactly what you want the other person to do. Direct doesn't mean nasty or bossy. It just means you don't dance around it.
4. Indirect communication is when you "sort of" say something by saying or doing something else to give the person the general idea, without coming out and saying it.
5. Direct and indirect is **not** the same as more forceful and less forceful. For example:
 - Direct communication can be done in a gentle way, like asking someone quietly and politely to stop doing something, or telling someone you like them.
 - Indirect communication can be done very forcefully, like slamming the door, giving someone a dirty look, or swearing at them without telling them why.
6. Direct and indirect are different styles of communication. Most people have communication styles that are more toward one end than the other.
7. Different cultures sometimes lean toward different communication styles. Different families also tend to lean toward one or the other communication style.

8. Most of the time we don't think of it as having one communication style, and other people having a different communication style.
9. Most of the time we just think we're right and people who are different from us are wrong.
10. Actually, we're wrong about that. There really are two different styles of communication, and both of them are OK.
11. This activity is about understanding a little better the differences between those two styles, and figuring out where you are.
12. I need two volunteers. One of you will be somebody with an indirect communication style, and the other will be somebody with a direct style. You won't have to make things up.
13. *Give the volunteers their Communication Sheets, Pages L-6-5 and L-6-6, and ask them to sit in the chairs labeled for them.*
14. We do this activity walking around. I'm going to name a situation, and let the indirect person and the direct person say what they'd say in that situation.
15. Then I'd like you to show us which response you think is better, by walking toward one end or the other. You can be way on one end, or just a little toward one end, or right in the middle. There are many points between Indirect and Direct.
16. If at any time anybody says anything that makes you want to change your response, you can move to a different point.

Activity: (11 Minutes)

1. Here's the first situation. *(Read a situation from Pages L-6-4 and L-6-5. Choose the situations you want to use, and do as many as you have time for, or want to do.)*
 - *Ask the Indirect person to give a response.*
 - *Ask the Direct person to give a response.*
2. Now, each person in the class, move to a place that shows which response you think is better.
3. *Ask people at various points on the continuum between Indirect and Direct to tell why they're standing where they are.*

4. Does it feel to you like one person is right and the other person is wrong? Why or why not?

Activity Processing (5 Minutes)

1. Let's all go back to our chairs.
2. What did that activity tell you?
3. Why do Direct people do things the way they do?
4. What do Indirect people tend to think of the way Direct people do things? (*Example: They think they're being rude.*)
5. Why do Indirect people do things the way they do?
6. What do Direct people tend to think of the way Indirect people do things? (*Example: They think they're being dishonest.*)
7. Do you think it's possible to be both at different times? How many people use different styles with different people? How many start with indirect and move up to direct?
8. How much of your style—how direct you are, how indirect you are—may be related to your culture of origin? How much might be related to your gender or your age?
9. Does it sometimes make it harder for you to understand or accept people whose cultural background or age or gender is different from yours?
10. Have you ever seen it cause problems when one person is talking Indirect and the other is talking Direct?
11. Whether or not you think they have a right to be that way, would you be interested in learning how to communicate better with people who have the opposite style?
12. There are some tips for doing that in your *Students' Guide*, on Page 6-2, in the section called "Direct and Indirect Communication Styles."

Communication Sheet: Indirect

Situation	What You Say
1. You want somebody to take out the garbage.	That garbage is getting pretty full.
2. You want to go to a particular movie that's just come out, and you want somebody to go with you.	Hey, I heard that new _____ movie is pretty good. Have you heard anything about it?
3. A friend ask you to go to a movie that you don't really want to see.	I'm not sure if I can go.
4. You're out with some friends, and you're really hungry. You're outside a restaurant.	Is anybody hungry?
5. Your partner in the class project is late in getting his part of the project done, and you're getting nervous.	How's your work on the project coming?
6. Somebody offers you a kind of doughnut that you really hate.	That's OK, I don't want to take your last donut.
7. A friend offers you a pill of some kind (you don't know what it is).	You don't really want to give that away!?

Communication Sheet: Direct

Situation	What You Say
1. You want somebody to take out the garbage.	Would you take out the garbage?
2. You want to go to a particular movie that's just come out, and you want somebody to go with you.	Do you want to go to that new _____ movie?
3. A friend ask you to go to a movie that you don't really want to see.	I don't really want to see that movie. Would you be interested in seeing something else instead?
4. You're out with some friends, and you're really hungry. You're outside a restaurant.	I'm really hungry. Anybody mind if we go in here?
5. Your partner in the class project is late in getting his part of the project done, and you're getting nervous.	We're coming down to the deadline on this project. I've done my part, and I need to know if you'll be finishing your part, too.
6. Somebody offers you a kind of doughnut that you really hate.	No, thanks.
8. A friend offers you a pill of some kind (you don't know what it is).	No, thanks. I don't take any drugs.

