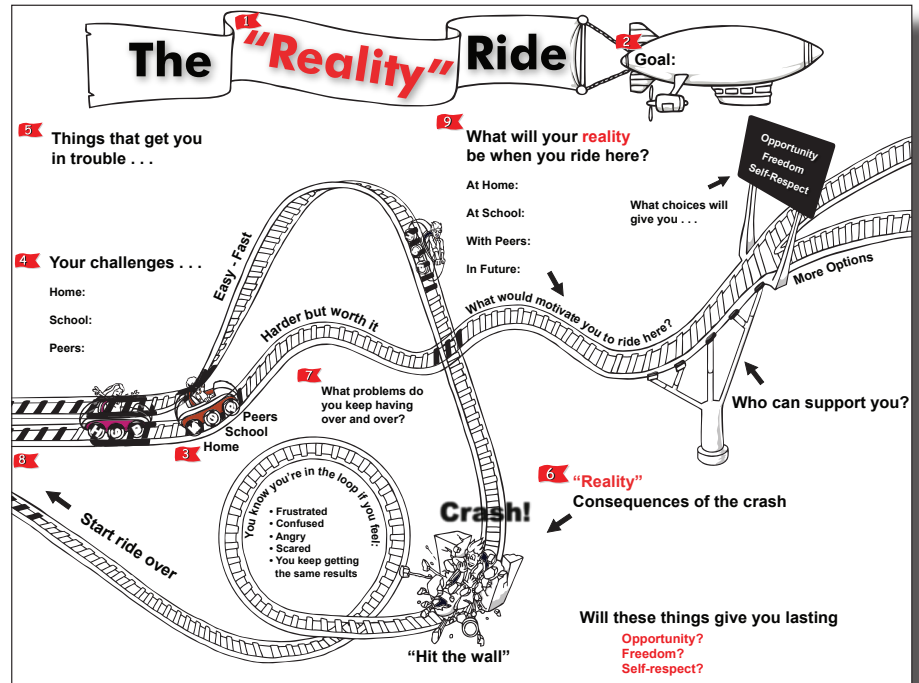


The Reality Ride

Introduction

Key Concept:

Each decision we make has a consequence. The decisions we make today directly affect the future.



Vocabulary

- Reality
- Goals
- Challenges
- Choices
- Trouble
- "Stuck in a Loop"
- Immediate gratification
- Delayed gratification

Secondary Concepts:

- We all experience challenges at home, at school, or with peers.
- It's important to be aware of the consequences of our decisions.
- Each new day is an opportunity to change and make good choices.
- Remember, "You are free to make your own decisions, but you cannot choose the consequence."

Personalize your Lesson:

- Can you think of any time in your own life when you were on the easy-fast track?
- Have you ever had to face a difficult consequence as a result of a decision you made?
- How has the "harder but worth it" track been worth it for you?

Activity:

To introduce this lesson, complete the attention activity "Count Your Fingers." (See the "Learning Activities" section under "Reality Ride.")

The Reality Ride

Lesson Plan: Introducing Reality Ride

Watch a short video segment of roller coasters and/or amusement park rides.

Questions

- Have you ever ridden on a roller coaster? Did you like it?
- What makes the ride fun or not fun?
- Do you think you could have stayed on the ride all day? Why or why not? How long do you think the ride would continue to be fun?

Emphasize that what can make the ride fun for a while - the big steep climbs and the fast dropoffs - can become tiring after a while and will eventually make you sick. Show the visual analogy.

The Reality Ride

Lesson Plan: Visual Analogy Walkthrough

Discussion Point 1:

Question

What does the word "reality" mean to you?

Discussion

Emphasize that reality is what is real or what is actually happening in our lives. For example, "Us sitting here looking



at this picture right now is reality." Let students know that this picture shows one reality of life: our choices eventually have consequences.

