

Social & Emotional Learning Exercise Tolerating Failure & Critical Feedback

Failing at a task and/or being corrected on performance is a big trigger for many people. This lesson is about teaching a student how to deal with critical feedback & failure. The goal is to get the student to not just learn but practice new responses to this situation. This way students will have new words and behaviors when a difficult situation arises.

Materials: The student will need a worksheet and a pen or pencil if you are doing an academic task (see below). You can download free worksheets online. In person, I would have a big intimidating red pen to mark it up. Online you will have to pretend and have the student hold work up to the camera.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduce the Skill: “Today we are going to practice dealing with failure and tolerating critical feedback”.
2. Ask for Input: Ask the student to reflect on how they deal with this. In what areas are they good at accepting feedback and failing? In what areas is this a problem? For instance, a student may be good at accepting feedback from a coach on their athletic performance but really struggle when it is in response to academics. Ask them to identify the difference in these situations. Have them help you spell out the typical problems they face in this area.
3. Set up a Pretend Scenario with the Student: You could give them pretend work, or even pretend to correct their behavior.
4. Ask the Student to Design a Response Prior to the Enactment: Have them tell you how they want to respond. You can give them ideas. For example, in response to a failed math problem they could simply say, “Okay, I will fix that.”

5. Role Play the Pretend Scenario with the Student: Run through the pretend scenario at least three times. You can scale the difficulty by giving a harsher correction or a more frustrating task.
6. Remember: The idea is not to challenge the student to their capacity, but to **practice new responses**.

Homework

After the lesson, have the student “secretly” try out this new response two or three times during the week on someone that is not expecting it, . and see what happens. Get them curious and excited about trying it out. You can even ask them to fail something small on purpose so they can practice.