(4) Session Wrap-Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. After this session would be a good time to keep working on Area Two of your Strengths Inventory, "Communication," if you haven't finished it.
2. Has anybody run into any questions in working on your Strengths Inventory?
3. There are some materials in your *Students' Guide* that talks about this. They're not homework, but they give:
 - Some more information on "cross-cultural communication," when one person is Direct and the other is Indirect
 - Some information on the idea of "Boundaries" that can be really helpful in dealing with people. Boundaries are the imaginary lines between our "stuff"—our business, our responsibilities—and other people's "stuff." You can learn to set boundaries to protect your privacy, or to keep people from pushing you around or taking advantage of you.
4. *Give people a chance to ask questions, and close the session.*

Indirect

Direct

Session Seven: Getting Along

(1) Intro to Session Seven

Instructions (1 Minute)

1. This session is called "Getting Along." It's really about what to do when it's hard to get along—when there's some kind of conflict, even if it's just a problem that people disagree about.
2. Getting hung up in the wrong conflicts can really take away our power. And knowing how to manage conflict can really increase our personal power.
3. Most of the information in this session comes from a book called *Conflict Unraveled* by Andra Medea. It's in your school library, and this section of your emPOWER! notebook has some information from that book. It has a lot of good advice.

(2) Talking About Conflict

Large-Group Discussion (7 Minutes)

Goal: *To make people more aware of the types of conflict that tend to arise in their lives, the issues and values underlying those conflicts, the results of those conflicts, and the ways they tend to feel in those conflicts.*

1. Everybody has conflict. Some people enjoy it more than others, but basically we all have trouble with it sometimes.
2. I'd like each person to think of one kind of conflict that causes problems for you.

Session Seven: Getting Along

- It could be a kind of conflict that comes up often in your life, like a running battle with a family member.
 - It could be a kind of conflict that really bugs you, like when somebody gets mad at you and won't tell you why.
 - It could be the kind of conflict that scares you, like when somebody hits you or threatens you with violence.
3. What are some kinds of conflict that you sometimes have?
 4. What are some things that are at stake when this kind of conflict comes up—things that you're defending, or trying to get? (*Elicit things like "respect," "property," "money," "being right," "safety," etc.*)
 5. Does the conflict usually get you those things? Does it usually do what you want it to do?
 6. Open to section 7 of your Students' Guide, Page 7-2, with a bunch of pictures of little guys in conflict.
 7. Now put a check under the little guy who looks most like how you feel when you're in the middle of this kind of conflict. There might be more than one, or you might like to draw your own.
 8. Next we're going to talk about one way of making conflict a little easier on you, and there are some resources in your Students' Guide.
 9. But first, there are some kinds of conflict situations that are physically dangerous—like a family member or boyfriend who's hitting you, a dangerous neighborhood or gang territory that you have to walk through, or a bully who just hits you or threatens you just because he or she can.
 10. If you're in one of these situations, please get help. You can ask me—but understand that I have to report it if you're in danger—or you can see the Student Assistance Program Coordinator, or the Guidance Counselor or school Social Worker, or call one of the numbers in the YESS program. The numbers are in the booklet called "Where to Go for More Resources."

(3) Flooding

Large-Group Discussion
(7 Minutes)

Goal: To make students more aware of the adrenaline flooding reactions they might have in times of stress and threat, and help them understand and normalize those reactions with a simple explanation of the underlying physiology.

1. One problem with conflict is that the part of our brain that gets involved in conflict is hard to control. We call it the "survival brain."
2. The survival brain lives deep in the center of the brain. It's a very old, very primitive part of the brain, and it thinks it has to protect us from rampaging rhinos and stuff.
3. When the survival brain feels threatened, it sends out a rush of chemicals so we can run away, or pick up a big stick and beat off the rhinos, or play dead until they go away.
4. That part of our brain doesn't know we really live in Joliet and we don't see many rampaging rhinos. With most of the conflicts we have, it won't help to run away, pick up a big stick, or play dead. Those things will usually make it worse.
5. So we have all these chemicals running through us, with nowhere to go. Some of these are "fight or flight" chemicals, like adrenaline. They can cause a lot of trouble.
6. When we feel angry, or scared, or anxious, or really guilty, our brain sends out a lot of adrenaline. It's called "flooding."
7. Who's ever had that? What happens when you get that?
8. Here are some things that might happen when you're flooding:
 - Your heart might beat faster, or harder.
 - Your face might get red, or you might even see red.
 - Your arms might go numb or feel like people are sticking them with little needles.
 - Your thoughts might race, or your mind might go blank.
 - You might not be able to talk, or you might not be able to stop talking.

9. When we're flooding, all the adrenaline is keeping us from getting to the smarter parts of our brain. It's keeping us down there in the survival brain. So:
 - We have a hard time thinking of different choices. We think there's just one choice—like to scream or run away or hit somebody, or to freeze like a deer in the headlights. Has that happened to anybody?
 - We have a hard time thinking of the possible consequences of our actions. We just want to act now, and think later. Anybody ever have that?
 - We have a hard time thinking of how to say things. We say things we don't mean or things that don't make sense, or we can't talk at all. Anybody ever have that happen?
10. Trouble is that the other people involved in the conflict are probably flooding too. How can that cause problems, if two people are both flooding?

