

The overall goal of the children's lessons, the parenting lessons and the lessons to train teachers is to build a school atmosphere that promotes positive nurturing beliefs based on new knowledge and new behaviors. To this end, the nurturing lessons incorporate five critical skill areas that have proven effectiveness in building healthy and nurturing skills. These areas are called **Constructs**. A construct is a summary of skills, beliefs and knowledge that shape all patterns of behavior.

There are five constructs that form the basis of all the lessons and activities in the Program:

Construct A: Positive Self-Worth. The level of worth we have for ourselves generally forms the basis for the level of worth we have for others. Self-worth is formed by the thoughts we have of our self, usually referred to as our self-concept. Self-worth also entails the feelings we have toward our self, generally referred to as our self-esteem. Building a healthy, positive self-worth is a critical part of cultivating a community wide culture of nurturing.

Construct B: Emotional Regulation and Empathy. When we are born, as babies we have unregulated emotions. What this means is we do not have the mental structure to control how to handle our emotions. We learn regulation of our emotions by the way we observe our parents handling their emotions and by their messages they give us regarding our emotions. In turn, we will respond to the emotions of others based on this learning. Learning how to control our emotions is called emotional regulation. Learning to recognize and respond to the emotions and needs of others is called empathy.

Construct C: Self-Discipline. The word discipline comes from the Latin word *discipulus* which means to guide and teach. Two words that have their origin in *discipulus* are discipline and disciple. Discipline is a process of regulation of sorts. We learn the dos and don'ts of family and society which form our morals: the rights and wrongs of life. Discipline starts as an external process that ideally grows to an internal process. Being self-disciplined means you are in control of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. People with self-discipline generally examine the rights and wrongs of their choices before they act.

Construct D: Self-Awareness and Self-Acceptance. It is commonly accepted in the field of mental health that, regarding our own patterns of behavior, what we are aware of and take ownership for we can control. What we are unaware of and do not take ownership for controls us. Becoming aware of the behaviors that need changing and accepting those behaviors as a part of who we are form the first two steps involved in behavior change.

Construct E: Self-Empowerment. To be empowered is the ability to take control of your thoughts, feelings, morals, and make healthy choices. Being self-empowered is the ability to protect yourself; nurture yourself; and respect yourself. Being self-empowered is the ability to problem solve, cooperate, negotiate and compromise, to share and to withstand the pressures from peers the give up your moral ground. Being self-empowered comprises self-awareness and self-acceptance; positive self-worth; emotional regulation and empathy; and self-discipline.

The DNS Program

The Developing Nurturing Skills Program is the part of the program the children, pre-teens and teens receive during regular school time. The program activities and lessons are taught by trained teachers during "Discussion Time" in Middle Schools and High Schools.

The DNS School-Based Programs are presented in four separate Teacher's Instructional Manuals.

- DNS K-3 Program designed for children Grades K-3.

Activity 1.7 I Get Scared When ...

Construct: Emotional Regulation; Self-Awareness

Materials: Smart Board, White Board, or Flip Chart

Teaching Goal:

To reinforce with children the concept and practice of recognizing and stating how they feel.

Learner Competency:

Children will identify how they feel.

Procedures:

1. Welcome the class and ask them to sit in a circle on the floor.
2. Briefly discuss with the children the feeling “scared.”
3. Ask each child to respond to the following statements:

Today I’m feeling _____.

I get scared when _____.

4. Encourage a brief discussion to each response by reflecting their responses with their feelings.

Notes and Suggestions:

Encourage children to talk about feelings that may be uncomfortable to share.

Quiz Question:

When other children were scared of the same things as me, I felt _____.

5. Share with the children that some ways to express anger are:
 - a. Do an angry dance. (Have the children get up and do an angry dance.)
 - b. Tell someone that you're angry. (Have the children practice telling someone they're angry).
 - c. Brainstorm with the children other ways they can handle their anger.

Notes and Suggestions:

If you have a Smart board this is an excellent example of a lesson you will want to load on your Smart board to utilize and revise again.

Quiz Question:

List the 3 rules for when you are angry:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 3.4 Dancercise

Construct: Positive Self-Worth; Self-Discipline

Materials: Music appropriate for young children

Teaching Goal:

To engage children in cooperative play through music.

Learner Competency:

Children will demonstrate the ability to move to music.

Procedures:

1. Ask the children to stand in a circle.
2. Start the music.
3. Demonstrate easy dance moves that generally use gross motor movements. The movements should change every 30 seconds to one minute to keep the interest going. Some gross motor movements may include the following:
 - Jumping jacks
 - Standing leg lifts (bending at the hip and knee to form a right angle)
 - Body twisting (turning at waist with hands on hips)

The intent is to create gross movement to music.

Notes and Suggestions:

When working with a group of young children and an activity like this, preface with some safety instructions.

Quiz Question:

When I dance, I feel _____.