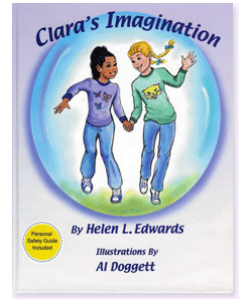


Lesson Plan 3

The Culture of Fear



GRADE LEVELS: 3-6

BASED ON THE BOOK:

Clara's Imagination by Helen L. Edwards

PURPOSE:

- Students will learn about the culture of fear and explore some of the root causes of fear.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand that we all have fears. Some of our fears we share in common and some of our fears are unique to us.
- Students will be able to identify their fears and the root causes of their fear.
- Students will learn to use self-talk in an empowering way, decreasing their fear, enabling them to move forward.
- Students will learn ways to calm their mind and skillfully manage some of the physical symptoms of fear.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- The book **Clara's Imagination** by Helen L. Edwards
- "Best Friend" (Poem)** By Clara and Safina (included In this lesson plan)
- Previous character traits chart from lesson 1
- Paper or journal
- Pencil or pen

PRE-READING: The class should have read through and discussed Appendixes A-E.

TEACHER'S NOTE:

1. You might choose to read the story with the focus being on what were the events that took place in the story that fueled Safina's fear. Begin the class discussion with the students' prior background knowledge and experiences with fear.
2. Say:
 - ❖ **Today class we are going to examine the elements of fear. Raise your hand if you have ever been afraid of something.** (Wait and look around at the class for a few seconds) **Yes, everyone's hand should be up. We all have fears. Fear is a normal human emotional response to a perceived stress, threat, or danger.**

- ❖ **Did you know that when you were born you only had two natural built in fears programmed in your DNA. This programming came about as a means of survival and was passed on through generation after generation. Those two natural fears are the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. The function of these fears is to alert you to potential dangers, therefore, keeping you safe and alive.**
- ❖ **How does this work you might be thinking? The fears trigger an emotional response inside of your body which motivates you to avoid the threat or danger. All other fears are learned, through experiences you have had and now associate a negative emotion with that experience. An example of this would be in the story, Safina listens to a scary tale about a person named Ones the manic man. He only has half of his limbs. He also is a stranger and lives one block down the street, where she is not allowed to go.**
- ❖ **Okay class I will list Safina’s thoughts and you tell me what negative emotions Safina might associate with that thought.** (Draw a T-Chart on one side label Safina’s Thoughts on the other side label Negative Emotions. An example of that chart might look like this as you record the students’ responses).

<i>Safina’s Thoughts</i>	<i>Negative Emotions</i>
Ones the manic man (manic means crazy)	alarmed, dangerous, panic, scary, threatened
Ones has half of his limbs (monster)	frightening, terrified, horrified
He’s a stranger	wary, uneasy, distrust
“Chop, chop, and off, drops, plop, plop, plop, goes your limb.”	harm, violence, hurt

- ❖ **In the story Safina’s response to her fear as she was dreaming was to run, run, run from Ones the manic man. Safina was running away which equals to taking flight. We call this the “fight or flight” response to fear. Fear acts as a useful emotional tool to help us avoid a threat or danger.**
- ❖ **If Ones had caught Safina in her dream, class what do you think her response would have been?** (Possible responses to look for, fight back in a case where your life is in danger and there does not appear to be adult help available. That is the other part to “fight or flight” response. Scream, yell stranger, stranger, and yell for help).
- ❖ **Class this is the one time when physical fighting is okay, when you are defending your life, in cases where it is a life threatening situation. Class do you see how the “fight or flight”**

response works? You either fight the danger directly or you take flight which means to avoid, fleeing from danger.

- ❖ In all situations relating to fear what we say to ourselves will either increase our fear or decrease our fear. We call this self-talk. Self-talk is what you say to yourself in your mind about your fear.
- ❖ An example of self-talk that might **increase** your fear: *“I’m afraid and I don’t know what to do. I feel powerless. I am so scared that I can’t move. I’m frozen with fear. There is nothing I can do.”*
- ❖ An example of self-talk that might **decrease** your fear: *“ I know what to do. Get adult help immediately! If adult help is not immediately available, I am strong enough and capable enough to draw attention to my need for help. I will help myself by any means necessary. I will kick, yell, scream stranger, stranger, scratch, and fight, and run until I am out of immediate danger. I need to follow through and do it. I can handle this. I am calm and cool. Take some deep breaths. I am in control. I can get through this. I see my success. I feel confident I can manage this. I know where to get help. I know what to do until help arrives.”*
- ❖ If self-talk is used effectively to replace self-talk that increases fear to self-talk that decreases fear then that form of self-talk has been an effective strategy to use when dealing with fear. We have to learn to replace self-defeating talk, with self-affirming talk to conquer our fears. Your self-talk can empower you or it can hinder you, depending on what you say to yourself. Learning how to use self-talk skillfully can produce successful outcomes in many life situations.