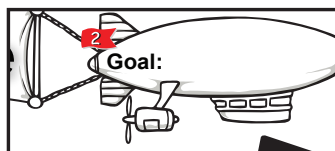
Challenge

Have students write down their definition of "reality" underneath the word "Reality" on their copy of the picture. If you are doing this one-on-one, you may want to summarize their responses by writing down what they say in your own words.

Point 2:

Question

What is a goal that you have for your life? Let students know that to get on this reality ride, they need to identify one goal or dream for their life.



Discussion

Stress that they can have any goal, as long as it doesn't break the following rule: The goal

can't hurt themselves or others. It must be a positive goal.

Challenge

Challenge them to think about this goal when they are discouraged and need motivation to keep trying.

NOTE:

You may not like the goal that they choose, but as long as it doesn't hurt them or others, just "go with it" for now. Often students have unrealistic goals or dreams, but it's best not to get hung up on those. We use the goal to inspire them to take the harder but worth it track later in our discussion.

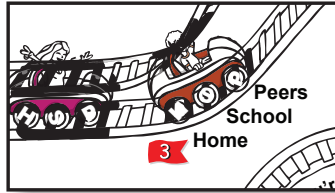
Point 3:

Question

What are the three main environments where you spend most of your time?

Discussion

Point out that the three wheels have the letters H, S, and P



on them. These represent the three main places where they spend their time: at home, at school, and with peers. Ask the

students, "What do the wheels do for the roller coaster?" (They take the roller coaster down the track.) Those three environments of home, school, and peers are like the wheels on the roller coaster. They take us down the road of life. Sometimes in those environments, we have challenges.

Point 4:

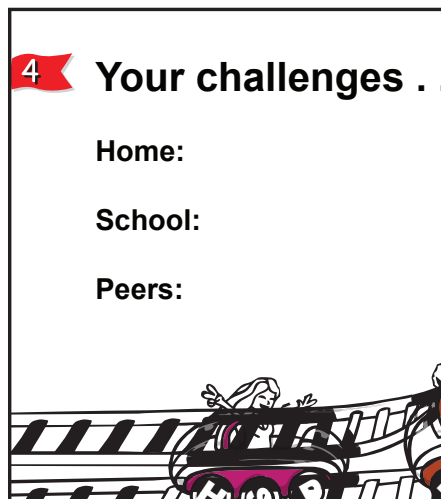
Question

What are some of your challenges at home, at school, and with peers?

Note: If you are teaching this one-on-one, you may ask personal questions about some of their challenges at home, at school, and with peers. If you are working with a group, it's best to keep your questions general. For example, "What are some of the challenges that kids have at home?" Students can feel very uncomfortable answering personal questions about their home life in front of a group.

Examples of student responses may include the following:

At **HOME**: Too many rules, bored, parents too strict, divorce, fighting, no money, can't communicate with parents, etc.



At **SCHOOL**: Too hard, boring, "My teacher doesn't like me," failing

With **PEERS**: Peer pressure to fit in, don't have any friends, bullying or being bullied

Discussion

Tell the students, "When you have difficult problems in life, life can be hard." Point to the uphill part of the track, and explain that life's problems are like this part of the track. It's important to emphasize stu-

dents' challenges in these environments. Be careful here not to discuss what they are doing wrong. (Step 5 will focus on what they are doing that is getting them into trouble in these three areas.) During the discussion, be empathetic with students, showing that you understand that dealing with challenges can be tough.

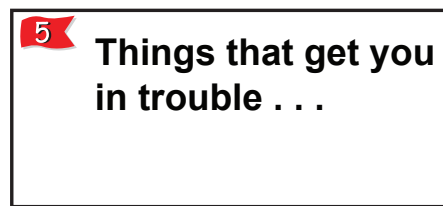
Help students see that although they don't have control over all of the challenges in these three environments, they do have control over how they respond and how they deal with their challenges. For example, they don't control whether their parents get divorced or how much money their family makes; they don't control graduation requirements or how much homework they have. They do control whether they do their homework and whether they say "no" to drugs that peers offer them.