(4) Flood Control

Demonstration (3
Minutes)

Goal: To give students some simple techniques for controlling adrenaline flooding reactions.

1. There are some simple things you can do to stop your flooding. We'll try out a couple of things here.
2. The problem is that the adrenaline is in your body, and it needs to get used up. You do that by exercising your large muscles—arms, legs, back, stomach, lungs, etc.
3. So if you can find a calm way to get away from the situation—or do this before you go into the situation—you can try doing jumping jacks, or taking a very fast walk, or just swinging your arms. Stand up and try it for a minute.

4. Whether or not you can get away, you can try deep, slow breathing. Let's try it for a minute. That will help in a lot of ways. Our brains get most of their oxygen from the bottom of our lungs, so breathing deeply really helps.
5. And if you're sitting there and you're flooding and you can't get away, you can just try picking up the chair you're sitting in. Let's try it.
6. Nobody will even know you're doing it, but it will use up some of the adrenaline and make it easier to think.
7. Or if you're sitting at a heavy table that you can't pick up, you can try to pick up the table. (But don't do it with a small table or a light table, because you might flip it.)
8. What are some other things you can think of that might help control flooding?

(5) Session Wrap-Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. The "Getting Along" section of your Students' Guide has a little more information on conflict, including how to bring down your own flooding, and how to deal with flooding in other people. It really makes a difference.
2. The "Resources" list also has some places to go for more information or help.
3. In your Strengths Inventory, getting along is another part of the area called Communication.
4. Have you learned anything about your strengths today that might go in the Strengths Inventory?
5. How are things going with the Strengths Inventory?

Session Eight: Families

(1) Prep for Session Eight

Special Note for Session Eight: More than any other session so far, this one has the potential to be emotionally "loaded." In discussions, be prepared to handle any expressions of stigma or crisis by students. Don't criticize students, but be prepared to:

- *Counter labeling or stigmatizing terminology by suggesting less stigmatizing words*
- *Use non-labeling terms (e.g., "parents who drink too much" rather than "alcoholic parents"; "challenges" or "troubles" rather than "problems" or "dysfunction")*
- *Explain (if it comes up) that mental illnesses or problems with alcohol or drugs or gambling are really illnesses, and that people don't **choose** to have them*
- *Explain that children can't cause, control, or cure their parents' illnesses*
- *Counter dangerous suggestions (like if a student suggests that someone with a volatile parent go home and confront him or her about a problem) with safe advice (like **not** confronting the volatile parent, but seeking help through the YESS program instead)*
- *Suggest immediate safety measures, and/or make referrals, if indicated*
- *Be honest about the fact that you are required to report it if you learn that a student is being (or is about to be) hurt, hurting others, or hurting him- or herself*
- *Always bring it back to the fact that these are common challenges that lots of people and lots of families face*

(2) Intro to Session Eight

Instructions (1 Minute)

1. This session is on families—all kinds of families. This is about the families that people really have, not the ones you see on TV.
2. We need a volunteer artist, someone who can do quick stick figures to draw what we're talking about. But you can't make them perfect, because we're going to be talking very quickly.
3. Go up there and stand at the board, and get ready to draw. You'll be drawing the families that people are describing. Any way you can think of to represent what they're saying is fine. And you don't have to get all of it down, or even most of it. Just draw some stuff.
4. While the artist is up here, you can draw a family yourself if you want to. You don't have to, but you can.

(3) Families

Group Discussion (10 Minutes)

Goal: To normalize the diversity of family situations and the presence of challenges in families, and to underscore the existence of strengths in spite of these challenges.

1. Let's just brainstorm—say anything that comes into your mind—no right or wrong answers. What do families look like? Feel like? What do they do? What do they have? *(Keep asking these kinds of questions until they run out of things.)*
2. What are some strengths that families have? *(Elicit a wide range of strengths, e.g., courage, sense of humor, love, faith, fun, protectiveness, sticking together, giving each other space, being willing to talk, being willing to forgive, etc.)*

3. *For each strength that they name: Who in the family is affected by these strengths? (Elicit "everybody.")*
4. *What kinds of challenges do some of the people in the family have? Doesn't have to be your family. I mean families in general. (Elicit things like divorce, fighting, blended families, students having babies, problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, violence, sexual abuse, mental illnesses, physical illnesses, disabilities, unemployment, losing a home, chronic illness, terminal illness, death of a family member).*
5. *For each challenge that they name: How much of the family is affected by these challenges? (Elicit "the whole family.")*
6. *Have you ever found a family that doesn't have any challenges? (Elicit "no").*
7. *Have you ever found a family that doesn't have any strengths? (Elicit "no").*
8. *So is it fair to say that all families that have challenges also have strengths?*
9. *In the past, people thought that if we pretended some of the challenges that families face were bad or shameful or "not normal," they wouldn't happen as much. But they did, of course. Making people ashamed of things doesn't make their lives better. It makes them worse.*
10. *So instead, we need to just admit that all kinds of things happen in families. If we have to use the word "normal," we should understand that **all** families are normal. It's normal to have challenges and be confused. And all families, no matter how many challenges they face, have a lot of strengths.*
11. *Let's have a round of applause for our artist.*

(4) Safety and Help

Discussion (7 Minutes)

Goal: To normalize the process of asking for help for family troubles, and to make students aware of the resources that are available to them through the schools.