3. There are also physical things we can do when we are feeling afraid that can help calm our fear. (Draw a T-Chart on the board, label one side Scary Situations, label the other side Calming Responses. Use this chart to record the students’ feedback. The responses will vary according to the age group. An example:

<i>Scary Situation</i>	<i>Calming Responses</i>
going to a new school	do some deep breathing
being alone	count slowly to 10 or 100
being afraid of the dark	talk to family and friends
speaking in front of an audience	think happy thoughts
being afraid of a bully	snuggle with family or cuddle with the family pet
being in trouble with your parents, or in trouble at school	listen to music
being afraid to go to the dentist, or getting a shot from a doctor	take a warm bath or shower
a fear of not passing a test, or a class	exercise

4. After the class has brainstormed, shared and discussed their scary situations and calming responses, conclude this portion of the lesson).
5. **Summarization:**
 - ❖ **As you have heard it is natural to have fears, we all have them. Some of our fears we share in common and some of the fears we have are unique to us. We have heard a variety of calming activities we can do to soothe ourselves. Now let's talk about the root causes of fear (write Root Causes of Fear on the board) for a few moments. Most fears are based or rooted in the following (list under the Root Causes of Fear on the board as you write say them verbally).**
 - A) A fear of the unknown.
 - B) Feeling insecure, not feeling confident about something or a situation.
 - C) Feeling you may experience discomfort, harm, or some kind of danger.
 - D) A fear of failure.
 - E) Feeling you do not have control over a situation that directly affects you.
 - F) Fear of being alone.
 - G) Fear of change.
 - H) Fear of death.
 - ❖ **As we look over the Root Causes of fear, class what do you think the root causes of Safina's fear was? There could be more than one. An example: A fear of the unknown. One lives one block down the street where Safina is not allowed to go. A fear of harm could be another root cause of Safina's fear. Remember in the story if Ones every catches you "Chop, chop, and off, drops, plop, plop, goes your limb."**
6. **Class I am going to allow you some think time to reflect on your own fears, past and present. I want you to think of three or four fears that you have currently and only one that you have had in the past. List the fears on your paper.**
7. **Then I want you to write what you think the root cause is for each of those fears. Next write the self-talk that has been in your mind about those fears that has increased your fear.**
8. **Then I want you to replace that self-talk with a fear decreasing statement, thought, self-talk, that will be empowering to you. Does everyone understand? (Check for understanding and go back over the charts so students can see how you modeled this during the class lecture, participation, and class discussion).**

ASSESSMENT:

- List on the board exactly what you will be looking for on their process of showing you how they understand the culture of fear and how they manage their fear.
- It is up to you to design what you want to assess based on the lesson. Below are just some ideas of what might be important for students to be assessed on.
- Look at students work, did they understand that it is normal for all humans to have fear. That fear is mostly learned through our experience and association with something that we attach a negative emotion to.
- *An example:* You see a scary movie about birds and snakes attacking people. Then you find yourself having nightmares about birds and snakes attacking you. Now you are afraid of certain birds and snakes or birds and snakes in general.
- The student recognizes the root cause of this fear is a fear of being harmed. They understand that this fear most likely developed after having seen the movie because prior to that they don't remember being afraid of birds or snakes. If it is a past fear and a fear they no longer have. What was their self-talk, the decreasing fear thoughts?
- *Example:* Their self-talk is I saw that movie when I was younger and I spoke to my parents about it after having nightmares and they assured me that I was safe, that was just a sensational movie and birds are not going to attack me. We do not come in contact with snakes and so that is not a worry I need to have. My decreasing fear self-talk statements was, I'm safe, it was only a movie, and I have never seen any bird in my community attack a person. You are looking for students to have a strategy or two to calm physical symptoms of fear as well. You would be looking for some of the strategies listed on the "Calming Responses Chart".
- If they list some that were not on the chart that is fine as long as they understand when they are feeling afraid that they have physical options to calm the physical symptoms of fear.