

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

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CONTENT LINK



REVISED & UPDATED 3RD EDITION

STICK UP FOR YOURSELF!

EVERY KID'S GUIDE TO PERSONAL POWER

AND POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

**AN 11-SESSION COURSE IN SELF-ESTEEM
AND ASSERTIVENESS FOR KIDS**

free spirit
PUBLISHING®

GERSHEN KAUFMAN, Ph.D., and LEV RAPHAEL, Ph.D.

Praise for

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

STICK UP FOR YOURSELF!

"A Teacher's Guide to Stick Up for Yourself! is as enlightened as it is creative. The authors have created a resource that can be applied in a variety of settings by educators that are new or experienced. In tackling the topics of self-esteem and assertiveness, this text offers users the opportunity to equip young people with tools that will enable them to reach their full potential. The quality of instructional ideas and subject matter found in these pages is sure to keep the book relevant for years to come."

—**Andrew Hawk, M.S.**, special education teacher, Lafayette, Indiana

"Self-advocacy is the greatest skill a student can learn for leadership, relationships, and school. *Stick Up for Yourself!* offers skills to help students reason through expectations, needs, and goal setting, then gives practical ways to use this information in everyday life. The teacher's guide is absolute gold, giving lesson plans that are detailed and perfect for a seasoned educator or anyone new to running groups. My students and I are so lucky to have this resource that I can use as a stand-alone and also incorporate into other groups."

—**Stephanie Filio, M.Ed.**, middle school counselor, Virginia Beach, Virginia

"A Teacher's Guide to Stick Up for Yourself! is a great resource for any teacher wanting to help students recognize the importance of self-esteem, increase their personal power, and build inner security. The book presents strategies necessary to explore these ideas in a positive, straightforward, and helpful way, along with great activity ideas, discussion questions, and resources. Together with *Stick Up for Yourself!*, it's a must-have book for teaching kids to be secure and confident."

—**Felicia Murillo**, K-6 gifted specialist and consultant, Clive, Iowa

"This is a wonderful resource. It's very thorough and scripted for groups but also allows for the flexibility to tailor it to your students' needs."

—**Stephanie Meyer**, guidance counselor, Eriksson Elementary School, Canton, Michigan

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM AND WHY SHOULD WE TEACH IT?

Positive self-esteem is the single most important psychological skill we can develop in order to thrive in society. Having self-esteem means being proud of ourselves and experiencing that pride from within. Without self-esteem, kids doubt themselves, cave in to peer pressure, feel worthless or inferior, and may turn to drugs or alcohol as a crutch. With self-esteem, kids feel secure inside themselves, are more willing to take positive risks, are more likely to take responsibility for their actions, can cope with life's changes and challenges, and are resilient in the face of rejection, disappointment, failure, and defeat.

Self-esteem is *not* conceit, it's *not* arrogance, and it's *not* superiority!

Unfortunately, it's often confused with all three (and also with narcissism, egotism, and disrespect), which leads some people to believe that too much self-esteem is bad for kids. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Indiscriminate praise, flattery, social promotion, and falsely inflated self-worth are indeed bad for kids, but those aren't what self-esteem is really about. Self-esteem is based on facts and truths, achievements and competencies. The more self-esteem kids have, and the stronger it is, the better equipped they are to make their way in the world.

Conceit, arrogance, and superiority do exist, of course. But they aren't the result of genuine pride. Instead, they're the result of *contempt* for others. Pride grows out of enjoying ourselves, our accomplishments, our skills, and our abilities. It's not about diminishing anyone else.

Contempt, on the other hand, often masquerades as pride, but it's really false pride if you look closely. When we're contemptuous of others, we perceive them as being beneath us. We see ourselves as superior. Secretly, however, we're actually feeling *inferior* to others. Contempt allows us to temporarily rise above those feelings of inferiority. But in order to keep feeling this way, we have to continually find someone else to feel superior to—someone else we can put down in order to stay on top.

