



After A Disaster



Objectives:

Objective 1: Develop empathy for youth displaced as a result of disaster

Objective 2: Practice decision-making skills you would use after a disaster

Objective 3: Identify feelings and actions encountered by children after a disaster.

Target Audience:

Jr. High and High School Students

Life Skill(s):

Character Focus:

Caring

Respect

Delivery Mode: Group Meeting such as 4-H club meeting

Time Allotted: 30 minutes

Materials Needed for the Lesson:

Clipboard; Matching game for Grief Steps Activity; Flipchart, chalkboard or dry erase board, markers (enough for each participant), Crisis Quotes, construction paper "bricks"

Number of Participants: 2 to 50

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| What You Say: | What You Do: | What Participants Do: |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>I have a disturbing announcement to make to all of you. A tornado has just gone through the south end of town (or the city) and destroyed all the homes there. Everyone living in that area of town will be unable to go back home because all of their clothing, pets, and other belongings are all gone. You will be required to temporarily move to <i>(name a city on the other end of the state)</i>. Your mother will be here to get you after school, but she cannot locate your grandmother or any other member of your family. You will be enrolled in the school in that town immediately after you arrive at your destination. Some of you will be able to stay in homes with people who have volunteered extra rooms and some of you will be staying in a shelter. The location at which you will be assigned will have more information prepared for you by the time you arrive.</p> <p>“This was only a test. Had it been a real emergency, there would have been an announcement made by your school administrator.</p> <p>How many of you live in the south end of town?</p> <p>How did you feel when I made the announcement?</p> <p>For those of you from other parts of town, how did you feel? Did you feel guilty because your home was spared?</p> | <p>Agent or volunteer makes announcement, reading it from a clipboard to make it appear official.</p> <p>Pause for a moment, then announce.</p> <p>Wait for responses. Write the responses on chalkboard, flipchart, etc. so participants can see the many emotions as well as the range of emotions. <i>(Probing questions if you get no response may be: Did you feel fear? Did you think there was no way this could happen to you? Did you wonder what you would do?)</i></p> <p>Wait for responses</p> | <p>Respond</p> <p>Respond</p> |

What You Say:

These are all very normal feelings. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, many youth are feeling the same way that you do. You have seen many of these young people on the news. Some of them may have moved into your neighborhood and are new students in your school.

Even with the different emotions you identified, after a disaster everyone goes through the stages of grief. They don't necessarily go through each stage only once, and may not go through them in the order specified. Also, not all people move through the stages with the same intensity of emotions, or at the same rate.

Understanding what they are feeling can help them to begin to cope. Grief is as human and inescapable. Understanding the stages of grief, giving into them, and going through them, is critical to getting past the disaster and moving forward. The stages of grief are:

- *Denial*
- *Anger*
- *Bargaining*
- *Depression*
- *Acceptance*

Now, let's see if you can identify descriptions of the each of the stages of grief.

Let's review how you matched the stages and their description

Denial: "No, not me, it can't be true." This is a typical reaction when a person faces a loss. This stage functions as a buffer after the unexpected happens. It allows you to collect yourself and, in time, to find a way to cope.

What You Do:

Distribute games pieces

Allow time for them to make matches.

What Participants Do:

Match stage with description

What You Say:

Anger: "Why me?" When the first stage of denial passes, it is likely to be replaced by anger, rage, envy, and resentment. God is often a target for anger, especially in natural disasters. You may also resent people around you who didn't suffer as much loss as you did.

Bargaining: "Yes, me, but...." Once you have gotten the anger under control, you may enter the bargaining stage. You may promise God that you'll be good or that you'll do something in exchange for what you need. Bargaining can be a positive way to deal with stress. Whether you bargain with God, with yourself, or with your family, it provides comfort for things you cannot control. It allows you to "frame" the crisis so you can manage it. Bargaining may help you cope with feelings of sadness without experiencing deep depression. Good bargaining skills allow people to see the bright side of even the most difficult situation.