1. Some families aren't safe, because one or more people in the family is violent or uses force. If you lived in one of these families, what could you do to get safe? *(Elicit things like the following, and fill in any that students don't mention).*
 - Talk to the Student Assistance Program Coordinator
 - Talk to a guidance counselor
 - Talk to the Dean
 - Join a support group in the school
 - Talk to someone in the YESS Program.
 - Talk to the school social worker
 - Talk to a teacher or pastor you trust
 - If the people you tell who are connected with the family don't believe you, or if they punish you, talk to someone not connected with the family.
 - Don't take anything home with you that will tip the violent person off to the fact that you're getting help (like brochures about having a parent with a drug problem).
 - Don't confront or start fights with a parent who has used violence or threats of violence.
 - Don't call people names: Don't accuse a family member of being an alcoholic, a drug addict, or "crazy."
 - If you're in danger, call the child abuse hotline.
 - Make plans with a trusted friend, so you have somewhere to go if things get too dangerous at home. And when you're there, contact people who can help you get safe.
2. If you're worried about someone you care about who needs help, the SAP coordinator, guidance counselor, social worker, or counselors in the YESS program can help you figure out whether or not there's anything you can do to help him or her find help.

3. If someone you care about needs help but won't get it:
 - The most powerful thing you can do to help that person is to get help for yourself.
 - It might seem like you're not the one who needs help, but when we're around people who are very troubled, we change in many ways. That sometimes makes it easier for the other person to stay "stuck."
 - If you get help, you will change in good ways. At some point that might help the people around you get the help they need.

(5) Session Wrap-Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. The materials in your *Students' Guide* have a little more information on families. (*Name these sections.*)
2. The "Resources" list also has some places to go for more information or help.
3. And strengths in the family—and in you as a family member—is a whole section of the Strengths Inventory.
4. Any thoughts on how these are going? Any questions that have come up so far?

Session Nine: Dating Relationships

(1) Prep for Session Nine

1. *Optional: Have a supply of candy kisses, to use as incentives for participation in the activities in this session.*
2. *Also have enough copies of the "Survey: Challenges in Relationships" so that everybody can have one.*
3. *Write the bullet points in Number 4 (Strengths and Resources) on the board.*

(2) Intro to Session Nine

- Instructions (2 Minutes)
1. At one point somebody either told you, or will tell you, that relationships are hard for you because you're young. They were lying.
 2. Dating relationships, sexual relationships, romantic relationships are hard for most people, no matter how young or old they are.
 3. In this session we won't have time to make them any easier for you, but at least we'll have time to:
 - Help you understand how normal it is to be confused
 - Point you toward a few resources you can look up if you want more information or help
 4. *(Optional): I need an assistant. (Give the bag of kisses to the assistant): Everybody who participates today gets a kiss each time they participate.*

(3) It Ain't Easy!

Interactive Activity (9 Minutes)

Goal: To get a sense of the kinds of challenges that students perceive as most important, and to give students a chance to discuss and normalize the experience of challenge in this area of life.

1. I'd like you to think of the hardest things about relationships, dating, sex, stuff like that. They don't have to be things that have happened to you, but they should be things you know make dating and relationships difficult for some people. Here are some examples, but this is just a few. There are a lot more:
 - Finding somebody
 - Finding the right person
 - Figuring out what to say on a date
 - Asking somebody out
 - Having the wrong people ask you out
 - Rejection
 - Parents who won't let you date
 - Feeling like you're "too different" to attract anybody
 - Not knowing whether or not to be up front about your sexual orientation
 - Having a crush
 - Having the one right person not know you're alive
 - Fighting in relationships
 - Getting beaten up by someone you're dating
 - Breakups
 - Getting used
 - Being stalked
 - Getting groped
 - Getting raped
 - Getting pregnant
 - Getting HIV or another sexually transmitted infection

Session Nine: Dating Relationships

2. My assistant is passing out little survey forms. When you get them, privately check the top three things that you know that make relationships hard. There's space to write other things, if you want to. The activity is anonymous, so don't put your name on your paper. (Give them a couple of minutes to do that.)
3. Now crumple your pieces of paper up into a tight wad and come back together, and throw the pieces of paper up in the air and into the group of people. Don't pay attention to where your paper went.
4. Now pick up one of the crumpled pieces of paper somebody threw, and throw it up in the air and into the group of people. *(Repeat this process until the students are confident that all the pieces of paper are completely mixed up.)*
5. Let's go around the room, and each person read the three things that somebody checked on your piece of paper. If you got your own piece of paper, don't tell us. If you think you know whose piece of paper you got, don't tell us.
6. *As they read these:*
 - *The Leader prints the items on the board, and for every one that appears more than once, puts a "tick" next to it.*
 - *The assistant gives the reader a candy kiss.*
7. What does all this tell you? *(Lead a short discussion on the challenges associated with dating, etc.)*
8. Just remember:
 - The people you're attracted to are people too. That's actually more important than the fact that they're hot.
 - If you're nervous and you don't think they'll be attracted to you, they might feel the same way, only it doesn't show.
 - We're always comparing our insides to other people's outsides, and thinking they'll think badly of us. But other people have insides, too. And they might be comparing their insides with your outsides.

