Lesson 12 – Social Skill: Making a Complaint

Summary and Rationale

This social skills lesson teaches group members how to express a complaint to an individual or a group of individuals about a situation, condition, or a fact with which they are dissatisfied or unhappy. This skill provides a prosocial alternative to a stressful or problematic situation, one in which the group member is empowered to take control of his/her circumstances.

Concepts and Definitions

Making a complaint provides an opportunity for an individual to decide what to complain about and to whom; inform the other person about the complaint; and tell the person what might be a mutual, acceptable alternative.

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, group members will:

1. Describe the importance of making a complaint.

2. Perform the steps of making a complaint during the lesson.

3. Perform the steps of making a complaint in real life situations.
Major Activities

Activity 1: Homework Review
Activity 2: Overview of Social Skill
Activity 3: Model the Skill
Activity 4: Discuss Modeling Display
Activity 5: Group Members Role Play Skill

Activity 6: Discuss Role Play
Activity 7: Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with All Group Members
Activity 8: Assign Homework
Activity 9: Wrap-up

Supplements

Charts – Make charts before facilitating the lesson. (See the supplement section in each lesson for full text of chart page.)

Denoted in the lesson plan with this symbol

Handouts - Make copies before the lesson. (See the supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in the lesson plan with this symbol

Presentation Slides - Make transparencies if a presentation projector is not available. (See the supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in the lesson plan with this symbol

H-12-1-Pocket Skill Cards
H-12-2-Homework Sheet

P-12-1-Lesson Title
P-12-2-Understanding the Feelings of Others Definition
P-12-3-Understanding the Feelings of Others Skill Steps
P-12-4-Homework
P-12-5-Homework, continued
P-12-6-Making a Complaint Definition
P-12-7-Making a Complaint Skill Steps
## Equipment
- Easel (chart stand)
- Projector to show presentation slides
- Projection screen or suitable surface

## Supplies
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Copies of handouts

## References


Activity 1: Homework Review

Hello again! Before you learn a new skill, let’s briefly review the last skill you learned, understanding the feelings of others. This skill focused on developing your ability to observe another person and identify what he/she may be feeling by looking at his/her actions or listening to what he/she is saying.

There were several steps to effectively using this skill. Will someone tell us what they are?

(Answer: Watch the other person; listen to what the person is saying; figure out what the person might be feeling; think about ways to show you understand what he/she is feeling; decide on the best way and do it.)

Have the group read the steps of the skill. (If there is time, you may wish to have individuals take turns reading a step of
Your homework was to practice using the skill, **understanding the feelings of others.** Take out your homework reports and let’s quickly review.

- Tell us about practicing the skill - when you did the skill, where and with whom.
- Describe specifically what you did to follow each step of the skill.
- Tell us another situation where you will use the skill.

Who would like to begin?

Choose a group member and take a minute to review the homework.

Repeat with all group members.

This is a quick report of their practice with the...
Activity 2: Overview of Social Skill:
Making A Complaint

Today, you will learn another skill, making a complaint. What do you think this skill, making a complaint is about?

(Example answer: Making a complaint is about the appropriate way to complain or get some assistance if things aren’t working the way you think they should.)

Why do you think it might be an important skill for you to have “in your pocket?”

(Example answer: It provides you a way to decide what to complain about and to whom; inform the individual about the complaint and tell the person what might be a mutual, acceptable alternative.)

Define the Skill

This skill is a way to: Decide what to complain about and to whom; inform the individual about the complaint, and; tell the person what might be a mutual, acceptable alternative.

Based on that definition, start to think about
Making a Complaint - Definition

- A way to decide what you don’t like and whom to tell
- Inform the individual about the complaint
- Describe to that person what might be a mutual, acceptable alternative

Content

Notes

times when you may have had difficulty in situations where you had to make a complaint to someone else.

You will have an opportunity to talk about what **making a complaint** means to you and how you might use it in a little bit.

Then Mr./Ms. ____ and I will do a brief vignette that shows you the steps of the skill, **making a complaint**. After you have had a chance to watch us model this for you, you will talk about times when you may have to or want to use the skill in the near future. Then you will have a chance to try it out here in class.

**Review Action and Thinking Steps**

**Definition**

Remember last week you talked about how every skill is made up of a number of steps. Each of the steps is either a “thinking” step or an “action” step.

What was a thinking step about?

*Answer: A “thinking” step is something that you say to yourself and that can’t be seen.)*

What are you supposed to do when you do a “thinking” step?

*Answer: We are supposed to point to our head*
Making a Complaint

1. Decide what your complaint is
2. Decide whom to complain to
3. Tell that person your complaint
4. Tell that person what you would like done about the problem
5. Ask how he/she feels about what you’ve said

And the second type, the action step, what was that about?

(Answer: It is called that because you can actually see the person doing that skill step.)

Skill Step Identification

Would (group member name) read step 1 of the skill and tell us if that is a thinking step or an action step.

