

WORKIN'

IT OUT

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WELCOME!

Goals

In the Workin' It Out program, we will learn to:

1. Improve our awareness of how our beliefs, thoughts and feelings affect the problems we have.
2. Improve our ability to stop and think when upset and to deal with feelings without making problems worse.
3. Learn to successfully solve problems in the workplace.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to the memory of Judy Kaufmann, former DWI Project Director, whose vision began this project and whose spirit has seen it through. Hey Jude...

Rationale

The "Workin' It Out" program series was developed for the Denver Workforce Initiative to meet the needs of both employers and employees by (1) better preparing the residents of low-income neighborhoods for the interpersonal challenges of the workplace, and (2) better preparing employers to support and manage entry-level workers.

The "Workin' It Out" program is designed to help entry-level employees, especially those from diverse backgrounds, to develop the self-awareness and interpersonal "soft skills" needed to succeed and advance in the world of work.

Lesson 1

Understanding Conflict

SAMPLE

**Pearl of
WISDOM**

**"MOST PROBLEMS BEGIN WITH A PERSON
ALREADY IN STRESS!"**

Introducing Our Characters



Brenda was a 35-year-old single mother. She had two young children at home, Keisha (age 6) and Dominique (age 4). She also had an 18-year-old daughter, Toni, who lived with her boyfriend most of the time. Until about 6 months ago, Brenda had only worked part-time at her friend's beauty shop. *"But I didn't have any choice after my husband Ben passed away last year. I don't much like my job at the shoe factory, but someone's got to pay the bills,"* she thought as she rode the bus into work.

Anthony was a 28-year-old man with a 10-year-old son that he hadn't seen in years. After finishing high school, Anthony had been constantly on the move, doing short-term jobs to get by -- working construction, washing dishes, painting houses. *"But I'm tired of all this now,"* Anthony said. *"I'm ready to settle down, especially since I got that new job at the shipping center. The training program started last week, and I can hardly wait! I'll be making big bucks in no time."*



SAMPLE



Maria was a 30-year-old mother with two children, Anna (age 7) and Thomas (age 5). She had never worked a full-time job. *"Most of my time was spent taking care of the children, keeping house, and trying to care for Momma. But now that Thomas is in school and Momma's passed away, I want to get a good job."* Maria was in a training program and had taken a class on interviewing skills, but she was still very nervous about actually going on an interview.

Brenda's Story Part 1

Brenda was a single mother with two young children at home. She was on the morning shift at the shoe factory, and worked hard to get out the door on time each day. "Get the kids up and dressed and fed, then catch the 6:30 A.M. bus to the daycare center, and then catch the 7:10 bus to the shop. What a way to start the day!" she complained to her friend on the ride in.

Brenda went on: "And this week my youngest has the chicken pox! They won't take him at day care until he's over them, so my oldest daughter Toni has been watching him for me. She's not the most responsible girl though, and yesterday I had to sneak into work 10 minutes late. It's a good thing Mr. Carr didn't catch me!"

At 7:25 AM the next morning, however, Toni still hadn't arrived. Brenda paced the living room and watched the clock. She thought: "*Where the @#%\$ is she?? I should be able to count on her to be on time, shouldn't I! My boss is gonna kill me!*" She'd only been there six months and was worried she might lose her job.

A minute later, Toni came rushing through the front door. "Momma, I'm sorry. I know I'm a little late, but --"

Brenda grabbed her things to run out the door and yelled: "But NOTHIN', young lady! Do you KNOW the trouble you put me through?? I'm gonna be at least 15 minutes late AGAIN, and I'll be lucky if I DON'T LOSE MY JOB!!" The more she yelled, the louder she got, working herself up.

Dominique started crying in the background as Toni yelled back. "If you don't want my help, then maybe you should just find someone else! And you can't just be screamin' at me like that! I ain't a child anymore, you know! I don't have to put up with it!"