Point 5:

Question

Sometimes, as a result of challenges, we do things that get us into trouble. What are the things that are getting you into trouble at home, at school, and with peers?

Examples of student responses may include not doing home-



work, talking back to the teacher, getting in fights, stealing/shoplifting, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, staying out past curfew, partying, sexually acting out, etc.

Discussion

Ask students, "When you do these things, is it fun?" You will find that in most cases, students will recognize that there is a thrill associated with each one of those examples. Just like the high part of the roller coaster, doing those things is a thrill and is fun. But everything that goes up eventually comes down.

Point 6:

Question

Say, "This ride is called the 'reality ride.' I want you to be real and honest with me about how you really see things. What have been the consequences of doing the things you listed in Point 5 that get you into trouble? What are the possible consequences of these situations?" (It's important to use the word "possible consequence" here to point out that even though they may not get caught each time, we want them to recognize what the possible consequences are.)

For example:

Out past curfew: Upset parents, loss of freedom, anger, and frustration.

Fighting: Legal and court problems (charged with assault), you could get hurt, you could hurt someone else, suspended from school.

Stealing: Legal and court problems (arrested for shoplifting), probation, have to pay back.



Drugs: Legal and court problems, addiction, loss of freedom, hangovers, loss of self-respect, and death (possible consequence).

Not attending or trying in school: Suspension, failing grades, less opportunity and money, more time spent in school.

Discussion

Point to the list of consequences that you identified and ask students, "Will any of these give you lasting opportunity, freedom, and self-respect?" Note: Most of us recognize the answer to that question is "no." However, you will find that many students will think of an exception and challenge you on this. For example, they might say, "I know this guy

who sells drugs and makes lots of money, gets lots of respect, has a sweet car, and has a hot girlfriend. This isn't true." In situations like this, be very careful how you respond. If you tell a student they are wrong, you are basically telling them that what they think doesn't matter. The reality is, in their life, what they think is all that matters. You may want to respond by saying, "You know, you're right. Sometimes you do see people who are doing those things but not yet experiencing the negative consequences. I'm not here to tell you to believe me. I want you to observe it for yourself."

Challenge

Challenge students to observe people who are doing the behaviors in Point 5, and to pay attention to the consequences of those behaviors. Point out that one of the great things about life is that we all get to make our own decisions. However, with those decisions, we must recognize that we don't get to choose the consequences of our actions.

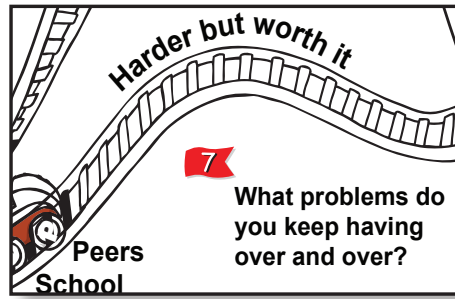
Point 7:

Question

What problem or behavior from Point 5 do you keep repeating?

Discussion

Point out that when we keep repeating things, we will likely get the same results. We may also feel like we are stuck in a loop and we've lost control. Point out to students that they



can tell if they're in the loop if they regularly feel the following emotions: frustration, confusion, anger, or fear, or if

they lack options to deal with challenges. The fastest way to get out of the loop is to stop the behavior that is hurting them the most. It is often easiest to stay in the loop because it is the most familiar and comfortable. The reality is that to get out of the loop, they may have to work harder, sacrifice, and take a risk by leaving their comfort zone.

Point 8:

Question

Ask students to observe in Point 8 the difference between the "harder but worth it" track and the track that leads to the crash. How are these two tracks visually different?