We believe that contempt is a root cause of two great problems facing our schools—and our world—today: bullying and violence. Kids who taunt, tease, and harass others aren't kids with positive self-esteem and genuine pride in themselves. They are kids who lack social skills and empathy, and may have other serious problems, including parents or older siblings who bully them,

deep-seated anger, loneliness, jealousy, or resentment of another person's success. In order to bully others, you must believe that their feelings, wants, and needs don't matter. You must feel contempt for them.

When contempt combines with feelings of powerlessness and shame, these emotions can escalate into violence. We've seen this in the school shootings that shock us so profoundly year after year. The children and teens who wound and kill their classmates and teachers aren't kids with positive self-esteem and genuine pride in themselves. For reasons we may never fully understand, these kids developed utter contempt for others, coupled with a burning rage. It wasn't only that other people's feelings, wants, and needs didn't matter. Their *lives* didn't matter.

Self-esteem isn't the culprit here. Rather, the *lack* of positive self-esteem may lead some kids to take inappropriate, hurtful, and even violent or desperate actions. When we help kids build positive self-esteem, we're not teaching them to diminish anyone else, and we're certainly not teaching them to be contemptuous. Instead, we're teaching them to take pride in themselves; to feel good about themselves when they do the right thing and own responsibility when they don't; to celebrate their achievements (both tangible and intangible); to know what they stand for and what they won't stand for; and to strive to be their best inside and out. When kids have a solid grasp of their feelings and needs, trust their emotions and perceptions, have a realistic sense of their capabilities, and have personal power, *then* they feel secure and confident inside themselves and don't feel the need to put down other people.

Self-esteem isn't something we're born with. It's something we learn, which means it can be taught. We believe that all children should be taught the skills of personal power and positive self-esteem at home and in the classroom right along with reading, writing, and arithmetic. All these "basics" work together.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

A Teacher's Guide to Stick Up for Yourself! helps children and young people in fourth through eighth grades build self-esteem, become more self-aware, and develop and practice assertiveness skills. It was designed for the classroom, but it can also be used in other group settings, including counseling groups, after-school programs, youth groups, clubs, and community programs.

It is intended to be used with the student book, *Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem*. Students are asked to read portions of that book before and/or during each session, so you'll want to have several copies on hand if possible. Ideally, each student will have his or her own copy.

The student book is based on a program originally developed for adults. Called “Affect and Self-Esteem,” it was taught as an undergraduate course in the Psychology Department at Michigan State University. That adult program is also available in book form, titled *Dynamics of Power: Fighting Shame and Building Self-Esteem*. To create *Stick Up for Yourself!* we adapted its concepts, principles, and tools specifically for children ages nine to thirteen. By reading the book and doing the “Get Personal” writing exercises, children can learn essential self-esteem concepts on their own. That learning becomes especially powerful in a classroom or group setting, where children benefit from the guidance of a caring adult leader and the opportunity to explore the concepts more fully in activities and discussions.

A Teacher’s Guide includes clear and complete instructions for eleven consecutive sessions. Each session is presented in a logically organized, step-by-step way, with the final session being devoted to review and evaluation. The sessions are scripted so you can literally read many parts aloud, if you like. (Within the sessions, this scripted text is in **bold** type.) Our goal was to create a guide that would be welcoming and easy to use for any classroom teacher or adult group leader, beginning or experienced.

A Teacher’s Guide also includes suggestions for additional curriculum-related activities and a list of resources.

ABOUT THE SESSIONS

The sessions are:

1. What Does It Mean to Stick Up for Yourself?
2. You Are Responsible for Your Behavior and Feelings
3. Making Choices
4. Naming Your Feelings
5. Claiming Your Feelings
6. Naming and Claiming Your Dreams
7. Naming and Claiming Your Needs
8. Getting and Using Power
9. Building Self-Esteem
10. Building Inner Security
11. Sticking Up for Yourself from Now On: Reviewing Your Choices

Each session includes the following parts:

- An **overview** that introduces and briefly describes the session topic(s).
- A list of **learner outcomes** stating the purpose of the session and what your students should be able to do after participating in the session.