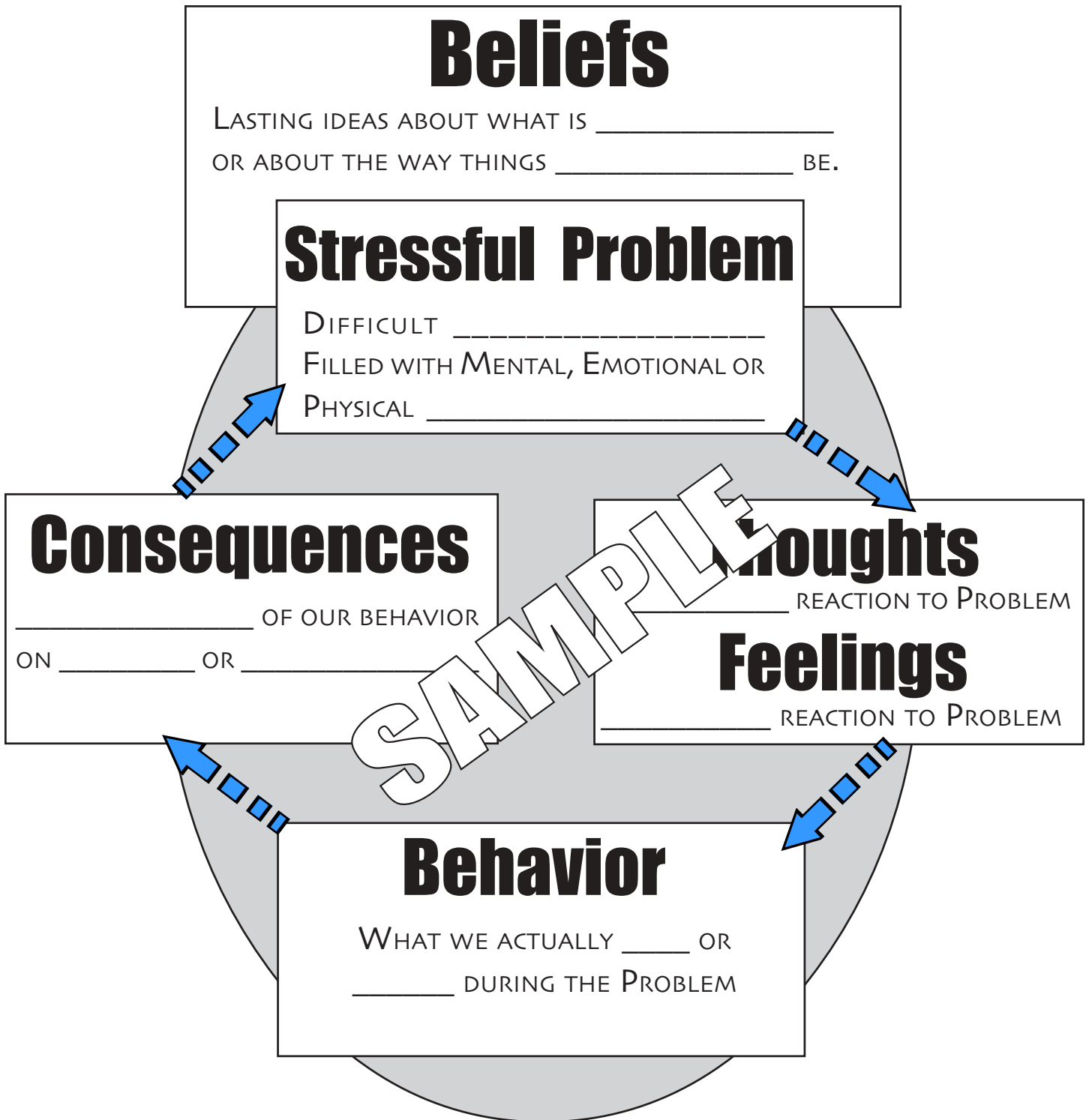
Brenda could feel her blood pressure rising as she turned around furiously. "*That girl needs to learn some respect,*" she said to herself.

She stared Toni straight in the eye and threatened, "Girl, you better watch your mouth. That's all I got to say. You better watch your mouth!"

Brenda finally stormed out the door and down the stairs just in time to see her bus pulling away. She could feel her body shaking as she sat at the bus stop, knowing she would be at least 30 minutes late, and just KNOWING that her boss, Mr. Carr, would have something to say about it.

