

May 21, 2020

Hello Families -

With stay at home orders and distance learning, we are experiencing “togetherness” as never before. Close quarters and stress factors can put pressure on even the strongest relationships. In my newest guidance mini-lesson, I review some basic ABC strategies for students to use when they need to problem solve in conflict situations. I hope you will watch the video together and support your child in using the strategies. You can find the lesson [here!](#) on my school counselor page on the DFES website. Before using the problem-solving strategies, it is important that your child is in control of his/her emotions and is ready to make positive decisions. If you can tell that your child is not in the proper frame of mind, suggest some of the coping skills that have been previously taught in guidance lessons. Ask them to try a relaxing activity, like reading, making a drawing, or practicing calm breathing. You can find other ideas for coping strategies on my DFES Self Care Challenge (just click [here](#)). When your child is able to think clearly, consider these ABCs as solutions to the problem of everyday conflicts.

A - Apologize: An effective apology consists not only of saying that you are sorry, but telling why you are sorry and what you can do to rebuild trust.

B - Take a Break: Use your coping skills to allow time for strong emotions to settle, so your mind is clear enough to make positive decisions.

C - Communicate: Children can communicate positive messages *to themselves* in the form of positive self-talk. Examples might be “I can handle this” or “Maybe it’s not such a big deal” or reminding themselves of their positive qualities. Children can communicate *to others* to tell how they feel and ask for what they want. This is sometimes called an “I-Message” and has three parts: I feel _____ when _____. I would like _____. An example might be:

I feel upset when I can’t have the computer now. I would like a turn when you are finished with it. Notice that I Messages do not contain the word “you”, which can sound accusing and start an argument.

Remind your child that communication is a two-way street and involves listening to the other side also. That is how two sides can come to an agreement or **compromise** - a bonus letter C! I hope you will enjoy and learn from the mini-lesson. Keep an eye out for the fun story and the surprise guest!

Please call me with any questions or concerns you have. I am available by email or the phone number listed below. Stay healthy and safe!

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