- A list of all the **materials** (handouts, writing materials, and so on) you and your students will need for the session.
- An **agenda** giving you an at-a-glance plan for the entire session.
- A series of **activities and discussion prompts** that guide you step-by-step through the session, from introduction through closing. Each activity relates to one or more of the learner outcomes.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Familiarize yourself with the entire course before you lead the first session. Read this introduction and “Getting Ready” (pages 8–13) first, then read through all eleven sessions and “Additional Activities Across the Curriculum” (pages 122–124). Depending on how much time you have before the course begins, you may also want to consult one or more of the resources listed on pages 125–126.
2. Give yourself time to prepare for each session. Make sure you have all the materials you need, including enough copies of any handouts used in the session.
3. Feel free to make use of the margins in this guide to jot down notes, observations, personal experiences, additional questions, ideas, reactions, and anything else that comes to mind. We hope you’ll customize this guide and make it your own.
4. Keep parents, families, caregivers, or guardians informed about what you’re doing in the course. Invite their questions before, during, and after. See “Informing and Involving Parents and Caregivers” (pages 8–9).
5. Remember that as a caring, concerned adult, you’re in an ideal position to help students build personal power, positive self-esteem, and inner security. Treat them with respect. Encourage them to do their best—without expecting perfection. Allow them to make mistakes and take positive risks. Give them opportunities to make choices and decisions. Invite them to share their feelings, needs, and future dreams. Be someone they trust and can talk to about whatever is important to them.

YOUR ROLE AS TEACHER

In this course, the teaching role may be a little different than what you’re used to. You’ll structure the activities and organize the physical setting, just as you do in other teaching situations. But the students, in a sense, will determine the content. Their life experiences will form the basis for discussion.

For this reason, you may feel somewhat apprehensive about your ability to respond and to teach. You may not feel the same self-assurance you have in other teaching situations. Two things may help you:

1. being willing to serve as a model for your students
2. being familiar with the tools presented in the sessions

We have found that teachers who are willing to serve as models by sharing their own experiences and feelings are more effective as facilitators of this course. Plus they come away from the course feeling that something significant has happened for everyone, including themselves.

Modeling means letting students see that you, too, have situations in your life that require you to sort through your feelings, figure out which needs are important to meet at the time, and so on. It doesn't necessarily mean you'll be sharing your own story in every activity. But whenever you see an opportunity to help students understand by sharing a personal experience or feeling, we encourage you to do so.

The tools presented in the course include the following: the Happiness List (pages 27–28); the I-Did-It List (pages 63–64); Talking Things Over with Yourself (pages 52, 62–63, and 73); Change Your Inner Voices (pages 91–93); Active Imagination (page 101); and Creating a Personal Shield (page 102). Practice using the tools yourself so you're able to model them for students. If you start writing your own Happiness List and I-Did-It List each day, you'll have examples to share with students when those tools are introduced.

YOUR ROLE AS DISCUSSION LEADER

1. As teacher, you provide the structure. Be clear about the purpose of each session, and let students know that it's your role to keep the session moving along.
2. It's important to try to give everyone who wants to share an opportunity to do so. But sometimes you'll need to move on before a student has said everything he or she wants to. When this happens, say, "I'll come back to you if there's time."
3. Sometimes students will want to share their thoughts and feelings; sometimes they won't. Let them know it's okay to say "I pass." At the same time, encourage students to share whenever they feel comfortable doing so, because sharing allows the group to offer feedback and support. Point out that we also learn a lot by listening.
4. Model support and encouragement when students are talking. Don't judge what they say. Sometimes you may want to point out choices they have in a situation, but never tell them which choice they *should* make or what they

should think. Notice even small ways students are learning and growing, and comment favorably on them.