(4) Strengths and Resources

Discussion (7 Minutes)

Goal: To help students identify the strengths that might help them in dating relationships.

1. *Note: In the timing of this activity, you might want to take into account their answers to the first activity. If a particular area turned out to be a big problem for a lot of students, you might spend extra time talking about strengths and resources in that area.*
2. Okay, we have an idea of why dating and relationships can be hard. Now let's look at the strengths that can help you:
 - Find and attract the right partners
 - Spot the ones who aren't going to be right for you, and stay away from the ones who are trouble
 - Be a real friend to the people you're attracted to
 - Handle rejection and breakups without feeling really bad
 - Stay safe from things like sexual violence, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections
3. The strengths you mention can be any kind of strengths:
 - Inner strengths
 - Cultural strengths
 - People who can help you and listen to you
 - Books you can read, or web sites you can go to
4. If you want some ideas, you can look at your Strengths Inventory. And as we talk, you might think of things to check off in your Strengths Inventory.
5. My assistant will still give you a kiss each time you come up with an answer.
6. What are some strengths that can help you find and attract the right partners?
7. What are some strengths that can help you say no to the wrong partners?

Session Nine: Dating Relationships

8. What are some strengths that can help you be a true friend in a dating relationship?
9. What are some strengths that can help you handle rejection and breakups?
10. What are some strengths that can help you stay safe in dating and relationships?

(5) Wrap-up for Session Nine

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. Can you see how these strengths can be empowering?
2. Has anybody had a chance to fill in Area 4 of your Strengths Inventory (Friendship and Dating)? Any questions that have come up in that?
3. Section Nine of your Students' Guide has a few resources on the subject of Dating and Relationships. *(Walk them through these.)*

Please don't put your name on your survey form!!!

Survey: Challenges in Dating Relationships

Please check the three things that are most difficult for you when it comes to dating and relationships (romantic, sexual, crushes, etc.)

- Having trouble finding somebody
- Having trouble finding the right person
- Having a hard time figuring out what to say on a date
- Having a hard time asking somebody out
- Having the wrong people ask you out
- Rejection
- Parents who won't let you date
- Feeling like you're "too different" to attract anybody
- Not knowing whether or not to come out about your sexual orientation
- Having a crush
- Having the one right person not know you're alive
- Fighting in relationships
- Getting hit by someone you're dating
- Breakups
- Being used
- Being stalked
- Getting grabbed in a sexual way at the wrong time, or by the wrong person
- Getting raped
- Getting pregnant
- Getting HIV or another sexually transmitted infection
- _____
- _____
- _____

Session Ten: **Stress!!!**

(1) Prep for Session Ten

1. *Clear the furniture away from the longest wall in the room, to set up the "Human Stress-O-Meter":*
 - *Tape the "No Stress" sign (Page L-10-6) at the left-hand end of the wall.*
 - *Tape the "Some Stress" sign (Page L-10-7) in the middle of the wall.*
 - *Tape the "Too Much Stress" sign (Page L-10-8) at the right end of the wall.*

(2) Intro to Session Ten

Group Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. Today we're going to start talking about stress. Then next week we're going to talk about ways of coping with stress.
2. First, let's throw out some quick definitions of stress. We don't even have to agree on them. If someone from another planet asked you what stress was, what would you say?
3. Is there good stress and bad stress?
4. How would you tell the difference between good stress and bad stress?

(3) Measuring Stress

Didactic (1 Minute)

Goal: To make students more aware of their stress levels, and of the ways in which their bodies can alert them to their stress levels.

1. Some people like to think of stress on a scale of zero to 10, with zero being "no stress" and 10 being "way too much stress."
2. Other people like to measure stress by seeing where in your body you can feel it:
 - If you don't feel any stress in your body, then it's a zero
 - If you feel it in your stomach, it's a lower number
 - If you start to feel it in your chest, it's a higher number
 - When it gets up to your neck, it's really high
3. Most of us don't pay a lot of attention to the feelings of stress in our bodies, but it's a good idea to pay attention to it. Stress can tell us when we need to do something differently, talk about something that's bothering us, get some help, or take care of a problem that we thought we could just ignore.
4. You can look at the Stress-O-Meter on Page 10-4 of your Students' Guide if you want to try measuring your stress.

(4) Human Stress-O-Meter

Activity Instructions (2 Minutes)

Goal: To give students a chance to think about and discuss the levels of stress they might have in response to particular events, and to consider and explore the differences between different people's stress responses to the same events.

