

# Coping Skills



Not One More:  
A Mission to Eliminate  
Youth Suicide

## Overview

There are necessary lessons that every person must learn before starting their life. It is crucial that one is reminded of these lessons throughout life. The ability to resist peer pressure, accept the unfairness of life, and let go of unnecessary stress are just a few skills that have a great impact on one's ability to lead a successful life.

Through completion of the activities listed in this pamphlet, students and teachers will develop habits that help manage emotions, cope with stress, and increase self-sufficiency.

## Objectives

- Increase students' problem-solving abilities
- Strengthen relationships between classmates, parents, and teachers
- Further students' knowledge and understanding of how to manage harmful emotions

### Venue:

- Classroom Activities

### Estimated Cost:

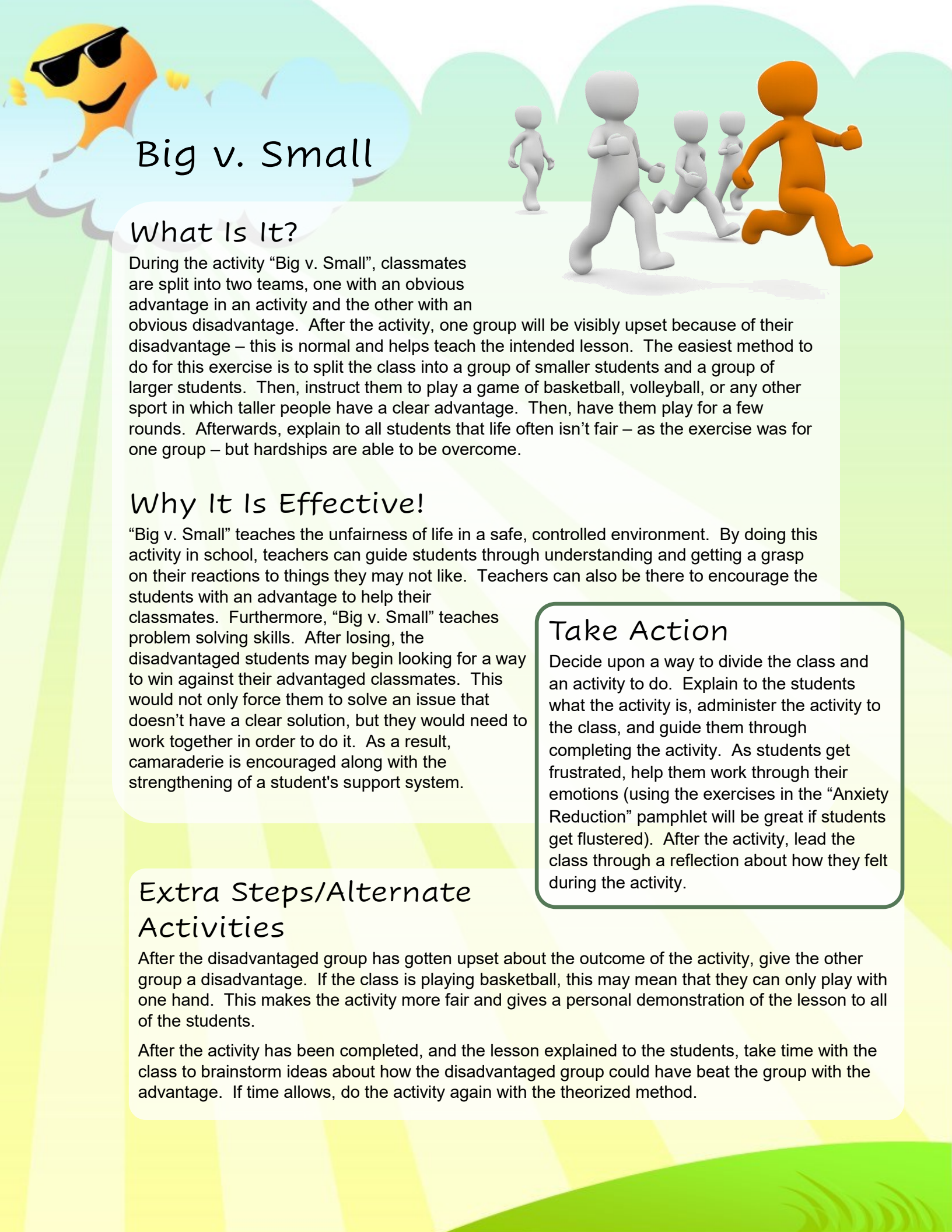
- Depending on how you choose to administer the activities, the price range is \$0-5

### Activities:

- Big v Small
- Off the Grid
- Build a Boat

*"The gem cannot be polished without friction nor the man without trials."*

*- Confucius*



# Big v. Small

## What Is It?

During the activity “Big v. Small”, classmates are split into two teams, one with an obvious advantage in an activity and the other with an obvious disadvantage. After the activity, one group will be visibly upset because of their disadvantage – this is normal and helps teach the intended lesson. The easiest method to do for this exercise is to split the class into a group of smaller students and a group of larger students. Then, instruct them to play a game of basketball, volleyball, or any other sport in which taller people have a clear advantage. Then, have them play for a few rounds. Afterwards, explain to all students that life often isn’t fair – as the exercise was for one group – but hardships are able to be overcome.

## Why It Is Effective!

“Big v. Small” teaches the unfairness of life in a safe, controlled environment. By doing this activity in school, teachers can guide students through understanding and getting a grasp on their reactions to things they may not like. Teachers can also be there to encourage the students with an advantage to help their classmates. Furthermore, “Big v. Small” teaches problem solving skills. After losing, the disadvantaged students may begin looking for a way to win against their advantaged classmates. This would not only force them to solve an issue that doesn’t have a clear solution, but they would need to work together in order to do it. As a result, camaraderie is encouraged along with the strengthening of a student’s support system.