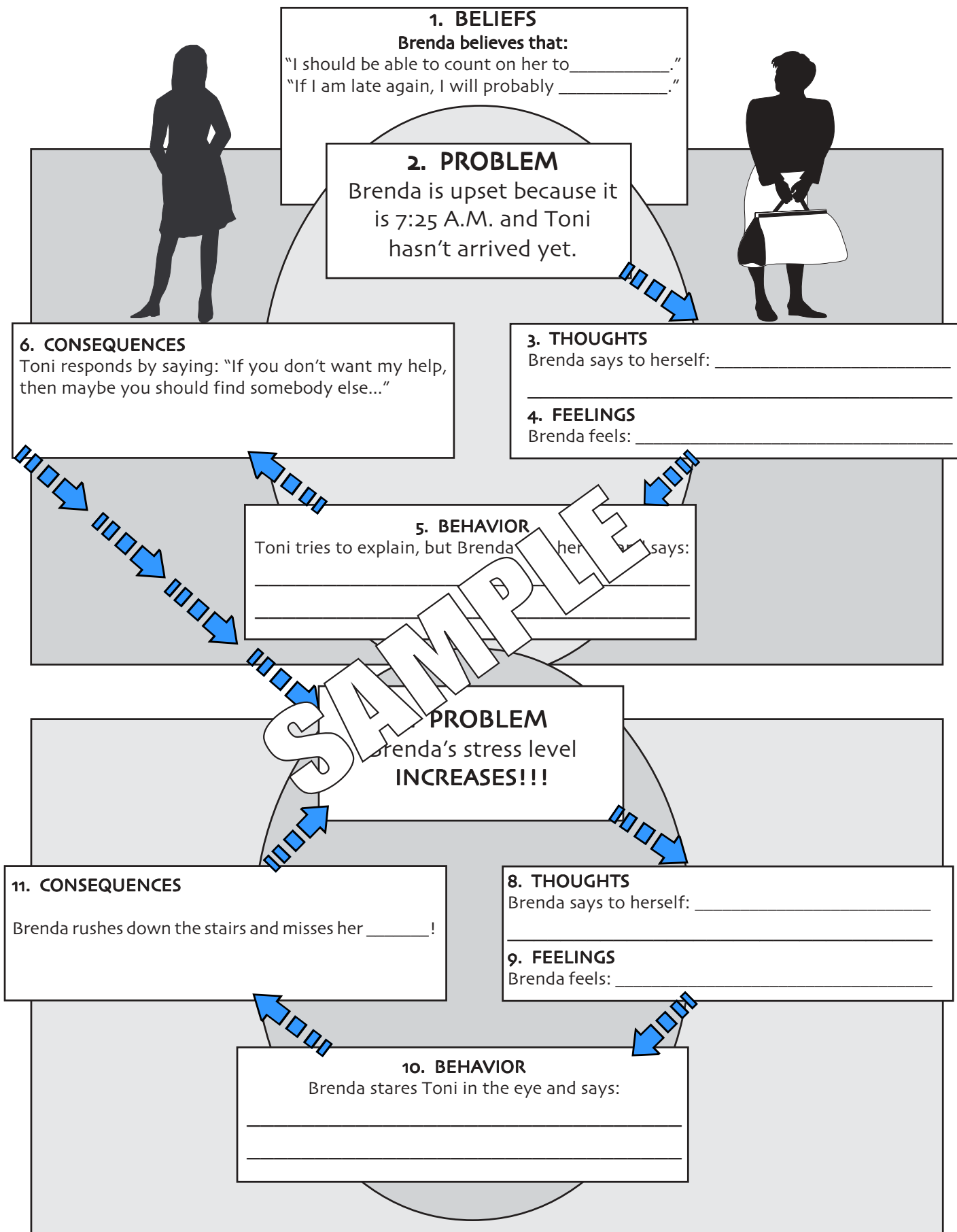


CONFLICT CYCLE



Based on a model created by Long, N. & Morse, W. (1995).
Conflict in the Classroom. Pro-Ed: Austin, TX. Used with permission.

Brenda in Conflict with Toni



KEY POINTS

In Lesson 1

1. Many problems begin when we are already under stress, making it harder to handle situations calmly.
2. Our beliefs about ourselves and others affect the way we see problem situations, and what we are likely to do about them.

MiniQuiz #1

PART 1: Match each part of the Conflict Cycle with its definition.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| ___ 1. Mental reaction to a situation | A. BELIEFS |
| ___ 2. Results of behavior on self or others | B. PROBLEM |
| ___ 3. Lasting ideas about how things should be | C. THOUGHTS |
| ___ 4. Emotional reaction to a situation | D. FEELINGS |
| ___ 5. Difficult situation with strain | E. BEHAVIOR |
| ___ 6. What you do or say in a situation | F. CONSEQUENCES |

PART 2: Read the following story about Ronnie. Label each part with a term from the Conflict Cycle that describes it best.



7. _____ Ronnie sat in the hallway nervously **waiting for his job interview.**
8. _____ He had been fired from his last job, and really **didn't believe he would get an even break** today.
9. _____ "*I don't know why I even bothered coming here at all,*" **he said to himself.**
10. _____ He was **depressed and frustrated,**
11. _____ so **he left the building** before the secretary even came to get him.
12. _____ His **wife was upset with him** when he told her about it later.