



“SAFE JOBS FOR YOUTH” ACTIVITY:

Problem Solving for Health and Safety

Session Summary

This activity has been adapted from “Safe Jobs for Youth”, a learner-centered curriculum unit for high school students developed by the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) Program. You can download the entire curriculum from the UCLA-LOSH website (<http://losh.ucla.edu> - Projects-Youth-Resources-Safe Jobs for Youth).

In this session, students use a “Safe Jobs for Youth” cartoon story to learn about and practice effective communication techniques to deal with job health and safety problems. They learn how to gain support from co-workers when experiencing problems on the job and then to effectively speak with their supervisors about finding solutions to address their problems.

Objectives

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Identify at least 3 ways to prevent job-related injuries or illnesses;
- Identify steps that can be taken to resolve such situations;
- Distinguish between effective and ineffective communication techniques;
- Apply their knowledge of successful interactions with authority figures to workplace situations;
- Demonstrate the ability to speak confidently and appropriately to supervisors;
- Demonstrate the value of getting support from co-workers to resolve workplace situations;
- Use teamwork, communication, and analytical skills.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Assessment of role-play activities, based on student incorporation of communication techniques from Handout 2.

Activity Grid

Activity	Estimated Time	Materials
A. Guided Group Practice: Your Right to a Safe Workplace	15 min.	Teacher's Supplement Handout 1
B. Preparatory Activity: Effective Communication Techniques	10 min.	Handout 2 Transparency 1, photocopied onto overhead Overhead Projector
C. Guided Group Practice: Getting Support from Co-workers	20 min.	Handout 1
D. Role Play Activity: Approaching Your Supervisor	30 min.	Handouts 1, 2 & 3
Total time	75 min.	

Advance Preparation

1. Review Teacher's Supplement (*Some Important OSHA Standards*) for background information and to answer any specific questions that students may have about workplace hazards regulations. Contact your state Department of Industrial Relations (or Department of Labor) to find out if your state's health and safety regulations are more stringent than the federal ones.
2. Review Handout 2 (*Tips for Effective Communication With Your Supervisor*) to prepare to lead the discussion and role-play activities.
3. Prepare Materials:
 - Handout 1 (*Your Right to a Safe Workplace*)
 - Handout 2 (*Tips for Effective Communication With Your Supervisor*)
 - Transparency 1 (*Tips for Effective Communication With Your Supervisor*)
 - Overhead Projector
 - Handout 3 (*Identifying Solutions to Workplace Hazards*)

A. Guided Group Practice: Your Right to a Safe Workplace (15 minutes)

Summary	Students work in groups to read a cartoon story about teens working in hazardous situations. They develop a list of hazards and possible solutions to these hazards.
Purpose	a) To help students apply knowledge about workplace hazards to a specific situation; b) To become aware of different types of problems a young worker may encounter in the workplace.

1) Present story handout

- Distribute Handout 1 (*Your Right to a Safe Workplace* cartoon story) to all students.
- Tell the class they will work in groups of four or five. Their task is to read the story, identify hazards, and determine what Derek and José can do about them.

2) Split class into small groups

- Each group should quickly choose 4 people to read the different characters (José, Derek, Sylvia and Uncle Victor) and a reporter who will take notes. (If there are extra students, some groups can have 2 reporters.)
- The reporters are responsible for creating a two-column chart listing:
 - the hazards at José's and Derek's job, and
 - what José and Derek can do to protect themselves.

3) Have groups report back

- After the group finishes reading the story, the reporter should read out loud his/her list of hazards and ideas about what Derek and José can do, and the group can add any other ideas.
- Review the correct answers (below) with the class and answer any questions.

Sample Chart for "Your Right to a Safe Workplace"

<i>Hazards/Injuries</i>	<i>What they each can do</i>
<p>José's job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Back injury from lifting heavy boxes;</i> • <i>Arm injury from slipping on spilled soda in the beverage aisle.</i> <p>Derek's job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Burns from french fry grease;</i> • <i>Robberies.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Talk to other workers about the problems;</i> • <i>With co-workers, talk to the supervisor about their concerns-falls, back problems, burns, robberies;</i> • <i>Make a list of changes needed. For example: help lifting heavy boxes or a dolly, someone to mop the floors, gloves, and security;</i> • <i>They have a right to join a union if there is one at their workplace*;</i> • <i>They have a right to talk to someone at OSHA to get more information about the regulations, or to file a complaint if the supervisor doesn't do anything,</i>
<p>*Most students work in non-union jobs, so the emphasis here is to work together collectively.</p>	

B. Preparatory Activity: Effective Communication Techniques (10 minutes)

Summary In preparation for the role-play activity in which students practice talking with a supervisor about a workplace problem, the class discusses effective communication techniques.

