

each other. But if I am not feeling happy with you because you keep borrowing my math book without asking, my What, When, Why, and How Messages would start with me saying, “You are making me feel frustrated.”

On the board, write the word *What* and the word *frustrated*. **SAY:** Next, I would add, “when you borrow my book and forget to return it on time.”

Now write the word *When* on the board. **SAY:** I would then tell my friend why the behavior is frustrating me. I would say, “This is frustrating me because I need to finish doing my homework.”

Now write the word *Why* on the board. Then write *I need my book to finish my homework*. **SAY:** Then I would tell my friend how he or she could change the behavior so that I will feel respected and get an important need met. I would say, “I want you to stop borrowing my book without asking. And if you do borrow my book, please return it on time.”

Write the word *How* on the board.

Make clear to students that the purpose of What, When, Why, and How Messages is to express our emotions and communicate our needs in a constructive way.

It may or may not result in a positive response from another person, but it does empower us to communicate our needs in a positive way.

ASK: What part of the What, When, Why, and How Messages do you think helped the most? How do you think this approach will help you express and take responsibility for your feelings?

3 PRACTICING 15–20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY 2

Explain the What, When, Why, and How Messages activity

Explain that students will practice using What, When, Why, and How Messages with a partner. Each student will get a chance to practice his or her message and have his or her partner listen. After, they will have a chance to discuss each others’ messages and provide specific feedback on how clear they were in expressing their emotions, describing the situation and reasons for feeling the way they do, and requesting a more helpful behavior when necessary.

KEEP IN MIND Tell students that What, When, Why, and How Messages are used with people with whom students have a relationship or feel safe to express emotions to. They are not appropriate with people who threaten to harm them.

Students practice creating What, When, Why, and How Messages

Use a creative grouping strategy to divide students into pairs. Have pairs pick one of the following situations:

- A friend throws a surprise party for you.
- A friend embarrasses you in front of other students.
- A friend flirts with someone you like.
- A friend goes out of his/her way to help you during a tough time.

Have one partner say What, When, Why, and How Messages responding to the situation they’ve chosen. The other partner gives feedback on how clearly the speaker used the four parts of the What, When, Why, and How Messages to express his or her emotions, the reasons for these emotions, and request a more helpful behavior when necessary. Make clear that the students are not responding to the message itself, but providing feedback about how clear and

Community Connection

Have an adult accompany students to a public meeting where there is likely to be an important discussion. Example: a school board or local government meeting. Have students choose one disagreement they hear and write a brief description of it. Then have them create What, When, Why, and How Messages about the disagreement from the point of view of one of the participants. For example, at a school board meeting, the school board may deny a principal’s request for a new computer lab. The student attending that meeting would consider the principal’s emotions and write What, When, Why, and How Messages from the principal’s point of view.

Family Connection

Have students explain What, When, Why, and How Messages to a family member. Then have them work with their family members to create What, When, Why, and How Messages in response to an imagined situation. Send home the Family Connection take-home worksheet called **Everybody Loves Resolution**.

Applying Across the Curriculum

LANGUAGE ARTS Have students choose situations from fiction in which positive and strong emotions are being communicated and write What, When, Why, and How Messages from the perspective of one of the characters. Use an example from *The Wizard of Oz* or another well-known book or movie to demonstrate writing What, When, Why, and How Messages from a character’s point of view.

SOCIAL STUDIES Have students identify and contact local agencies and organizations that help people deal with problem solving and decision making in healthy ways. Possibilities include Lions Clubs, Big Brothers and Sisters, and mediators from a conflict resolution agency. Consult with your school principal and counseling office to ensure that your efforts are not being duplicated. Ask a speaker from one of these groups to tell your class about the agency’s programs and approaches.