

**Workbook
Assignment***Dealing With the Past*

Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to address significant feelings that often accompany the break up of a friendship or dating relationship. Specifically, the focus of the lesson helps participants identify possible causes for feelings of regret, rejection and failure.

Objectives

- ◆ Participants will discuss feelings that usually result from the break up of a relationship.
 - ◆ Participants will self-evaluate their current level of feelings regarding a relationship they have experienced.
 - ◆ Participants will determine their readiness to begin another relationship at a later time.
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Vocabulary

understanding
perception

regret
guilt

Key Concepts

- Strong emotional feelings are usual after a relationship has ended.
 - Individuals learn from past experiences.
 - New decisions can be made for future relationships.
 - Others who have had similar situations share most of life's experiences.
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**Preparation for
Lesson****Instructor will need:**

- Worksheet *Dealing With the Past*
- Body cut-out worksheet
- Butcher paper or a writing surface

different reasons. One of the partners may have feelings of remorse for "causing" the breakup. The other partner may experience a sense of loss because the relationship no longer exists. Initially, both of the partners may even question whether the decision to end the relationship was a good one. To end the uncomfortable feelings of sadness, guilt or loss, the partners may feel pressured to begin the relationship over again, even though that may not be the best choice for either of them.

An individual may experience regret over decisions regarding intimate behaviors that were made during the relationship. It is not unusual for adolescents to engage in sexual behaviors with partners in the early stages of a relationship or while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sharing these kinds of experiences and then later realizing that the relationship is not a good one will almost certainly create feelings of regret within the individual because of poor choices.

Rejection is another strong feeling that is often associated with a breakup. This is especially true if one of the partners was content in the relationship and did not want it to end. That person may go through a period of self-doubt whether there is something intrinsically faulty about him/her that led to the break up. It is sometimes difficult for adolescents to understand that an unsuccessful relationship is not necessarily a reflection of their personal worth. It may have simply been the result of a incompatible combination of elements. Some young people report that the feelings of rejection are so great and have left them so fearful they do not want to enter into another relationship for a long time.

Many adolescents who have been unable to establish positive dating relationships consider themselves to be a failure as a person. These feelings are genuine and can persist for a long time following the end of a significant relationship. Feelings of failure may cause a person to withdraw from others or reject the whole dating process altogether. Adolescents need encouragement to understand that the possibility for a stable and lasting relationship with another person still exists. Each situation is new and the opportunity for happiness is real.

Teaching the Lesson

Dealing With the Past and *Moving Forward* will be taught as a two-day lesson. Begin the class with participants working through their workbook activities in *Dealing with the Past*. Following a time of personal reflection, ask the participants to contribute/brainstorm situations of regret, rejection, and failure (either from previous personal experience or from those of friends). Have them place their comments on butcher paper (or other writing surface). Participants will use the situations to create a project for the remainder of the class time. It is helpful to have all contributions in view.

- After all contributions have been listed, ask the participants to briefly categorize the listed situations by group or topic. Class discussion on dealing with these experiences may be helpful.
- Tell the participants that they will be creating a caricature person with two “faces” that represent the old dating personality and the new “improved” dating personality. Participants may use the enclosed body cut-out or may create their own visual to represent their person. On one side of the cut-out, they are to draw or write in a representation of their character’s dating past which is “decorated” with the theme of regret, rejection and failure. The students should create a story to go with their visual representation.
- The other “face” of the doll will be used for the second part of the two lessons. *Moving Forward*, and will represent the person’s new outlook on life. These representations will focus on positive relationship experiences. Participants should be given ample time to develop their character, and dating stories (both positive and negative).

LECTURE NOTES:

The degree of emotional investment in a relationship also determines the intensity of feelings that result from a break up and the amount of time it takes to recover from the experience. The person more emotionally invested into the relationship will have the greater adjustment when the relationship ends. Additional feelings that are typically felt after a relationship has ended are regret, rejection and failure.

Being sorry, disappointed, or experiencing a sense of loss are all associated with feelings of regret. When a relationship is over, the partners may both experience regret but for



DEALING WITH THE PAST

Each new relationship is different from past ones. Unfortunately, some relationships become too serious too soon. Sometimes individuals make decisions within the relationship based on feelings rather than on true knowledge of the other person. Relationships like this are built on a weak foundation and usually don't last. A break up can result in negative emotional feelings for both partners.

FEELINGS OF REGRET:

1. Have you ever experienced feelings of regret after a relationship has broken up? If so, be specific about your reasons for these feelings. (Write only what you are comfortable sharing.)

2. What do you feel you should have done differently in the above situation?

3. Do you think you will be able to handle a similar situation in a future relationship? If not, what changes must be made in order for you to feel more confident in your abilities?

4. Why is it important for dating partners to discuss their expectations about the relationship on a regular basis?
