Josh Amerson
Grade 3
Health Science

Playing Doctor

Objective/Purpose

This activity can be used to illustrate the importance of good communication skills as well as how feelings can be expressed in a healthy way. This activity is also used to show students the importance of being able to discuss health problems with a doctor.

QCCs

Respect for Others Topic 11
Family Living Topic 6
Mental Health Topic 9

Materials/Time Required

2-dozen or so note cards
chalkboard or dry-erase board and chalk/markers for discussion time
I did this activity, including introduction and discussion, in 30 minutes, but material can be added or subtracted depending on how much time you have

Background Information

We spent some time going over communication of feelings or emotions. Students need to understand what body language is and how it can be used to communicate. We also discussed examples where our feelings were communicated in positive or negative ways. I made sure to point out that feelings like anger, fear, or illness were not "bad" feelings, that they were very important feelings to have, but they must be communicated in a safe and healthy way.

Preparation

Make a list of 15 or more illnesses or symptoms that a student might have to explain to a doctor and write each one on a note card. Divide the note cards into three groups. Try and group the most difficult to explain symptoms together and the least difficult together...this will make the activity go more smoothly in the class. Write 'A' on the easiest group, 'B' on the middle group, and 'C' on the hardest group.
Safety Issues

Well, note cards are not exactly “dangerous objects.” Just make sure nobody gets a paper cut or tries to eat the cards and everything should be fine. I would be impressed if anybody was injured during the activity.

Activity Outline and Procedure

1. Begin by reviewing vocabulary like communication, respect, and body language.
2. Ask the students to tell how they feel about seeing the doctor. If they feel afraid, ask them why. How does the doctor find out what is wrong with them?
3. Explain the importance of communicating with the doctor and how by using good communication skills we can overcome the fear of being at the doctor’s office.
4. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5.
5. Explain that one of them will be the patient while the other 3 or 4 get to be doctors.
6. Tell the students that note cards with an ‘A’ written on them means they can only nod yes or no to the questions they are asked...you can tell them to keep their hands behind their back to make sure they do not use body language. Note cards with a ‘B’ on them means they can use body language. Note cards with a ‘C’ means they can communicate freely with the other students. Writing these instructions on the board will help them to remember.
7. Explain that everyone who is not a patient is a doctor and needs to everything they can to find out what’s wrong with their friend.
8. Give each group a set of cards and let them pick a card to begin the game.
9. After they play for a while, bring all the students back to discuss the difficulties with each situation. Write their comments on the board.

Possible Questions

1. Which group had the easiest time communicating what was wrong with them? The hardest time?
2. What should we do when we have to go to the doctor’s office so that we get the best care possible?
3. Can anyone think of other situations where what we learned today is important?

Assessment/Evaluation

You will be able to tell by the students’ interactions and their comments during discussion whether or not they are getting the point. The questions will help lead the students into understanding the idea you are presenting, and will also allow you to explain things that they may be missing.