Depression: "There is no hope." A crisis entails loss, which is followed by sadness. If you are absorbed by the sadness, you can become depressed. Signs of depression include: changes in usual eating or sleeping patterns, constant moodiness or irritability, lack of energy, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

Acceptance: "It's all right now." Once the preceding stages have been completely worked through, you will finally be able to accept what has happened, and you may even be stronger than you were before the disaster occurred.

People who survive crises well have common characteristics:

- *They have people who stand by them, supported them, and give them a sense of hope*
- *They understand the magnitude of what they have lost*

What You Do:

What Participants Do:

| What You Say: | What You Do: | What Participants Do: |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>They learn to forgive themselves for their mistakes and for surviving</i> ▪ <i>They learn to accept their own good qualities</i> ▪ <i>They have given themselves a reason to live</i> <p>Now that you have thought about possible feelings a person may experience and have an understanding of the GRIEF process, how would you like to be treated if you were a new student at this school? What would you know about _____, the city to which you were being transferred?</p> <p>All of us have somehow been affected by hurricanes, oil spills and flooding in one way or another even if not directly and experienced different emotions.</p> <p>Jack Penn once shared “One of the secrets in life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks.”</p> <p>Students who are required to move to a new school, whether because of disaster or even some family crisis, or just because their parents are starting new jobs because of a promotion or something positive, will be building new relationships and essentially new lives in new surroundings. They will be taking their former experiences and combining them with the new experiences they encounter with us to create those foundations. As with any strong building, relationships also need strong foundations upon which to build. What kind of foundation can we help provide our new friends and classmates to help them to become stronger? What are the things you can do to help displaced or new students feel comfortable in their new surroundings and to help them deal with the tragedies they may have encountered?</p> <p>Each of you will be given a brick to indicate your part in helping to</p> | <p>Wait for response.</p> <p>Distribute “bricks” and have participants write responses on them. Tape to a wall or other vertical surface for all to see.</p> | <p>Respond</p> <p>Write things they can do to help displaced students feel comfortable.</p> |

What You Say:

build that foundation. Write one thing you or your group can do to help any new classmates to feel more comfortable in their new surroundings and to help them deal with the tragedies or even just basic changes they may have encountered.

Here are some final words that can help us to consider how we can build foundations from the remnants of crisis.

How do these quotes relate to disaster?

Our job is to help those affected by disaster, crisis or even just a change in circumstance turn stumbling blocks into a solid foundation for the future!

What You Do:

Distribute “Crisis” Quotes to three individuals who will read the cards.

What Participants Do:

Four individuals read aloud.

“Each choice we make causes a ripple effect in our lives. When things happen to us, it is the reaction we choose that can create the difference between the sorrows of our past and the joy in our future.”

— Chelle Thompson,
Editor of Inspiration
Line

“Difficult times have helped me to understand better than before, how infinitely rich and beautiful life is in every way, and that so many things that one goes worrying about are of no importance whatsoever...”

— Isak Dinesen

“In every crisis there is a message. Crises are nature's way of forcing change — breaking down old structures, shaking loose negative habits so that something new and better can take their place.

— *Susan Taylor*”

