

Tutorial Lesson #7: Defense Mechanisms Walkthrough



Lesson Summary:

This lesson will introduce the Defense Mechanisms metaphor. You will use video, activities and resilience boosters to help teach this lesson. You will also focus on the Framing core competency.

Learning Objectives:

- I can list defense mechanisms, both positive and negative, which I have used in the past.
 - I can describe how positive defense mechanisms lead to solutions better than negative ones.
 - I can list different positive defense mechanisms I can use in pressure situations.
 - I can plan and practice how to react in pressure situations by choosing positive defense mechanisms.
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Lesson Tools:

- Lesson plan PowerPoint deck (Windows)
- Lesson plan Keynote deck (Mac)
- Make sure the Parking Lot Rage video in the Lesson Plan works and is cued ready to go. Practice sharing the video and stopping it at key moments.
- Read through and practice the Activity: Name Writing if you have never used it before.
- Have the supplies necessary for the Observation Booster.

Note: these resources can all be accessed on this lesson's webpage.

ATTENTION GETTER / SETTING THE CLASS (5-10 minutes)

As students come in choose a song to be playing. You could pull a song from the Suggested Playlists in the Defense Mechanisms toolkit (link on this lesson's webpage) or you could play a popular song to build atmosphere. Either way, this is also a great moment to Surrender the One Up by greeting students by name and talking and asking them about things outside of school.

Instruct the kids that you want to start a new routine at the start of class. You want to do a check-in. A check-in is really simple. You go around the room and everyone has an opportunity to say how their day is going on a scale from 1-10 (poor to awesome). A student can also say pass if they don't want to say. They also have the opportunity to share why they rated it the way they did. (NOTE: Establishing a protocol with students where you can check in with them is very important. This can inform you about what is going on with your students and the mindframe they are coming to class with. Pay attention to students who may need a kind word based on the details they are giving.

CORE COMPETENCY ALERT: Framing

As a WhyTry facilitator, framing is one of the most important and difficult skills to master. Framing refers to our ability to present information in a way that students will connect to it, be excited about it and it represents our own enthusiasm and passion for what we present. Imagine taking a picture and you have a dozen lenses to choose from. Depending on the lens you choose will greatly affect the quality of the picture or how someone sees it. Read our indicators for successfully using framing and watch the tutorial found on this lesson's webpage for using framing as a WhyTry facilitator.

VIDEO (5 minutes): Parking Lot Rage

Prepare to show the video Parking Lot Rage to your students. Before you start the video explain that the video you are watching today is a perfect example of what you'll be talking about today. Let's see if they can figure it out.

Show the video clip in its entirety and ask the following questions. Feel free to substitute or add questions of your own:

- What happened in this video?
- Who was the winner?
- Why did it keep going on and on?
- What would've happened if someone would have reacted differently at the very beginning?
- Why do you think she said I don't know what happened? at the end of the clip?
- What do you think we will be learning about today?

Next, transition the conversation into the metaphor walkthrough.

METAPHOR WALKTHROUGH (30 minutes including activity)

Whether you are using the Powerpoint Tool, projecting the metaphor, or providing individual copies, follow the sequence annotated by the red flags on the metaphor. It will be a guide to help you walk the students through the Metaphor:

Setting up the Metaphor Discussion: To start the walkthrough of this metaphor begin a discussion about a suit of armor and what it is used for. We've provided you with some talking points to illustrate and surface as much knowledge about armor as possible:

- Look at the knight in this picture. What is he wearing?
- Why do you think he would be wearing this?
- What kind of weapons would be used against him to need this kind of protection? (These could include a sword, spear, lance, arrows, or mace.)
- Have you ever seen a suit of armor in real life? What does it look like? (Usually someone will say, "Heavy.")
- How much do you think a suit of armor weighs? (Often it is around 100 pounds.)
- Why would this knight want to carry so much weight around? (The amount of protection would make it worth it.)
- Would it be weird to see someone walking down the street wearing armor like that today?
- Do soldiers today wear different types of armor to protect themselves? (Bulletproof vests, kevlar, helmets, etc.) Explain that in modern times, we all still do things to protect ourselves like this knight. Often, when confronted with pressure situations, we just do what comes naturally. Explain that this picture is about the ways we try to protect ourselves.

Discussion Point #1: Ask the question: What is a defense mechanism? Explain that a defense mechanism is how we react when we feel like we are being attacked. Much like a knight wears a suit of armor to protect himself, we do the same thing to protect ourselves. For example, when WhyTry Founder Christian Moore was in school, he was a bad reader. If a teacher asked him to read out loud, he felt uncomfortable or embarrassed, so he used the defense mechanism of acting out (punching a kid next to him), so he would be sent to the principal's office instead of being embarrassed in front of the class.

Discussion Point #2: Say: To better understand this, I'm going to bring up some possible pressure situations you may find yourselves in and I want you to think about and say how you or your peers normally respond. At this point you will be writing down your students' answers on either side of the shield. You will need to make sure it is being projected on a surface you can write on, or draw your own copy of a shield on a board. As students share responses, record their answers on the left side of the shield if they are negative and on the right side of the shield if they are positive. Special Note: you are not going to ask students what side they go on, you will simply put them there. Remember positive means it doesn't hurt you or anyone else. Most of the answers will be on the negative side of the shield. Point out that all of these are defense mechanisms we use to protect ourselves.