5. Try not to talk too much; this group is for the students, and you want them to participate. When you have something to say, keep it short and to the point, then bring students back into the discussion.
6. Ask open-ended questions, not those that can be answered with a yes or no. For example, you might ask “How would you feel if . . . ?” rather than “Would you be upset if . . . ?”
7. If you want to bring up a personal experience without identifying it as yours, you can begin by saying “I have a friend who”
8. If someone monopolizes the discussion, gently direct attention away from him or her. You might say “Thank you for sharing. Now let’s hear what other group members are thinking.”
9. Find ways to involve everyone. If you have a student who isn’t ready to participate in discussions, find another role for him or her. Let the student hand out papers or arrange chairs, or ask the student to help you remember to do something.
10. It helps to see life—yours and your students’—as a journey. What you see and hear and learn along the way is amazing. If you can communicate that to students, it may help them accept change as a natural, desirable process.

CHILD PROTECTION LAWS

Confidentiality is important to the success of this course, but there are certain things you may hear or observe that you *must* report for the protection of the child and any others involved.

Before beginning the course, be absolutely sure that you understand exactly what you’re legally required to report and what the guidelines for reporting are. These reporting requirements usually fall under the category of child protection legislation.

Most school districts and youth organizations have developed guidelines to conform to child protection laws. Learn what those guidelines are and who you should report to if the need arises.

ABOUT THE EVALUATIONS

It’s likely that you’ll teach this course more than once, and you’ll want to improve each time. Evaluations provide valuable feedback that you can use to strengthen the course and your teaching.

This book includes two formal evaluations: one for students and one for parents, guardians, or caregivers (see pages 118–121). You might use

information from completed evaluations to follow up after the course and plan future courses.

Students also have the opportunity to do a self-evaluation. During the first session, they are asked to write about particular situations in which they'd like to learn how to stick up for themselves. During the final session, they are asked to read what they wrote during the first session and decide for themselves if they reached their goals. This helps students integrate their experience and realize what they have accomplished in the course.

The student self-evaluations will also help you, as the teacher, identify which aspects of the course worked best for your students and how you could improve other parts.

GETTING SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

In a course such as this, where feelings are expressed openly, you can't always anticipate what a session will be like or what needs might be revealed. Things may happen that indicate the need for follow-up, but you might not be sure how to proceed. For example, you may suspect that a child is showing signs of depression but not know if your hunch is accurate. You may notice that one student seems to have a great deal of anxiety. You might wonder, based on what a student shares in the group, if there's a need for counseling or further discussion. You may not know what to do about a student who tends to be disruptive but only in small-group settings. Or you may feel overwhelmed or drained by a particularly emotional session.

Think of someone you can talk to—a school counselor, the school psychologist, a fellow teacher who has led similar classes, or another colleague you trust and respect. Ask if he or she is available to help you debrief after sessions when you feel the need. You can talk about what went on, but you'll want to respect the group's confidentiality, just as you expect your students to do.

For more information about the principles and tools presented in this course, see the resources section beginning on page 125.



GETTING READY

SCHEDULING THE SESSIONS

If possible, schedule the sessions for a time when you can keep outside interruptions to a minimum. For example, try to avoid holding the sessions during a period of the day when class members are regularly called out of the room for various reasons. It's frustrating to get students involved and interested only to be distracted. Especially when feelings are being shared, it's disruptive to have people coming in and out who aren't part of the group and aren't aware of the discussion guidelines.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Each session is likely to take about 45 to 60 minutes from start to finish. The actual time required will depend on the age of the students as well as the amount of discussion that takes place during the various activities. Sessions 10 and 11 are likely to take more time than the others.

Many sessions also include an optional extension activity; you can use your judgment about whether to include those.

As you teach the course for the first time, keep track of how long each session takes so you'll have that information available when you teach the course again. And if you go on to teach the course to different age groups, also keep track of how the length of time required for the sessions changes as the age of the participants changes.