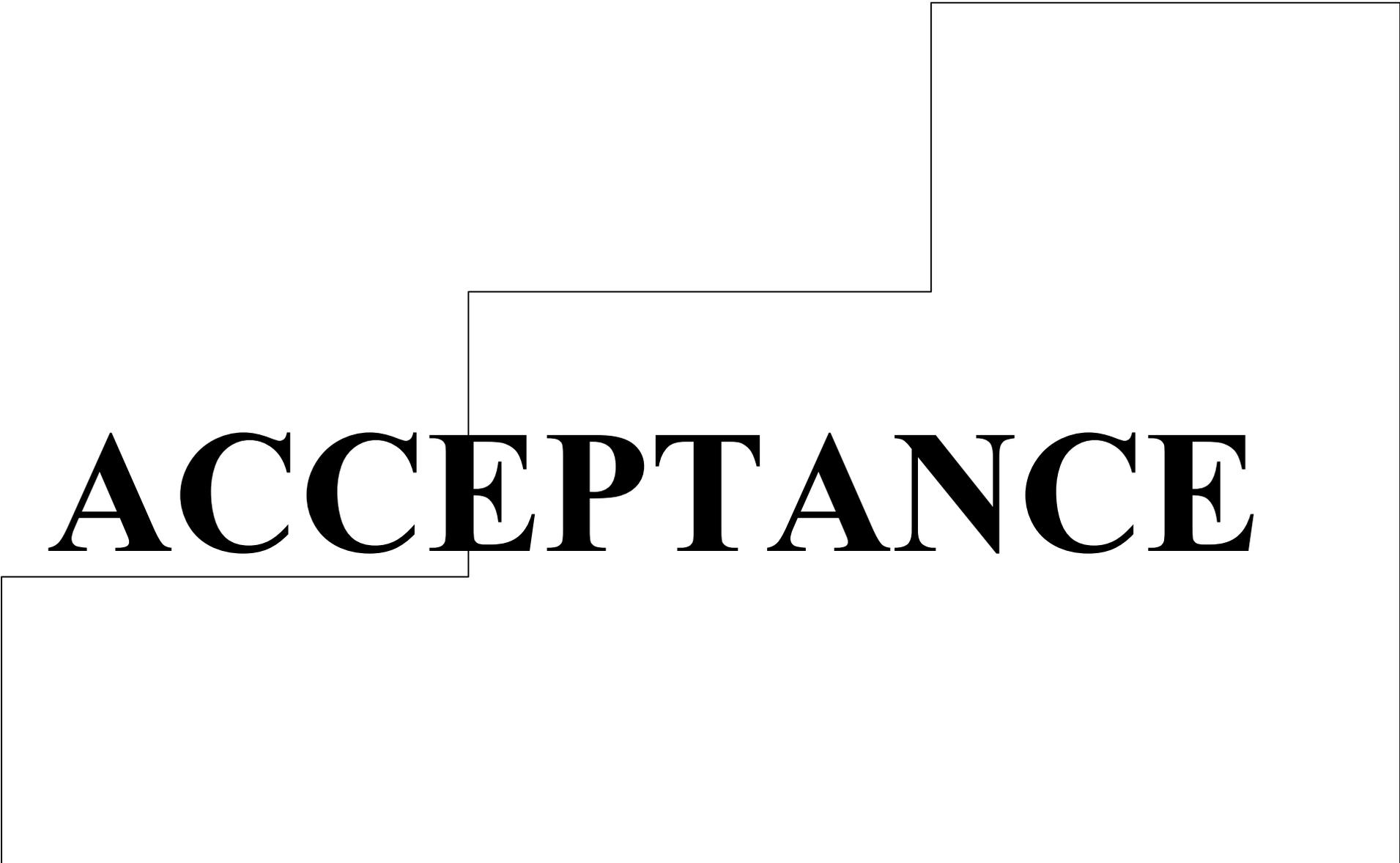
DENIAL



ANGER

BARGAINING

DEPRESSION



ACCEPTANCE

"No, not me, it can't be true."

This stage functions as a buffer after the unexpected happens.

It allows you to collect yourself and, in time, to find a way to cope.

"Why me?"

God is often a target for anger, especially in natural disasters.

You may also resent people around you who didn't suffer as much loss as you did.

"Yes, me, but..."

You may promise God that you'll be good or that you'll do something in exchange for what you need.

A positive way to deal with stress.

It provides comfort for things you cannot control.

It allows you to "frame" the crisis so you can manage it.

May help you cope with feelings of sadness without experiencing deep depression.

Allow people to see the bright side of even the most difficult situation

“There is no hope.”

A crisis entails loss, which is followed by sadness.

Signs of stage include: changes in usual eating or sleeping patterns, constant moodiness or irritability, lack of energy, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

"It's all right now."

Able to accept what has happened, and you may even be stronger than you were before the disaster occurred.

“Crisis” Quotes

Duplicate, separate into individual quotes and distribute to participants.

When you face a challenge in the future, remember that challenges offer an opportunity to grow and learn. It's important to take care of yourself by understanding the stress you are feeling. Helping others can help us take our minds off of our problems and concerns.

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—Chelle Thompson, Editor of Inspiration Line

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