1. I've put a much simpler, much bigger Stress-O-Meter on the wall, so we can get a sense of where our stress comes from. At the left end is "No Stress" and at the right end is "Lots of Stress." Everything in the middle is everything in the middle.
2. Everybody will stand up, and when somebody names a situation, you'll walk to the place along the wall that describes the level of stress you'd have in that situation. You can go any place along the wall, and you can move any time you want.
3. The situation might be more or less stressful for you than it would be for somebody else. So you'd be in different places along the wall.
4. Anybody can name a situation. If somebody else names a situation, you can also name something that happens in the situation.
5. If somebody names something that happens in the situation, you can move up or down the wall, to show how your stress level might rise or fall if that happened.
6. I'll show you. (*Leader: Name a situation that has some stress for you, and move to the point that illustrates this stress. Then name something that happens in the same situation that would change your stress level, and move to a new position on the wall.*)

Group Activity (10 Minutes)

1. Everybody stand along the wall.
2. Somebody name a situation, and everybody go to the place that shows your stress level in that situation.
3. *Have some situations ready in case the students can't think of any, or in case the discussion stalls. Some possibilities:*
 - You miss the bus and have to ask someone at home for a ride, but they're getting ready for work, and running late.
 - Your boyfriend/girlfriend breaks up with you.
 - Your boyfriend/girlfriend starts dating your "friend."
4. Now, people at different points along the wall, tell me why you're where you are. Why that much stress? Why not more stress?

5. Now somebody else name something that happens.
6. *Let the activity become self-propelling, as people name situations and things that happen in those situations, move to different points on the wall, and talk about why it's more or less stressful to them.*
7. *After the activity:* What did you learn from being part of the Human Stress-O-Meter? Do you think there's more than one way of looking at how stressful a situation is?

(5) Stress and Balance

Didactic (1.5 Minutes)

Goal: To acquaint students with the physical roots of stress reactions, pointing them toward physical ways of addressing these reactions.

1. The reason you can sometimes feel stress so strongly in your body is that the systems in the body that react to stress are the same ones that react to physical threats.
2. These are old systems. They were meant to help us handle physical attacks in the wild, where the best way to handle it was to fight off the attackers, run away, or play dead.
3. The kinds of stress we have are usually not things that we can or should physically fight off, run away, or play dead. But our bodies react as if they were, and we're stuck with that.
4. In Session 7, we talked about the survival brain and the flooding reactions that our bodies have. Basically it's the same system that handles both stress and threat. So under enough stress, we can go into that flooding reaction.
5. That's why physical exercise is so important when we're under stress. It helps burn off all those extra stress chemicals.
6. The materials on the survival brain and flooding are reprinted in your handouts for this session, because they're important.

(6) Session Wrap-Up

Didactic (1.5 Minutes)

1. As I mentioned before, we'll be talking about ways of coping next time.
2. But in the meantime, there are some more materials in your course notebook that explain a little better why the body does what it does when we're under stress.
3. There's also a section that talks about what happens when we have too much stress, or the stress doesn't stop, and our stress systems go out of balance.
4. When our stress systems go out of balance, it tends to make our feelings more intense, so we may mistake this for emotional reactions.
5. It's not. It's really a set of physical reactions. And the force of the physical reactions "pushes on" our normal feelings, so they come out more intensely. It can also mess with our memory.
6. If you think your stress systems might be out of balance, you can talk to a YESS counselor about it. There are all kinds of ways of getting your stress systems back in balance.
7. It may also be helpful to read the materials in your notebook for this session and the next one, "Coping."
8. *Answer any questions students might have, and end the session.*

No Stress.

Some Stress.

Too Much Stress!

Session Eleven: Coping

(1) Prep for Session Eleven

1. *Divide the board in half. Write at the top of the left side, "Coping" and at the top of the right side, "Escaping."*
2. *Make sure the Worry Box is in a prominent place.*

(2) Intro to Session Eleven

Discussion (1 Minute)

1. Last time we talked about stress, and some of the things that bring stress into our lives.
2. Did anybody notice anything after the last session that they hadn't noticed before? Anything about stress?

(3) Two Ways of Dealing With Stress

Discussion (3 Minutes)

Goal: To introduce students to the concepts of stress reduction and stress management.

1. Last time we talked about stress, and some of the things that bring stress into our lives.

2. Did anybody notice anything after the last session that they hadn't noticed before? Anything about stress?
3. There are two positive ways of dealing with stress.
 - First, you can do things to lower the amount of outside stress in your life. This is called "stress reduction."
 - You can also do things to lower the effects of the stress on you, even if you can't lower the amount of outside stress in your life. This is called "stress management" or "coping with stress." Sometimes the stress outside gets so overwhelming that it feels paralyzing. You might feel stuck, or start to procrastinate. Then you have to start doing stress management just to calm down, before you can even get to the stress reduction.
4. Here's an example:
 - If you have way too much homework to do, the most obvious kind of stress reduction is just to start doing the homework, and get some of it out of the way. You can also make a rule for yourself where you set aside a certain amount of time each day to work on it.
 - But if you're overwhelmed, and it feels like you'll never be able to do it, you might feel paralyzed, and you can't make yourself do it. So you need some stress management. You can talk to somebody who knows you, who can remind you that you've gotten through bigger things than this before, and you've always done fine. Or you can remind yourself.
 - Now, let's say there are parts of the homework you just don't understand. You can do some more stress reduction by getting some tutoring, or asking for help from somebody who's good at that subject.
5. What would be another example of stress reduction?
6. A lot of this session is going to focus on the second of these skills, coping with stress. This is for those situations where you can't make the stress go away, but you want to lower the effects of the stress on your body and the way it feels inside your head.