(Answer: Decide what your complaint is. This is a thinking step.)

(Group member name) read step 2 of the skill. Is this a thinking step or an action step?

(Answer: Decide whom to complain to. This is a thinking step.)

Would (group member name) read step 3 of the skill? Is it a thinking step or an action step?

(Answer: Tell that person your complaint. This is an action step.)

(Group member name) read step 4 of the skill. Tell us if that is a thinking step or an action step.

(Answer: Tell that person what you would like done about the problem.)

Be sure to take every opportunity to read the steps of the skill, not just say the number when either assigning the steps or referring to them.

Ask a different group member to read a step of the skill (in sequential order).

As they read the skill step, have the individual (or the group) identify...
done about the problem. This is an action step.)

Would (Group member name) read step 5 and tell us if that is a thinking step or an action step.

(Answer: Ask how he/she feels about what you said. This is an action step.)

**Hand Out Pocket Skill Cards**

Here is a card that lists the steps of the skill. You will use it later to help when practicing the skill (during the session and in real life situations).

**Activity 3: Model the Skill:**

**Understanding the Feelings of Others**

Now Mr./Ms. _____ and I will model the skill for you. Here is the situation.

**Modeling Display Option #1 – For institutional settings, adult or youth:**

I have missed my commissary visit for the last three weeks because of a schedule conflict with my school program. My instructor never lets me leave class to get to the commissary! I want to express a complaint.

**Modeling Display Option #2 – Probation or Parole settings:**

The purpose of a modeling display is to demonstrate the steps of the skill. Use one of the three options suggested in the lesson plan to make sure that you do that correctly.

Select the situation which applies to your group setting; Youth, adult, community, or incarceration.

It may be appropriate to change some details of the situation to meet the
I am doing community service as a condition of release (or probation). My supervisor told me she has to cut my work hours, which means I will have to work for an additional 6 weeks to complete my community service requirement. I want to tell her that stinks.

**Modeling Display Option #3 – Generic setting for youth:**

I am the older of 2 children, and my mother always makes me clean up after my little brother. I want to make a complaint about the unfair division of chores.
Activity 4: Discuss Modeling Display

In step 1, “Decide what your complaint is,” did _____ do that?

What evidence did you see or hear?

In step 2 did _____, decide who to complain

or your father.

After the modeling display, group members are asked to discuss what skill steps they observed.

The modeling display must be a picture perfect representation of the step of the skill. Therefore, the only answer to these questions about performing the steps is always, “yes.”

When a group member answers “yes,” prompt them by asking; “What evidence did you see or hear?”

(Answer: He/she pointed to his/her head and said...)

Group facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Facilitators should solicit answers from group
to?

What evidence did you see or hear?

In step 3, did ____, tell ____ their complaint?

What evidence did you see or hear?

In Step 4, did ____ tell ____ what they would like done about the problem?

What evidence did you see or hear?

And Step 5, did _____ ask how _____ felt about what was said? What evidence did you see or hear?

**Group Members Identify a Specific Situation**

Now that you have seen a model of the skill, what is a current or immediate future situation in which you might use this skill?

Think of something that is likely to occur before the next session.

This is important because what you identify and role play here, you will practice in your homework for the next session.

Be as specific as possible. Include:

members that are specific to the modeling display.

Facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

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Facilitators should solicit answers from group members that are specific to the modeling display.

Be sure that all group members identify a specific current or immediate future real life situation, identifying specific information such as: Who, when, and where.

It is critical that you get the group member to be as specific as possible.
The current or immediate future situation.

With whom?

When would you practice it? (Specific time and day.)

Where could you practice it? (Specific location.)

**Transition**

Great, everyone has had the opportunity to describe the situation where they would use the skill.

**Identify Role Player**

I would like one group member to volunteer to do a role play.

Remember, everyone in the group will have an opportunity to try out the skill during this Lesson.

Once everyone has had the opportunity to describe the situation where they would use the skill, have one group member volunteer to do a role play.

Remind the group that everyone will have an opportunity to try-out the skill during the session with the situation he/she has described.
Activity 5: Group Member Role Play of the Skill

To the main actor

Where would you be when you are using this skill, making a complaint?

Set the Scene

How is the room furnished?

Where are you? Are you standing or sitting?

Try to follow the steps of the skill as best you can. Remember to point to your head for each “thinking step,” saying aloud what you would be thinking for that step.

Designate the volunteer as the main actor, and ask him/her to choose a co-actor (possibly someone who reminds the main actor of the person with whom the skill will be used in the real life situation).

Set the stage for the role playing, including props, arrangements, and set description.

Prepare the main actor to follow each of the steps of the skill. For example, you might say to the main actor:

“Be sure to point to your head for each "thinking" step.”

“How do you plan to do step 1? Step 2?” etc.

Ensure that main actor has a Pocket Skill Card and is facing either a chart or a screen that has
To the co-actor

Try to play the part as best you can. Say and do what you think ____ would do as (main actor) follows the steps of the skill.