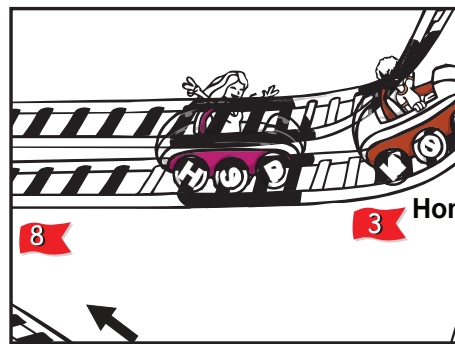
Students may give the following responses:

Easy-fast track: It goes way up and comes down and crashes, it's a big loop, it's faster at first, more exciting at first, the color fades towards the end.

Harder but worth it track: It goes up and down, but isn't as extreme, It continues forward, there are options at the end, it leads towards your goal, it has a support, the color stays the same.

Discussion

Tell students that you are going to teach them how to



achieve opportunity, freedom, and self-respect through these two steps:

1. Get out of the loop.
2. Use the goal they identified in Point 2 as their motivation to get on this ride (track).

Although getting and staying on this ride can be difficult, the difficulty pays off with the absence of the anger, confusion, and frustration of fluctuating between highs and lows. For example, "If you get on the track that leads to a crash by deciding one morning not to go to school, you will likely have a rush from the fun of missing school. But in reality, you will

crash when you get caught or fail your class. On the other track, if you go to school that day and put effort into it, you may not experience a rush, but you won't crash either. You will be on the track that gives you more options, opportunity, freedom, and self-respect."

Stress that anybody can do things that cause crashes, but it takes strength to use goals as motivation to avoid a crash. Let students know that the other pictures you will teach them are skills that they need to stay on track and to avoid future crashes.

Challenge

Challenge students to ride the "harder but worth it" track for two weeks and then ask themselves, "Do I feel less frustrated, am I getting different results, and do I have more self-respect?"

Point 9:

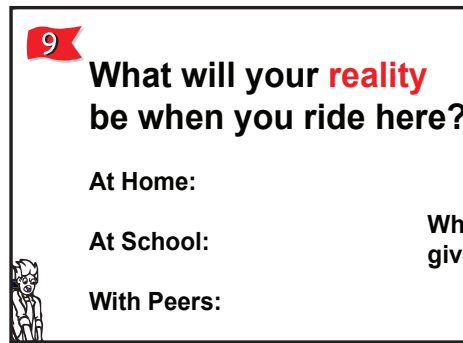
Question

What could be your reality if you avoided the crash?

Discussion

Discuss possible realities at home, such as parents worrying less, arguing with family less, more freedom given by parents (or caregiver). Discuss possible realities at school, such as getting better grades. Discuss possible realities with peers, such as standing up to peer pressure, helping other friends, and so forth. Discuss future realities, such as reaching goals, having self-respect, and becoming something.

The following questions from the visual analogy can be asked at any time you feel appropriate during the walkthrough:



9 What will your reality be when you ride here?

At Home: _____

At School: _____

With Peers: _____

Who gives you self-respect? _____

- What choices will give you opportunity, freedom, and self-respect?
- Who can support you? (Help them identify a support system that can help them stop crashing and stay on track.)
- What would motivate you to ride here? (Discuss how the reality of the crash can motivate them to get on the other track. The answer to the questions in Point 9 can motivate them to ride on the track that creates options and helps give opportunity, freedom, and self-

respect.)

- What does each track do to your options? (Point out that the easy-fast track takes away their options and opportunities in life, while the other track gives them unlimited options in life.)

Remember, although this is a very detailed walkthrough of the Reality Ride, always start where students are and teach it at their own pace. If it is too much information, simplify; if it is too little, add. Most importantly, students must understand the basic concepts of all nine visual analogies. It is also important that you use your own creativity and experiences to bring the pictures alive. The Reality Ride can be your road map through the program. You will notice all the other visuals tie back to the concepts taught in the Reality Ride. Have fun with the rest of the ride!