(4) Worry Box

Group Activity (2 Minutes)

Goal: To help students connect the Worry Box to the concept of stress management, and to invite them to use the Worry Box.

1. Before we talk about coping, you're probably still thinking about the things that give you stress. So this is a good time to write down some of those things and put them in the Worry Box.
2. *Bring out the Worry Box and let students write things down and put them in.*

(5) Stress Bounces

Large-Group Discussion (4 Minutes)

Goal: To help students see the difference between coping with stress and trying to escape stress, and tell the difference between the effects of those two types of responses.

1. There are a lot of ways of coping with stress, a lot of things we do. We all cope with stress, every day.
2. Some of the ways we cope with stress make the stress go away, like it just disappears into our lives and we're fine.
3. Some of the ways we try to cope with stress just make the stress bounce back at us. They make it seem like the stress is going away. Then the effects of our ways of coping make the stress come back worse later on. This is usually what happens when we think we're trying to cope with stress, but we're really trying to **escape** the stress.
4. So let's think of some ways of trying to deal with stress. And we'll talk about them, and decide which side of the board they belong on, "Coping" or "Escaping."

5. You can name any ways of dealing with stress, not just the ones that you do.
6. *When a student names a way of coping, lead a discussion about the effects of that way of coping, and the effects of those effects, etc. If it's a healthy coping skill, it goes on the "Coping" side. If it's an escape response that brings on more stress later, it goes on the other side.*

(6) Procrastination

Didactic (4 Minutes)

Goal: To introduce students to one theory of procrastination and some approaches that might help them address this challenge.

1. I'd like to talk about procrastination. Should we do it now, or put it off for a while?
2. But seriously, procrastination is just that, putting things off until later even though we really need to do them sooner.
3. Most people think procrastination is a sign that we're lazy. It's not. It's the opposite of that.
4. People who procrastinate usually have very high expectations of themselves and what they can get done. Their expectations are so high that they scare them. And the way they escape that fear is by not thinking about, and not doing, the thing that's hanging over them. So it keeps getting bigger and scarier.
5. For example, if you have a big project due next Monday, you might put it off all week, telling yourself you'll spend the whole weekend working on it.
6. Then when the weekend comes, the idea of spending the whole weekend working on it is so scary that you do something else instead, and tell yourself you can do it easily on Sunday, then—when Sunday rolls around—you say you'll do it on Sunday night.

7. Sunday night comes, and you only have two hours left to work on it. Either you don't finish it, or you stay up all night doing it.
8. According to author Neil Fiore, in his book *The Now Habit*, there are some simple ways of changing those patterns. One of them is to stop promising you'll spend all weekend working on a project. Instead, you just do a little bit now, then take a break, then do a little more, and so on.
9. In this section of your *Students' Guide*, there's a sheet on this subject, with the name of Neil's book.

(7) Mindfulness

Demonstration (4
Minutes)

Goal: To give students a tool for stress management and development of the prefrontal cortex, by introducing them to the concept and practice of Mindfulness.

1. Another good way of dealing with stress is just to be in the here and now, instead of the past—thinking about things that have happened—or the future—thinking about things that might happen. Staying in the here and now is part of a practice called "Mindfulness"
2. It's really hard to have stress when you're focusing on the here and now. Usually the stress in our lives is over something that's already happened, or might happen later.
3. What's an example of something that's stressful in your life? Is it happening right now? Is it happening 24 hours a day? Or does it happen in the future, or every once in a while, but you feel stressed about it even when it isn't happening? That's normal, but it's also stressful.
4. Let's practice being in the present, in the "here and now." As we go through this, it might seem hokey to you, but I'll invite you to just give it a chance. We can evaluate it later.
(Leader: Read the following in a calming voice):

- I'd like you to close your eyes, if you're comfortable doing that. If you'd rather keep them open, you might want to find something to look at and keep your eyes there.
 - First take a deep breath, for four counts. Now hold your breath for seven counts. Now breathe out, for eight counts. *(Repeat this.)*
 - While we do this, I'm going to ask you to listen to the sound of my voice, instead of listening to your own thoughts. You may have thoughts going on in your head, but just let them run. Notice them, but don't pay a lot of attention to them.
 - First notice the fact that you have a body. It's right there. Your body might feel comfortable, or parts of it might feel stressed, or tired, or something might hurt. Just notice the feelings in your body.
 - Now notice the ground under your feet, the chair you're sitting in, the clothes you're wearing, the way all these things feel against your body.
 - Now notice the people sitting near you, what they look like, what I look like, what I sound like.
 - Now notice the room around you, the walls, the things on the walls, the floor, the furniture, the windows, the things outside the windows.
 - While you're noticing these things, don't think about anything that just happened, or anything that's going to happen.
 - Also, just let your own thoughts run in your head without getting sucked into them. It's as if you're on the bottom of the ocean and your thoughts are all the currents and fishes and stuff that's floating around above your head. You notice them, but you're sitting still on the bottom of the ocean, no matter how much your thoughts are flying around.
5. Okay, now open your eyes and join me. Anybody notice anything while you were doing that? Does this sound like something you might try sometime?