Discussion Point #3: Explain how our defense mechanisms are trying to protect more than just our bodies. Say: Everyone has pressure situations. As a result of those situations, we have feelings. Ask: what feelings do you have in pressure situations? Discuss: The feelings we have in these moments cause us to react and use one of our defense mechanisms. We have made a list of defense mechanisms. Ask students to think about why they use the ones they have listed.

LEARNING ACTIVITY: NAME WRITING ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Additional Activity: To help drive home the idea that our bodies and minds are trained to behave in a certain way after repetition. You can ask your students to fold their arms and pay attention to what arm is on top and what hand is tucked underneath. After everyone folds their arms, have them separate their arms and then ask them to fold their arms again but with the other arm on top and the other hand tucked. You can illustrate this again by asking them to clasp their hands together. They should pay attention to what thumb is on top. Ask them to separate their hands and clasp them again with the other thumb on top. This can add to your discussion and processing questions in the name writing activity.

Say: Psychologists call this an “impulse response.” Unfortunately, most impulse responses in pressure situations are negative.

Introduction:

In order to improve and make positive changes, we need to get out of our comfort zone. This attention-grabbing activity shows students that this is possible with time and practice.

Activity Details:

- **Spatial Requirements:** Regular classroom setup: little or no space required
- **Activity Type:** Group
- **Group Size:** 2 or more
- **Time:** 5 minutes
- **Materials:**
 - Timer
 - 1-2 pieces of paper per student
 - 1 pen or pencil per student
 - Background music (optional)

Activity Instructions:

Play the background music. Ask the group members to write their full name on the paper as many times as they can in 30 seconds. After the time is up, have the participants count the total number of times they were able to write their name. Repeat this activity two more times. Ask if they improved after the third time. Now, have the group members change hands and repeat the activity for 30 more seconds. Ask the first two processing questions. Ask, “Do you think you can write your name with your eyes closed?” Have them try. This will come easy for them with their dominant hand. Ask them to do the same thing with their non-dominant hand. Ask the remaining processing questions.

Processing the Experience:

- Do you agree that it was harder when you changed hands? Why?
- Why was it easier to do this activity with the hand that you normally write with?(Discuss muscle memory. When you repeat a movement over and over, in time a long-term muscle memory is created for that task, eventually allowing it to be performed with little to no conscious effort. See if they can write their name with their dominant hand with their eyes closed)
- Why is change hard?
- What do we usually do in pressure situations when someone yells, hits, or blames us?
- Why is it hard to do something different?

METAPHOR WALKTHROUGH (continued)

Discussion Point #4: Ask: Who controls your defense mechanism? Allow students to answer and discuss that they don't have to respond to pressure situations and feelings by just doing what comes naturally. Say: You actually get to make a choice in every situation. You can choose to do something different. You can choose to do something positive. Although it is difficult to control how we feel inside, we can control how we respond outwardly. The choice is ours. Ask: Why does choosing the positive response give you self-respect? Discuss: Choosing a positive response will not always be easy – sometimes it will require you to pause for a moment before you react – but in the end it will give you more self-respect and freedom. Other people can affect our feelings, and sometimes they will do all they can to influence our choices. Because life is not fair, it is easy to blame others for our actions, particularly if we do not have control over our defense mechanisms. For example, “He/she yelled at me so I had to yell back,” or “They hit me first,” or “They were disrespectful to me.” People who are trying to take control of their defense mechanisms will take responsibility for their actions.

Discussion Point #5: Ask: How do you know if your defense mechanism is positive or negative? If it has not already surfaced in your discussion up to this point, discuss the easiest way to define if a defense mechanism is positive or negative is by whether or not it hurts you or another person. (You may jump to this as you're listing defense mechanisms on the shield if someone asks you how you determine which responses are positive or negative.) Review the defense mechanisms listed on the shield from your discussion. In most pressure situations, people respond by doing the things that they are used to doing. Notice how frequently in their examples, their natural response in a pressure situation is often negative. Point out to students that although negative defense mechanisms may give some short-term relief from the situation, too often they make the situation worse. Negative defense mechanisms are usually the easiest to choose. For example, if someone hits you, the easiest thing to do is to hit back. If someone yells at you, the easiest thing to do is yell back. Selecting a negative defense mechanism is easy: anyone can do it.

Refer back to the Reality Ride and point out that many people get stuck on the quick and easy track because they always respond in situations with negative defense mechanisms. If you feel it is appropriate you can even point out that many adults are in prison today because of negative defense mechanisms. (That discussion may or may not be appropriate for your group of students) Say: Next time we will be learning about how to change your defense mechanisms.

RESILIENCE BOOSTER: Observation Booster (5 minutes)

Provide access to the journal prompt Observation Booster. This can be done by either printing out the PDF from the online toolkit, writing the prompt on the board or projecting it, or using WhyTry journals you have purchased. Show them what it looks like and explain that you'd like them to read through these questions and observe this happening in their personal lives between now and next session. Give your own example to each prompt so they feel comfortable and prepared to do the same moving forward.

AFTER THE LESSON

If there is extra time at the end of the lesson before the bell rings, have students give examples of pressure situations you haven't perhaps thought of before and share how they have reacted in the past. Another idea is to brainstorm other impulse responses we have.

Say goodbye to students as they leave your class. Thank them for participating and tell them you are excited for next time! You may even want to have music from the suggested playlist or other music playing as they exit your room or transition to new content.

Reflect on your lesson: Ask yourself what went well? What didn't go as planned? Did any of your students respond in surprising ways? If you were to do the same lesson again, what would you consider doing differently?

Reflect on the Framing competency. What examples of framing did you use today?