## Take Action

Decide upon a way to divide the class and an activity to do. Explain to the students what the activity is, administer the activity to the class, and guide them through completing the activity. As students get frustrated, help them work through their emotions (using the exercises in the “Anxiety Reduction” pamphlet will be great if students get flustered). After the activity, lead the class through a reflection about how they felt during the activity.

## Extra Steps/Alternate Activities

After the disadvantaged group has gotten upset about the outcome of the activity, give the other group a disadvantage. If the class is playing basketball, this may mean that they can only play with one hand. This makes the activity more fair and gives a personal demonstration of the lesson to all of the students.

After the activity has been completed, and the lesson explained to the students, take time with the class to brainstorm ideas about how the disadvantaged group could have beat the group with the advantage. If time allows, do the activity again with the theorized method.



# Off the Grid

## What Is It?

Modern day life seems to be completely reliant upon electronics for entertainment, communication, and life in general. While electricity is an amazing tool, pressure associated with social media and the act of constantly being plugged in takes a toll on mental health. “Off the Grid” is an activity that helps students unplug at home. This is an activity in discipline during which students turn off all electricity (laptops, phones, TV’s, stove, AC, etc.) for a few hours to a day, and live “off the grid”. Think of this activity as a “challenge” that students can do over the weekend. During this time, students occupy themselves however they choose: reading, drawing, coming up with games, etc. Afterwards, classes can discuss their most and least favorite parts of going without electricity.

## Why it’s Effective!

“Off the Grid” teaches two main lessons: the ability to say “no”, and creativity. As students continue throughout school and their lives, there will be temptations to participate in harmful activities such as taking illegal substances, vaping, and even bullying. “Off the Grid” takes something that a student may be over-reliant upon for entertainment and comfort away. During this, students refuse something that they enjoy, and find alternative methods of entertainment. “Off the Grid” strengthens a student’s ability to refuse. This lesson remains with students as they are tempted to take part in the aforementioned harmful actions. Ideally, this minimizes the risk students put themselves at for developing risky habits that increase their likelihood of having poor mental health and committing suicide. The other trait developed by “Off the Grid” is creativity. During the period when students do not have electricity, they must come up with different ways to entertain themselves. Some ways this could show itself are that new games are thought of, or students make artwork or draw. As students increase the habit of creating and finding ways of entertainment when none seem apparent, their ingenuity is strengthened. Problem solving is also improved, and is a vital skill for suicide prevention.

## Take Action

During class one day, explain to students what “Off the Grid” is. Then, challenge them to go off the grid for a few hours during that upcoming weekend. Send a message to parents explaining the activity, so that they are not surprised when their student asks to not use electricity for a few hours that weekend. If desired, the teacher should complete the activity that weekend as well, as it is beneficial to all age groups to disconnect. After the weekend, take a few minutes to go around the class and ask them about their experience.

## Discussion Questions!

- Did you like it?
- What did you do?
- Did anyone come up with something new to do?
- Did anything happen that was unexpected?



# Build a Boat

## What Is It?

“Build a Boat” is a classroom activity in which classes use the guides included in the “Resources” section of this pamphlet to make paper boats. Afterwards, they write down whatever is making them angry, stressed, or sad and put it in the boat. Then, they can kick their boats around the classroom for a few minutes or until they feel a sense of control over the situation. After the activity, students throw away the paper they wrote on.



## Why It Is Effective!

“Build a Boat” is effective because it gives students a physical representation of them releasing unhealthy stress, it puts physical distance between the stressors and the student, and it imparts a sense of control. This activity helps clear their mind of possible harmful emotions that prevent them from solving what is stressing them. After their mind is uncluttered, they can focus on solving situations that could be stressing them. If they’re healing from something, the act of discarding whatever was written on their paper helps them accept the event, and begin healing from it.

## Take Action

Secure paper and guides for each student to build their boat. During the allotted time, guide students through building their boats, writing down what is making them sad, stressed, or angry, and releasing their boats. Ensure safety during the activity

## Alternative Activities

Alternate ways to complete this activity is to make paper airplanes and have students’ worries fly away. They could also ball up their worries and throw them into the trash or recycle bin.

During all these activities, it is important to have a physical representation of letting go of stressors. This could be through throwing or kicking them, making them fly away, or being intentional about leaving them in a recycling bin.





## Many Thanks To...

- Jenna W.—Editor

## \*IMPORTANT\*

- THIS IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR THERAPY OR PROFESSIONAL HELP. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE LISTED TO PROVIDE EASY-TO-ACCESS RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED TO LESSON FEELINGS OF ANXIETY. TRAUMA SHOULD NOT BE PROCESSED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING. PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, PTSD, OR OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES.
- To get a list of overall guidelines to follow when doing the activities in the pamphlets please reference the “Safety” page in the Implementation Packet.





# Resources

Reference for "Big v. Small": *104 Activities that Build Self-esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-discovery, and Coping Skills* by Alanna Jones

Problem Solving Guide:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-management/art-20044502>

How Stepping Away from Devices can Better Mental Health:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/why-and-how-to-do-a-digital-detox-4771321>

Writing, Coping, and Mental Health:

<https://hbr.org/2014/11/to-get-over-something-write-about-it>

"The gem cannot be polished without friction nor the man without trials."

- Confucius

1. Write your stressors on the other side.
2. Fold in half on the diagonal line so the two smaller slanted lines are still showing.
3. Complete folds 3 thru 6 shown on the tear-off tab.
4. Your folds don't have to be perfect! This design is very forgiving.

Tear or cut this tab off