(8) Session Wrap-Up

Didactic (2 Minutes)

1. There are a few other ways of coping with stress that might be helpful. One is just looking at the way you think about things. Sometimes we make things more stressful by labeling them "bad," or by exaggerating how bad they are.
2. All these suggestions, and some other ways of coping with stress, are mentioned in this section of your Students' Guide. There are also some materials on overcoming fear and procrastination. And area five of your Strengths Inventory is all about coping with stress.

Session Twelve: Purpose

(1) Intro to Session Twelve

Instructions (1 Minute)

1. In this session we're going to talk about "Purpose"—your feelings about why you're alive and what you want your life to mean to the world.
2. You're not going to have to figure out what your career is going to be, or make a commitment.
3. You're just going to be asked to start making a vision of what your life could be, and how you're going to use your strengths.
4. One tool we'll be using will be the Strengths Inventory that you've been working on.
5. If you haven't filled yours in, you can still look at it as we go along, and think about the strengths that you have.

(2) Review of Strengths

Large-Group Discussion
(7 Minutes)

Goal: *To give students a chance to share what they've learned about their strengths and learn more about one another.*

1. *Get out your Strengths Inventory, and flip through the pages, looking at what you've checked. As you do that, circle 5 strengths (Give them a couple of minutes to do this.)*
2. *Let's go around the room, and everybody name one or two of your strengths that you've discovered lately. These can be little strengths that are listed on the sheets, or big*

strengths that include a lot of little strengths.

3. *(After all are done).* Was it hard keeping it down to just one or two strengths?
4. How many people were surprised at how many strengths you have? Remember when we did Session One, and you wrote good things and bad things about yourself? How many people found it hard to come up with the good stuff then, but it's getting easier?
5. These strengths are going to take you a lot of places—in school, in your careers, in your relationships, and in your lives. You can make a big difference, whether it's in your families or your jobs, or in the world as a whole.

(3) Legacy

Dyad and Large-Group
Activity (10 Minutes)

Goal: To give students a concrete way of approaching an understanding of their purpose in the world.

1. I'd like you to pair up, find a partner.
2. Now close your eyes if you want to (but you don't have to).
3. Pretend it's the year 2100. One of your great-grandchildren is going through a book or an old newspaper or magazine, and comes across your name.
4. It might be a history book, with a paragraph about you. It might be an old newspaper or magazine article. It might be a letter written about you by someone you love. It might be a novel written by someone who knew you. It might be a page in your diary.
5. Think about what kind of document it is, and what it says about you. *(Give them a minute to think about this.)*
6. Now turn to your partner, and tell him or her what kind of thing your great-grandchild was reading, and what it said about you.

7. *(Leader: Give them a couple of minutes, then ask them to switch speakers and let the other person talk. Give them a couple more minutes).*
8. What did you learn about yourself by thinking about it this way?
9. Let's go around the room, and everybody say in one word, or a few words, the main thing you'd like the world to remember you for. *(Take 2 minutes to go around the room.)*
10. In your Students' Guide, starting on Page 12-2, there's a place where you can write down:
 - What you'd like to be remembered for
 - The strengths and other resources you have that will take you in that direction
 - What you've already done that has moved you in that direction
 - A few more steps you might take to keep going in that direction

(Give them 3 minutes to write this down)

(4) Session Wrap-Up

Discussion (2 Minutes)

1. This is the last of the emPOWER! sessions. I've really appreciated working with you, and I got a lot of good ideas from your suggestions.
2. Any thoughts or reactions to emPOWER?
3. I want to thank you for taking part in this, and thank you for being with one another in this process.
4. If you ever want to talk about any of this, I'm here, and the YESS staff are also there to talk and to listen.

Thank you!

Leaders: Please remember to give copies of the Evaluation form (in the next section) to the Advisory teacher!

What would you tell a friend about the curriculum?

Tell Us About Your Leader(s).

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate the leader(s) on the following:

Confidentiality (privacy) was maintained

Low High

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Rules were clear

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Sessions were organized

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Topic was clear for each session

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Encouraged everyone to participate

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Made the group interesting

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How would you describe the leader(s)? How they ran the sessions:

Tell Us About Your emPOWER Experience

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being lowest and 10 being highest, please rate your experience.

I opened up and talked about the weekly topics.

Low High

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Take a few moments to think about how emPOWER affected you.

- I tried some of the suggestions I got from the curriculum.
- I feel more empowered.
- I have improved the way I deal with others.
- I have improved the way I manage my thoughts and feelings.
- I will probably use some of what I learned in the future.
- Other _____
- This curriculum has had no effect on me.

I found out these things about myself:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

emPOWER helped me decide to:

This survey is confidential but, we would like to use some of your comments to promote future programs.

- Yes, you may use my comments.
- No, please don't use my comments.