IMPORTANT:

After teaching students this visual analogy, have them teach it back to you. Have them do this with all of the other visual analogies as well. This will help you assess students' understanding of what you taught. Keep it light, without pressure; just assess for a general understanding. Also, as you teach the rest of the program, ask students to point out or to draw a star where they are on the Reality Ride that day or week. Are they crashing? Are they on track? As you teach the other pictures, always tie them back into the Reality Ride. The other pictures will help keep them on the track to opportunity, freedom and self-respect. Keep reinforcing this!

The Flexible Lesson Plan:

The Key:

FLEXIBILITY

“It is important to be able to change your lesson plan on the fly based on the way that your group is responding.”

- Dr. Cristal McGill, Ph.D.

Flexible Lesson Elements:

Attention-getter – This can include music, an object lesson, a “Surrendering the One-up” activity, or a brief movie clip.

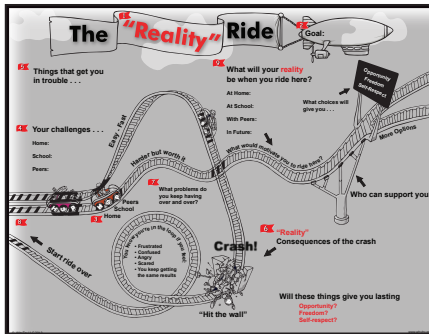
Visual Walkthrough – Use the teacher’s manual, posters, and other resources to teach the visual analogy. This element makes up the core of the lesson.

Music – Listen to WhyTry music. Provide students with the lyrics to follow along, then process the song.

Learning Activities – This gets students involved in the lesson and maintains attention and energy.

Journal Activities – This allows students to apply WhyTry to themselves. These can be done in class or as a homework assignment.

Example Stories / Resources – Use any other resources or examples you feel would be appropriate to meet your students’ specific needs.



Your Lesson Plan:

Plan your lesson based on your time constraints. You may want to identify a time estimate and priority for each element as well as some alternative activities that you can use in case you need to change your approach to meet the needs of your group.

Attention-getter / Warm-ups / Brief movie clip:

Time: _____

Priority: _____ Visual walkthrough:

Time: _____

Priority: _____ Music activity:

Time: _____

Priority: _____ Learning activity:

Time: _____

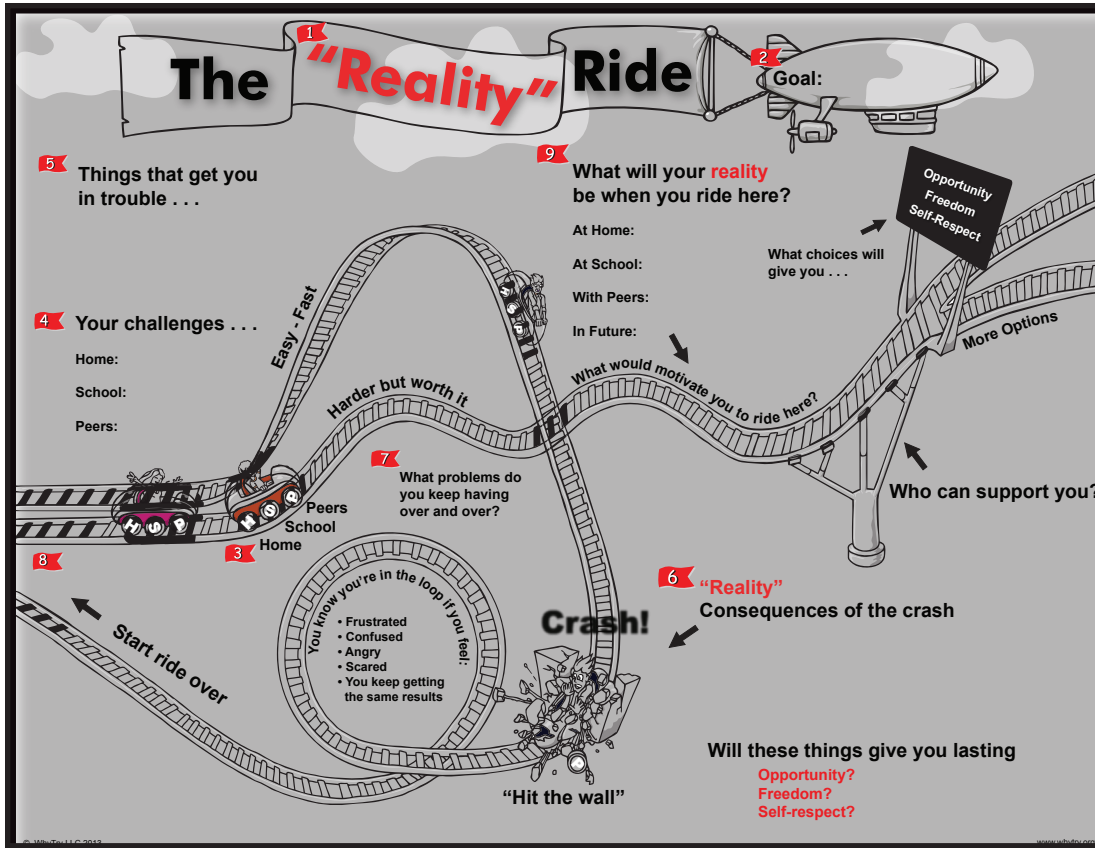
Priority: _____ Journal activity:

