

STUDENT ADVISORY ACTIVITY
10th GRADE
SESSION # 9

Topic: Self Defeating Behavior

Time Required: 35 minutes

Objective: Students will become aware of their working habits and identify self-defeating behaviors which can prevent them from achieving..

School Core Values & Beliefs Expectations Codes:

Self-Directed Learner, Knowledgeable Person, Community Contributor

Activity Statement: Students will complete an inventory in order to identify some personal behavior patterns and discuss the implications of their responses in reference to the list of self-defeating behaviors.

Materials Needed:

- Paper, Pen/Pencil

Procedure:

1. Duplicate and distribute the S-DBS inventory. Have each student complete it and total their score to identify their style of coping with school.
2. Distribute the second handout. Have students compare their results to the list of self-defeating behaviors.
3. Address the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. What behavior problems do you have that can hurt your academic performance?
2. Who do you think that self-defeating behaviors are picked up from?
3. What would you suggest to a student who seems to be unable to change a pattern of behavior?
4. What is wrong with simply saying, “That’s just how I am?”
5. Which do you think is a bigger predictor of success, intelligence or attitude?

Closure:

Getting down on yourself or doing things that are negative not only hurt yourself but can hurt your ability to be successful in the future.

Next Advisory Lesson:

International Awareness

Directions: Read each statement and decide how well it describes you and your typical *behavior in school*. Then, by using the four-point scale below, rate each statement and write your response (i.e. 0, 1, 2, or 3) on the answer sheet in the appropriate space. Please answer every statement.

- 3 --That's really me
- 2 --That's often me
- 1 --That's me once in a while
- 0 -- That's not me

- _____ 1. It is not very important for me to do well in school.
- _____ 2. When I become discouraged with school, I give up and don't try any more.
- _____ 3. I put a lot of time and energy into my schoolwork, but I don't seem to accomplish very much.
- _____ 4. I have a hard time finishing homework or projects for school.
- _____ 5. It is difficult for me to start homework or study for tests without being forced or threatened by someone.
- _____ 6. I don't like to ask questions or *ask for* help because *I* am afraid of looking stupid.
- _____ 7. I don't do any of my school assignments until I absolutely have to or until they are past due.
- _____ 8. I usually blame someone else, like my teachers or parents, if I don't do my homework or receive bad grades.
- _____ 9. I usually feel sorry for myself when things go wrong in school.
- _____ 10. I don't seem to have much time for homework because of all the other things I want to do.
- _____ 11. I never seem to feel good about my ability to do well in school.
- _____ 12. I have a hard time paying attention in class.

Scoring: Add the numbers next to each of the twelve statements and write your total score below.

TOTAL SCORE _____

Interpretation:

This is a brief description of the meaning of your score. You may want to discuss it with your advisor, counselor, parent or teacher.

Score of 24-36:

You have a self-defeating style of coping with school and should ask for help in changing these habits. You could ask a counselor, advisor, teacher or parent to help you.

Score of 13-23:

Your score is typical of many high school students. First, identify your goals for changing your self-defeating habits. Ask your family, friends, teachers, advisor, or counselor for help in accomplishing your goals.

Score of 0-13:

You have an EFFECTIVE style of coping with school.

What is a Self-defeating Behavior?

Psychologists have defined “self-defeating behavior” as any behavior that blocks an individual's goals and wishes. The following personality characteristics represent some self-defeating attitudes and behaviors that will keep you from succeeding in school and your career when you become an adult. The numbers next to the personality characteristic refers to the number of the statement on the S-DBS Inventory.

1. ***Lack of motivation:*** Part of being successful in school or work is the desire to do well. It must be something that you WANT.
2. ***Lack of persistence:*** Everyone becomes discouraged or frustrated at times with school. The successful students will continue and not give up.
3. ***Little accomplishment:*** If you are working hard, but have little to show for it, you may need help in how to use your time more effectively. The quality of your effort is more important than just putting in time. Learn how to focus your energy on each of your assignments in school.
4. ***Inability to complete tasks and to follow-through:*** Some students are very good at their homework or projects, but seem unable to complete them. In school and life, be rewarded *for* the work you promise to complete and then do it. Would you pay a mechanic who only completed half the repairs on your car?
5. ***Inability to get started:*** This is partly related to motivation or wanting to do your work. But it also includes being able to do something that's in your best interest even though you would rather be doing something else (e.g., watching TV, being with your friends, etc.). You can help yourself by looking into the future and seeing the payoff (e.g., better grades, learning something new) you will receive by taking the time now to study, complete your homework, etc.
6. ***Fear of failure:*** There are two kinds of students. Those who are afraid to make mistakes because they think they will look stupid to others. Then there are students who are not afraid to make mistakes because they realize it is the only way to really learn. All successful people have made mistakes or failed at something. They became successful because they learned from their mistakes and did not give up.
7. ***Procrastination:*** Procrastination refers to putting off doing things that need to be done. Procrastination only leads to low grades, poor quality of work, increased stress, and disappointment with yourself.
8. ***Looking for scapegoats:*** The student who is “looking for scapegoats” is always looking to blame someone else for their poor performance in school. “It's not my fault; my teacher is boring.” “I don't do my homework because

my parents won't stop bugging me about it!" "It's not my fault I don't know about the test today. I was absent the day the teacher told the class about it." These students refuse to take responsibility for their own mistakes.

9. ***Excessive self-pity***: We might call this the “poor me disease.” Sometimes we all feel bad about one thing or another, but it's a problem when we think like this too much of the time. Students who spend most of their time on self-pity don't have the energy to use their time constructively and make changes. Over time, self-pity also tends to turn other people off.
10. ***Distractibility and lack of concentration***: It is important to be able to focus your energy when listening and completing assignments. Some students have difficulty doing this without help. If this is a real problem for you, then it is important to talk to your teacher or advisor and ask for their help. Break your assignments into smaller activities if you can't concentrate for long periods of time. Try to figure out under what conditions you work best.
11. ***Ineffective time management***: Successful students learn how to balance their school work and personal life. First you have to decide about the real priorities in your life (hopefully school will be high on that list). Then learn how to budget your time so that you can complete the priorities. You will not only feel good about yourself and be more successful in school, but you will find time to enjoy your life outside of school.
12. ***Too little self-confidence***: The best way to build confidence is to first change the kind of self-defeating behavior described above. For example, when you are motivated, you refuse to give up.