Purpose

- a) To apply students' own understanding of appropriate communication to a workplace situation;
- b) To prepare for the group practice and role-play activities that follow.

1) Discuss how to approach the supervisor

- Begin the class by asking students to recall situations in which they have had to interact with an adult—a teacher, a parent, an administrator, or a supervisor—to resolve a problem.
- Ask students what they think is the best way to approach the supervisor—what they should pay attention to, constructive strategies to achieving their goal.
- Write their ideas on the board, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

2) Present and discuss handout/transparency

- Distribute Handout 2 (*Tips for Effective Communication With Your Supervisor*) to all students and project Transparency 1 on the overhead projector.
- Review each point in detail. If the students had any suggestions not listed, they can add these to their list.
- Students should each keep their copy of Handout 2 as an important reference for the activities that follow.

C. Guided Group Practice: Getting Support from Co-Workers (20 minutes)

Summary In groups of four, students practice a role-playing skit, playing the parts of either Derek and his co-workers or José and his co-workers. Using the communication techniques explained in Handout 2, each group prepares a plan for approaching the supervisor about the workplace problem portrayed in the cartoon story.

Purpose

- a) To prepare for the role-play activity;
- b) To demonstrate the value of getting support from other workers to resolve workplace problems;
- c) To develop teamwork and communication skills.

1) Split the class into groups to develop role-plays

- Tell students that they are to work in the same groups of four for the next two activities. They should pretend that they are workers either at the grocery, the store where José worked, or the fast food restaurant where Derek works.
- Tell the groups to each make a plan for approaching their supervisor to discuss the problem. Each student should play an active (speaking) part during the role-plays.
- Tell the students that they will be performing their skit later in front of the class, with you (the teacher) in the role of the supervisor. Also, make sure they know they will be evaluated based on the communication techniques discussed in the previous activity and listed on Handout 2.

D. Role-Play Activity: Approaching Your Supervisor (30 minutes)

Summary Groups of four students practice approaching the “supervisor” (played by the teacher) using the plans they developed in Activity C. Their classmates evaluate their performance based on the criteria listed on Handout 2.

Purpose

- a) To develop communication and persuasion skills;
- b) To provide a forum in which to practice preparing for what might be an intimidating situation;
- c) To empower students with the courage to ask for what they need on the job.

1) Students present role-plays

- Ask each group to approach you, the supervisor, in front of the class, to discuss either Derek's or José's work problems, using the plan they developed.
- Remind them that each student must have a speaking role, and that the group will be evaluated based on use of the communication techniques listed on Handout 2.
- As the “supervisor,” you can respond to them based on how clearly they present the problem, their willingness to try to propose a solution (versus just complaining), their respectful manner, etc.

2) Evaluate role-plays with the class

- After each group role-play, review each of the communication techniques from Handout 2. Ask the class to evaluate whether or not the group used each technique. Some evaluation questions to ask are:
 - Was the group well prepared?
 - Did they propose specific solutions to the problem?
 - Did they explain how the employer would benefit from implementing such a solution?
 - Were they assertive, but respectful?
 - Did they act as a unified team?

- If there are teams that did not effectively use the communication techniques in their role-play, they can use feedback from you and the class to go back and prepare their role-play again, and then they can act it out one more time.

3) Post-presentation discussion

- After all groups present, ask the class which approaches they thought were most effective. Ask them what works and what doesn't work when talking to a supervisor.

- To enhance and reinforce the solutions provided for the problems portrayed in the cartoon story, distribute the supplemental Handout 3 (*Identifying Solutions to Workplace Hazards*);

- Stress the importance of getting support from others when there are problems at work. Brainstorm ideas for whom to talk to: co-workers, friends, parents, school counselor/career advisor/work experience coordinator, teachers, case managers, etc.