

## Lesson 1

### Understanding Self-Awareness & Self-Advocacy

**TIME:** 45-60 minutes

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. define self-awareness and self-advocacy
2. identify examples of self-awareness and self-advocacy
3. identify personal strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes
4. use retelling skills to participate in oral presentation (Extension Activity)
5. complete the ME! Scale

#### MATERIALS

1. Worksheet 1-1: Understanding Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy
2. Student ME! Scale
3. Parent/guardian YOU! Scale

#### LESSON OPENING

Read the following scenario to the class. This scenario is included on the back of worksheet 1-1, for reference as needed by students throughout Unit 1.

*I will read you a short story about a high school student named Mike. Listen carefully while I read the story. Listen for situations in the story that are similar or different from your experiences.*

*Mike is a 17-year-old high school student who has a learning disability. He attends the general education classroom for all classes except English. He has always had a difficult time with spelling, reading and writing legibly. He attends Ms. Jones special education classroom for English. Mike has heard his teachers and mom talk about his IEP, but he is not sure what an IEP is and has never been interested enough to ask. He also knows that his mom comes to the school at least once a year for an IEP meeting. Last year, his special education teacher invited Mike to the meeting, but he hated the idea of sitting around a table with all his teachers while they talked about him.*

*When Mike takes a test for history or science class, he usually goes to the special education classroom to have Ms. Jones read the test to him. Most of the time he does not have to answer all of the questions, just the ones Ms. Jones or his classroom teacher has circled on the test. He rarely is required to answer the essay questions on tests. When he finishes his test, Ms. Jones puts it in a large envelope and places it in her desk. The only time*

*Mike sees his test again is if he did poorly on it and needs to make corrections. Mike does not understand who decided he would take his tests this way but he likes the routine because it makes it easier for him to pass his tests.*

*Mike will be a senior next year and is looking forward to graduation. He plans to attend a local college after graduation and believes he should do well since he has always earned passing grades in his classes.*

**Discussion point(s):**

- Ask students to think about Mike’s situation. Specifically, his classes, tests, and assignments.
  - *Is there anything in Mike’s story that you can relate to your life?*
  - *What, if anything do you have in common with Mike?*
- Provide students with 1 to 2 minutes to think about the questions you asked.
- Provide students an opportunity to share their thoughts if they wish to do so.
- Move on to the procedure below.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Students participate in class discussion about the meaning of “self-awareness” and “self-advocacy” and complete worksheet 1-1.

**Handout:** Distribute worksheet 1-1: Understanding Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy to each student.

- Write the word “self-awareness” on the board in front of the classroom.
- Ask students what they think “self-awareness” means and provide them an opportunity to respond.
  - *The word “self” means “me” and the word “awareness” means to know something, to be informed of something.*
  - *“Self-awareness” refers to a person knowing about himself or herself.*
  - *Take a minute to write the meaning of self-awareness on your worksheet.*
  - *Take a minute to think of answers to the following questions:*
    - *What are some things you do well?*
    - *What are some things you need to improve?*
    - *What are things you enjoy doing? Why do you like these things?*
    - *What are things you dislike doing? Why do you dislike these things?*
    - *What is important to you? Why?*
  - *Each of these questions are listed on your worksheet. Please take a minute to write down answers to each of these questions.*

- Provide students time to answer the questions on their paper.
- Have a few students share their answers aloud.
  - *These questions are about basic information you need to know about yourself in order to be self-aware.*
- Write the word “Self-advocacy” on the board in front of the classroom.
- Ask students what they think “Self-advocacy” means and provide them an opportunity to respond.
  - *Self-advocacy refers to a person making a deliberate or purposeful effort to speak up for his/her needs or ideas.*
  - *Take a minute to write the meaning of self-advocacy on your worksheet.*

**Discussion point(s):** Read and discuss the following scenario about Lucy and self-advocacy.

- *The following story about Lucy is a good example of self-advocacy. Listen while I read. Try to identify how Lucy self-advocates during the story.*
- *Lucy is a high school student who wears contacts. Even though she wears contacts, she cannot see small things from far away. When Lucy arrived to Algebra class on Monday, her teacher had made a new seating chart that left Lucy sitting at the back of the room. Lucy stayed after class to explain to her teacher that she needed to sit closer to the front because she could not see the board even when she wears her contacts.*

Use the following questions to guide a class discussion about the scenario.

- Why was it important for Lucy to speak up for herself?
- Do you think Lucy did the right thing?
- Have you ever been in a situation that you needed something changed in order to do your best? If so, did you speak up for yourself?
- Was it difficult for you to speak up for yourself? Explain.
- What would you have done in Lucy’s situation?
- How could Lucy’s actions in this situation impact her future?