Time: _____

Priority: _____ Example stories / Resources:

Time: _____

Total Lesson Time: _____



Key Concept:

Decisions and choices have consequences. We get to make our own decisions but we don't get to choose our consequences.

Notes:

Example Stories:

Reality Ride

2. An Amazing Experience

Spatial Requirements: Gym/outdoor space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 2-12

Group Size: 10-15 per maze

Time: 30-40 minutes

Introduction: As participants go through the maze, they will learn important concepts about choices and consequences. They will learn the importance of learning from their mistakes and the mistakes of others, and using positive support systems to help them through life's experiences. This activity can also apply to "Climbing Out," "Desire, Time, and Effort," and "Plugging In."

Materials:

- 1 roll of masking tape
- 1 grid map per team (These can be found at www.whytry.org/activities.)

Activity:

Make a 6 X 9 grid on the floor with the masking tape. A "maze master" stands at the head of each maze to monitor the movement of the team members on the maze. The maze master holds the grid map out of sight of the group. He/she also makes a "beep" sound when a mistake is made, and keeps track of all mistakes with a tally mark on the paper.

Have the team members line up in front of the maze. The team will see a grid of squares made of masking tape, and only the maze master will know which squares represent the path and which ones are impassable. (The impassable squares are those with an "X" over them on the map.)

The first person in line begins by stepping on any square of the maze. If they are lucky enough to step on the path, they may proceed to another square. They may move forward, backward, sideways, and diagonally, but can never skip or step over squares. As long as they stay on the path as shown on the grid map, nothing happens. But when they step off the invisible path and onto an invisible "X," the maze master "beeps" and that person leaves the maze and proceeds carefully back through the maze, to the entry point, and on to the back of the line. (They must avoid "beeping squares" while they are retreating as well.) The next person in line then steps into the grid and also moves through it until they make a mistake and the maze master "beeps" at them. The other players must watch closely to learn the correct route and complete the object of the game, which is for everyone to finish the maze without stepping on an impassable, "beeping" square.

Time this event starting with the first person. Any time the maze master beeps, add one minute to the total time. This includes if a team member steps on an impassable square while retreating back to the starting point.

Allow each player to take a turn before allowing second turns. Do not allow props (like a pen and paper) or speaking.

Only one person may be on the maze at a time until a player has made it completely through the maze and the pattern is discovered. At this point, there may now be multiple players on the maze at one time. However, if any of those players make a mistake, all the players behind them must retreat back to the start. As before, each beep encountered while retreating adds a minute to the team's total time.

Processing the Experience:

- What was difficult about this activity?
- What were your feelings as you went through this activity? What frustrated you? What motivated you?