

Defense Mechanisms

14. No-Fair Candy Game

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 5 or more

Time: To be determined by you

Introduction: When life gives us unfair or frustrating situations, it is often difficult to control our anger and choose positive defense mechanisms. This game is purposefully unfair, and leads easily into a discussion about anger management, following rules, and choosing positive defense mechanisms.

Materials:

- 2 decks of cards
- Pair of dice
- Large bag of candy (enough for 5 pieces per student plus leftovers for the bowl in the middle)
- 1 copy of the rules per student (You can print copies of the rules from www.whytry.org/activities.)

Activity:

To prepare for this activity, combine two matching decks of cards minus the spades. Have students sit in a circle and pass out five pieces of candy to each student, and set a large pot of candy in the middle of the group. Inform the group that at the end of the game, they will be able to keep all the candy they have, but they are not to eat it until the end of the game. You will also play the game. Give copies of the rules to each student for reference during the game. The game ends when time expires (determine how much time you have) or when a few students are eliminated but some candy still remains. Explain to the students that at the end of the game, you will decide who played with the most sportsmanship and they will get to keep whatever candy is left in the pot.

Rules of the Game:

1. When it is your turn, you may roll the dice or select a card.
2. If you roll the dice and get:
 - Odd- you must put a piece of candy in the pot (the middle of the table).
 - Even- you may take a piece of candy from anyone else's pile.
 - Double- (this does not count as an even) you must give a piece of candy to someone else in the group.
3. If you draw a card and get:
 - Heart- you must give a piece of candy to the person on your right.
 - Club- you must give a piece of candy to the person on your left.
 - Diamond- you must put a piece of candy into the pot.
 - Spade- you get two pieces of candy from the pot.
4. If anyone is unfortunate enough to lose all their candy, they are eliminated from the game.
5. If you are eliminated from the game, you may continue to sit in the circle but can return to the game only if someone gives you a piece of candy during the course of the game. No candy may be given to an eliminated person out of the goodness of someone's heart; the cards or dice must determine it.
6. The leader decides who displayed the best sportsmanship during the game, and this person gets to keep all the candy left in the pot at the end of the game.
7. After the allotted time, the person who has the most candy wins, and everyone gets to keep the candy they have acquired.

Processing the Experience:

- Was this game fair? Why or why not?
- How did you feel while playing the game?
- How do you feel now?
- Do you ever feel that life is unfair?
- How do you handle things when they seem unfair?
- How might it help you to change how you act when life seems unfair?