INFORMING AND INVOLVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

At least one week before conducting the first session, send home a letter to parents, caregivers, or guardians describing the course and telling them when it will start. (*Note:* We use the term *parents* in this book, but your students likely have many different kinds of families, so you can take the word *parents* to indicate whatever adults take care of and are responsible for your students.) A sample letter is found on page 12. You may use this exact letter or use it as a starting point for your own letter. Depending on your situation, you may want to ask parents for their support, and you may need or want to get their written permission for children to take the course.

Encourage parents to read the student book, *Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem*. Tell students that their parents may ask to borrow the book and suggest that they take it home with them. If parents want to look at the book before the course begins, arrange for them to see a copy.

Invite parents to email, call, or text you (depending on how you prefer to be contacted) with any questions they have before, during, or after the course. Give them your preferred contact information so they know how to reach you, and let them know the best days or times to get in touch if they are calling.

If you're teaching a group that is new to you, you may want to ask parents if there's anything they would like you to know about their children before the program begins.

It's a good idea to stay in touch with parents throughout the course. Consider sending home brief notes about how the course is progressing, or sending parents copies of handouts you use with the students. At the end of the course, invite feedback and comments from parents by sending them the evaluation form on pages 120–121.

PREPARING YOUR SPACE

The physical setting is important to the success of these sessions. If possible, try to organize the room so you and your students can sit in a circle for full-group discussions. Allow space between small groups, but set up the room in a way that also allows you to monitor what's going on in all the groups.

Think about how you might signal the beginning of the session. Turning the lights off and on is one way to get students' attention. You might play a few moments of relaxing music to let them know it's time to begin. Or you may have other ideas. Whatever you choose, you want it to be a pleasant way to help students shift gears.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

You may already have guidelines in place for class or group discussions. If so, make sure that everyone understands them and agrees with them. For the purposes of this course, you'll want your guidelines to include the following:

1. What is said in the group stays in the group.*
2. We are polite and respectful to each other. We don't use put-downs. We want everyone in the group to feel valued and accepted.
3. We listen to each other. When someone is talking, we look at the person and pay attention. We don't spend that time thinking about what we're going to say when it's our turn.

* See "Child Protection Laws" on page 6.

4. Everyone is welcome to share their thoughts and feelings, but no one *has* to share. It's okay to say "I pass" if you don't want to share.
5. There are no right or wrong answers.

RELATING ACTIVITIES TO YOUR GROUP

Good teachers are flexible and responsive, and being successful with this course does not necessarily mean teaching it to the letter. As you plan for each session, think about ways you might adapt the activities to your students' needs and relate the examples to their interests. You may decide to modify an activity or example, ask additional questions, or substitute new questions. You may choose to replace or skip some of the activities. As you make changes to the sessions, try to keep the learner outcomes in mind and let them guide your planning.

Many of the activities revolve around students' discussion of their own life experiences. This has the benefit of automatically relating the course to the community in which they live. If students can't relate to an activity, they won't be able to use it as a springboard, and the discussion may fall flat. Often a minor change is all that's needed to help them see connections between the activity and their lives. Take time to read through all the activities for each session before you conduct that session. If you feel that a particular activity isn't especially relevant to your students and their community, modify it so that it *will* speak to your group.

USING THE "GET PERSONAL" ACTIVITIES

The student book includes several writing activities titled "Get Personal." (For examples, see pages 26, 42, and 51 in *Stick Up for Yourself!*) You might use these as optional activities during the course, or assign them when assigning students' reading for each session. Either way, make it clear that students' "Get Personal" writing will remain confidential. Emphasize that they never have to share it with anyone (including you) unless they choose to.

Encourage students to think of the "Get Personal" activities as things they can do now and may want to do again after the course is finished. Point out that their ideas and feelings will be changing along the way, and they may find they have new things to write about.

At a minimum, ask students to read the tips on the bottom half of page 6 in *Stick Up for Yourself!* These briefly explain why the "Get Personal" activities are important and how to make the most of them.