**Discussion point(s):** Communication Skills

- *It is important to always use appropriate communication skills when advocating. If you are rude or belligerent, people will likely not listen to you. You must be able to explain why your need is important. If you cannot explain your need, you cannot expect the other person to understand why it is important. This applies to school, work and all other aspects of life. We will talk more about how to communicate effectively in Unit 5. I want you to spend some time between now*

*and then thinking about the way you communicate with others. Think about your tone of voice, facial expression, body language, the words you use, and your level of self-confidence when talking to others.*

**Extension Activity:** Use the following questions to guide a class discussion about “self-awareness” and “self-advocacy.”

- *Think about Mike! Are there any examples of “self-awareness” in his story?*
- *Are there any examples of “self-advocacy” in his story?*

After discussing the above questions, have students split into small groups and change Mike’s story to include examples of self-awareness and self-advocacy. Remind students that a copy of Mike’s story is on the back of their worksheet for reference if needed. There is also space on the paper for students to make notes about how they will change the story.

- Provide each small group time and opportunity to share their story about Mike.

**Discussion point(s):** Guide students to the table on worksheet 1-1. Have students brainstorm ideas about when and where they might have to self-advocate.

- *Let’s make a list of places or situations you might need to advocate for yourself. (Have students answer aloud while you write answers on overhead, chart paper, or dry erase board.)*
- *Can you advocate for yourself if you lack self-awareness? Why or why not?*
- *Choose an example from the list of places/situations you identified. Tell me something you might need to know about yourself to advocate in that situation. (Have students answer aloud while you write answers on overhead, chart paper, or dry erase board.)*

After classroom discussion is complete, have each student write the information you wrote on overhead, chart paper, or dry erase board on their individual worksheets. Students may also provide their own examples if they prefer. There is a table to copy five of the items onto their worksheet. Have students turn in their completed worksheets for grading.

2. Students complete ME! Scale.

**Handout:** Give each student a copy of the ME! Scale. It should typically take students five to ten minutes to complete the scale.

- *I am giving each of you a copy of the ME! Scale. This is not a test, but is an important tool that you will use to learn about yourself. Take a few minutes to answer all of the questions listed. Again, this is not a test, but it is very important that you answer all of the questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers, just answers that are true for you.*
- Provide students with an opportunity to share their answers or ask questions about the ME! Scale.
- Have students turn in the completed ME! Scale.
- Distribute the YOU! Scale to each student.
- *Take this sheet home and have your parent/guardian answer each of the questions about you. Bring the completed sheet back to class with you tomorrow. You will need the answers from this sheet to help you with our next activity. Just like on the sheet you completed, it is very important that all questions are answered. There are no right or wrong answers, just answers that your parent/guardian feel best describe you. You will not have to share the answers with the class. This could be a good opportunity for you to talk to your parent/guardian about things you need to work on and the things you do well.*

## LESSON CLOSURE

**Discussion point(s):** Have students define self-awareness and self-advocacy aloud.

- *“Self-awareness” refers to a person knowing about himself or herself. Things you do well. Things you need to improve. Things you enjoy doing. Things you dislike doing.*
- *“Self-advocacy” refers to a person making a deliberate or purposeful effort to speak up for his/her needs or ideas.*
- Ask students to identify aloud times and places that self-awareness and self-advocacy are necessary. Refer students to the table on worksheet 1-1 if they have difficulty providing examples.
  - *Over the next few weeks we will be working on activities to help you increase your self-awareness and help you become an effective self-advocate.*
- Remind student to bring the completed YOU! Scale back to class before the next lesson.

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

1. Completion of ME! Scale
2. Completed worksheet 1-1: Understanding Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy
3. Verbal participation during class discussion

## **Lesson 1**

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4. use retelling skills to participate in oral presentation (Extension Activity)
5. complete the ME! Scale

#### **MATERIALS**

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#### **LESSON OPENING**

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**Discussion point(s):**

- Ask students to think about Mike’s situation. Specifically, his classes, tests, and assignments.
  - *Is there anything in Mike’s story that you can relate to your life?*
  - *What, if anything do you have in common with Mike?*
  - **Modification: have students highlight items in the story that are similar to theirs**
- Provide students with 1 to 2 minutes to think about the questions you asked.
- Provide students an opportunity to share their thoughts if they wish to do so.
- Move on to the procedure below.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Students participate in class discussion about the meaning of “self-awareness” and “self-advocacy” and complete worksheet 1-1.

**Handout:** Distribute worksheet 1-1: Understanding Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy to each student.

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- Provide students time to answer the questions on their paper.
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**STUDENT EVALUATION**

1. Completion of ME! Scale
2. Completed worksheet 1-1: Understanding Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy
3. Verbal participation during class discussion