Assign Each Group Member a Skill Step

To Group Members

Watch carefully how well (main actor) performs the skill, because afterwards, you will discuss it.

In fact, (group member name), you watch Step 1 to see how well (main actor) decides what the complaint is.

(Group member name), you look for Step 2 and see if (main actor) decides who to complain to.

(Group member name), look for Step 3 and see if the (main actor) tells that person the
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>complaint.</td>
<td>Begin the role play, ensuring that the follow the steps of the skill exactly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Group member name)</em>, see if <em>(main actor)</em> carries out Step 4 and describes what he/she wants done about the problem.</td>
<td>If he/she doesn’t, <strong>stop</strong> the role play, provide coaching, and begin again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Group member name)</em>, watch to see if <em>(main actor)</em> uses Step 5 by asking how <em>(role played by co-actor)</em> feels about what he/she has said.</td>
<td>The role play should last no more than 1-2 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Begin Role Play</strong></td>
<td>After the role play is completed, invite feedback from the group. The purpose is for group members to state, objectively, whether the role player <em>(main actor)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s start. Remember; just 1 or 2 minutes.</td>
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**Activity 6: Discuss Role Play**
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<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To the co-actor</strong></td>
<td>followed the steps of the skill, and not how well he/she acted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you feel about playing the role?</td>
<td>Be sure that each assigned group member describes in detail what they saw and heard to support the main actor’s role play of the skill step. For example, “yeah, he did step one, or he did the step” does not provide specific detail. For action steps in the skill, have the group member identify specific behaviors that he/she observed the main actor do that confirms the main actor completed the step of the skill. For thinking steps in the skill, have the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any other things you would like to say about your part as the co-actor?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To the selected Group Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who was looking for step 1, “Decide what your complaint is”? How well did (main actor) do that?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who had step 2? Can you tell us how well (main actor) did that? Did he/she point to his/her head and decide whom to complain to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who had step 3? Did (main actor) tell (co-actor) his/her complaint?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who had step 4? Did (main actor) tell (co-actor) what he/she would like done about the problem?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>And step 5, did (main actor) ask how (co-actor) felt about what was said?</td>
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</table>
To the main actor
How well do you think you followed the steps?

To the Co-facilitator and Group Members
What additional feedback do you have for the role player *(main actor)*?

Facilitator Feedback

**Sample Feedback Statement:** Just as everyone has said, you *did* follow the steps. If you can do it here you can do it with your homework in a real life situation. Well done!

At this point the *main actor* will have followed all the steps. The facilitator should ensure that the *main actor* has received positive reinforcing statements, i.e., that they have followed the steps in order, as modeled.

Adjust the sample feedback statement in the lesson plan as needed.

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group member identify specific thoughts he/she observed the *main actor* report as part of his/her self-talk (fingers pointing to his/her head) that confirms the *main actor* completed the steps of the skill.
Activity 7: Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with all Group Members

Now, who would like to go next? Okay, (group member name) as I recall, your situation was....

Activity 8: Assign Homework

Now that you have had an opportunity to try the skill, when, between now and the next Lesson do you think you can practice it?

Here is a homework sheet.

- Complete the top part with your name, date, skill to practice and the first shaded area titled: “Anticipated Situation.” Do that now.

- Remember, the “Anticipated Situation” is the one you just role-played and tried out the steps of the skill.

- You do need to write down each of the steps of the skill in the appropriate according to the specific role play.

Repeat Activities 5 and 6 with each group member, using the situation he or she identified in Activity 4.

Every Group Member must try out the steps of the skill as the main actor in a role play situation.
space.

- Each of you will individually complete the second shaded part after you practice your skill, given the situation you have described and tried out.

- Please show me that you have completed the top portion of your homework sheet before you leave today.

**Activity 9: Wrap-up**

Next time you will learn another social skill. You will also have an opportunity to review your homework to see how well you did practicing, **making a complaint**. See you next time.
### Making a Complaint

1. Decide what your complaint is
2. Decide whom to complain to
3. Tell that person your complaint
4. Tell that person what you would like done about the problem
5. Ask how he/she feels about what you’ve said
Homework Sheet Lesson 12

*Fill in first three sections before leaving the session.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill to Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated Situation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When? ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where? ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Whom? ____________________________</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Steps to Follow</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ___________________</td>
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<td>2. ___________________</td>
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<td>3. ___________________</td>
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</table>

*Fill in after doing your homework.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Check-in - Actual Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Situation ______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. List your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Circle those that put you at risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Risk doing what? ___________________</td>
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</table>
### Describe Actions
(Specifically, explain what you did to follow each step of the skill.)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What happened when you did the homework?

2. How did you do when using this skill? *(Circle one)*
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor

3. How much did using this skill help reduce your risk behavior? *(Circle one)*
   - A lot
   - Some
   - A little
   - Not at all

4. What is another situation in which you could use this skill?