

Defense Mechanisms

2. *Bad, Better, Best*

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 3 or more

Time: 10 minutes

Introduction: When we are faced with situations that make us angry, we can handle them by choosing a bad way, a good way, or a best way. This activity is designed to help students brainstorm about positive ways to handle anger, and to promote a discussion about how the ways in which we choose to handle our anger can affect those around us.

Materials:

- 3x5 cards or small pieces of paper
- 1 pencil per student

Activity:

Give each student a pile of 3x5 cards or small pieces of paper. Ask them to create three piles in front of them. They should write “Bad” on the top card in one pile, “Better” on the next one, and “Best” on the third.

Create a few scenarios that would make the students in your class angry based on what you know about them. Read these to the class one at a time. After a scenario is read, each person must write down a bad way of handling the situation on the “bad” card, a better way on the “better” card, and a best way on the “best” card. Have the students place their responses on their respective papers. Do this for several scenarios. After all the scenarios have been read, take the “bad” papers and read all the responses. Discuss the consequences of handling anger in this manner. Do this next for the “better” papers and conclude with the “best” papers. You may want to make sure to separate the 3x5 cards after each response so you know which scenario the cards are responding to.

Some examples of scenarios might include:

Your best friend is ignoring you.

You're the last one chosen to be on a team.

A false rumor is spread about you.

Processing the Experience:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- Was it easier to think of a response to the bad, better, or best category?
- Do you tend to express anger in a bad or good way? Why?
- How can you change the way you respond in pressure situations?
- How can handling anger in a bad way affect those around us?
- Which way leads to the most opportunity, freedom, and self-respect?