

## ANALYZING OBSTACLES

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn how to get along with their emotions, both the pleasant and the unpleasant, and recognize it is important to let go of the things that are beyond our control and stop experiencing the unpleasant emotions they cause. On the other hand, when they can control the outcome of a situation, they will learn to analyze what they did wrong so they don't repeat it in the future.

## WARM UP

Ask two volunteers to come to the board and write one personal goal each. Then invite the class to brainstorm obstacles for accomplishing those goals. Ask volunteers to list the mentioned obstacles on the board, and to underline the ones that are out of their control.

## STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure all students have a printed copy of the handout.
- 2 Get them into pairs and ask them to remember the last time they did not achieve something they worked hard for. For example, studying all weekend for the math exam and not getting the grade they expected. Then ask students to take a look at the first box in the handout and read out the question. Invite them to write the answer individually.
- 3 Invite students to read out the question on the second box. Say: *Be honest and write if the obstacles for not achieving your goal were something under your control or out of it.* Explain that getting along with our emotions means taking full responsibility of our acts and not blaming other people or situations when we don't meet our goals.
- 4 On the third box, ask students to write four things that, in their opinion, were obstacles to meet their goals. Remind them to be as objective as possible. They should connect the

obstacles to the category they belong to in the fourth box. Say: *Were those obstacles under or out of your control?*

- 5 Finally, invite them to think what they could have done better to avoid losing control over things that were under their control. For example, not feeling frustrated if they don't get the grade they wanted, and asking for advice from their teacher or classmates instead.

## WRAP IT UP

- 6 *Is it difficult to accept failure? Why is it important to let go of things we can't control and learn to manage things we can control?*

Explain to students the importance of accepting unpleasant or difficult emotions instead of denying them and of changing the way we might react to everyday situations so we can get our emotions under control. If we learn to accept that sometimes we don't achieve our goals because of obstacles that are out of our control, we won't feel frustrated. Regarding the things that impeded us to achieve our goals and were under our control, the key is to identify them, accept our responsibility, and do our best next time.

**TEACHING TIP** The objective of this activity is for students to learn how to stay in control when facing situations that trigger unpleasant emotions in the context of not accomplished goals. Encourage them to find creative solutions. You can also use any literature character your students know well (Robinson Crusoe or Gregor Samsa, for example) for them to identify circumstances that triggered difficult emotions in this character as well as the obstacles and solutions presented by the author.

### STOP JUDGING YOUR EMOTIONS

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn that it is not helpful to judge themselves for the unpleasant, hurtful emotions they feel. They should allow themselves to accept them as something natural.

#### WARM UP

Ask students if they usually blame themselves for feeling bad. Give an example: *If you are sad or worried about something that happened to you (a breakup, quarreling with a friend, etc.) do you ever think: "This is bad. I shouldn't feel like this. This has to go away..."?* Ask students whether doing this has helped them to overcome the situation. Elicit as many reactions as possible.

#### STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure all students have a printed copy of the handout.
- 2 Ask them to read the situation on the handout, reflect on how they would feel and write their answers on the chart. Then get them into pairs to discuss their answers and compare their charts. You can ask some volunteers to share their information with the class and write on the board different emotions a particular situation may cause (anger, disappointment, sadness, etc.).
- 3 Invite students to read the three suggested ways for dealing with unpleasant, negative emotions. Have them notice the importance of recognizing the emotion and naming it. Explain that, once they have done that, they shouldn't feel ashamed or embarrassed of their feelings; they shouldn't censor themselves for feeling that way. Say: *If we don't accept what we are feeling, it's impossible to free ourselves from that emotion.*

#### WRAP IT UP

- 4 *Do you judge yourself when you're feeling bad? Do you try to push the emotion aside in your mind? Do you think you handle difficult emotions successfully?*

Get students into groups and read the questions out loud. Allow enough time for them to exchange opinions and discuss their ideas. You can invite some volunteers to share their answers with the class. Point out that handling the emotion in a successful way does not mean trying to forget the situation and the emotion it caused but dealing with it. If we don't do this, the emotion will still hurt us. Find out if it is difficult for your students to acknowledge their emotions.

**TEACHING TIP** The main purpose of this activity is for students to realize they shouldn't blame themselves for what they feel or feel ashamed of their emotions and try to hide them. Point out that recognizing our negative, unpleasant feelings is the first step towards emotional healing.

### EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn how to free themselves from damaging, unpleasant feelings by dealing with them in a positive way.

#### WARM UP

Elicit from students what they have learned about damaging, unpleasant emotions in past lessons of this unit and ask them if they have had a chance to put this knowledge into practice. Present a situation that could make them feel bad (like studying hard for an exam and getting low grades). Invite some volunteers to write on the board some emotions that situation would cause and ask them how they think they would handle it now that they have learned about analyzing and dealing with unpleasant emotions.

#### STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure all students have a printed copy of the handout.
- 2 Invite them to look at the tables in the handout. Now that students have worked on recognizing unpleasant emotions and not judging themselves for experiencing them, they should learn how to get free of those emotions. Give them some minutes to complete the tables. Then invite them to remember all the stages and aspects of handling emotions they learned in previous lessons.
- 3 Get students into pairs and invite them to share their information, and to discuss and compare their answers. It might be useful to ask them to change partners once they have shared their ideas so they can learn different points of view. Invite them to write the way they liked the most for turning negative emotions into positive ones.

#### WRAP IT UP

- 4 *What things do you think you can change the next time you experience an unpleasant emotion? What new ways of responding to difficult or unpleasant emotions do you want to try? How do you feel about experimenting with new techniques, like yoga or meditation?*

Get students into groups of four to discuss the three questions. Monitor the activity walking around the classroom and listening to them. After some minutes, bring the class together by inviting some volunteers to share their thoughts and opinions. Elicit as many ways of changing unpleasant, negative emotions into positive attitudes as possible and write them on the board.

**TEACHING TIP** Students should be aware that learning how to be emotionally free might be difficult at first, and that it takes practice to achieve it, but they shouldn't give up. Remind them that the more they do it, the easier it will be for them to get rid of those unpleasant, damaging feelings and turn them into positive behaviors.