

Table of Contents



ABOUT THE AUTHOR	7
INTRODUCTION	9
ACT 1 – Responsibility	
Scene 1 – A Real Mess (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	15
Scene 2 – “My Bad” (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	21
Scene 3 – Disappointing the Manager (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	27
ACT 1 – Star Wrap-Up	33
ACT 2 – Respect	
Scene 1 – A Poor Start (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	35
Scene 2 – An Apology (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	41
Scene 3 – The Unanswered Call (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	47
ACT 2 – Star Wrap-Up	53



ACT 3 – Fairness

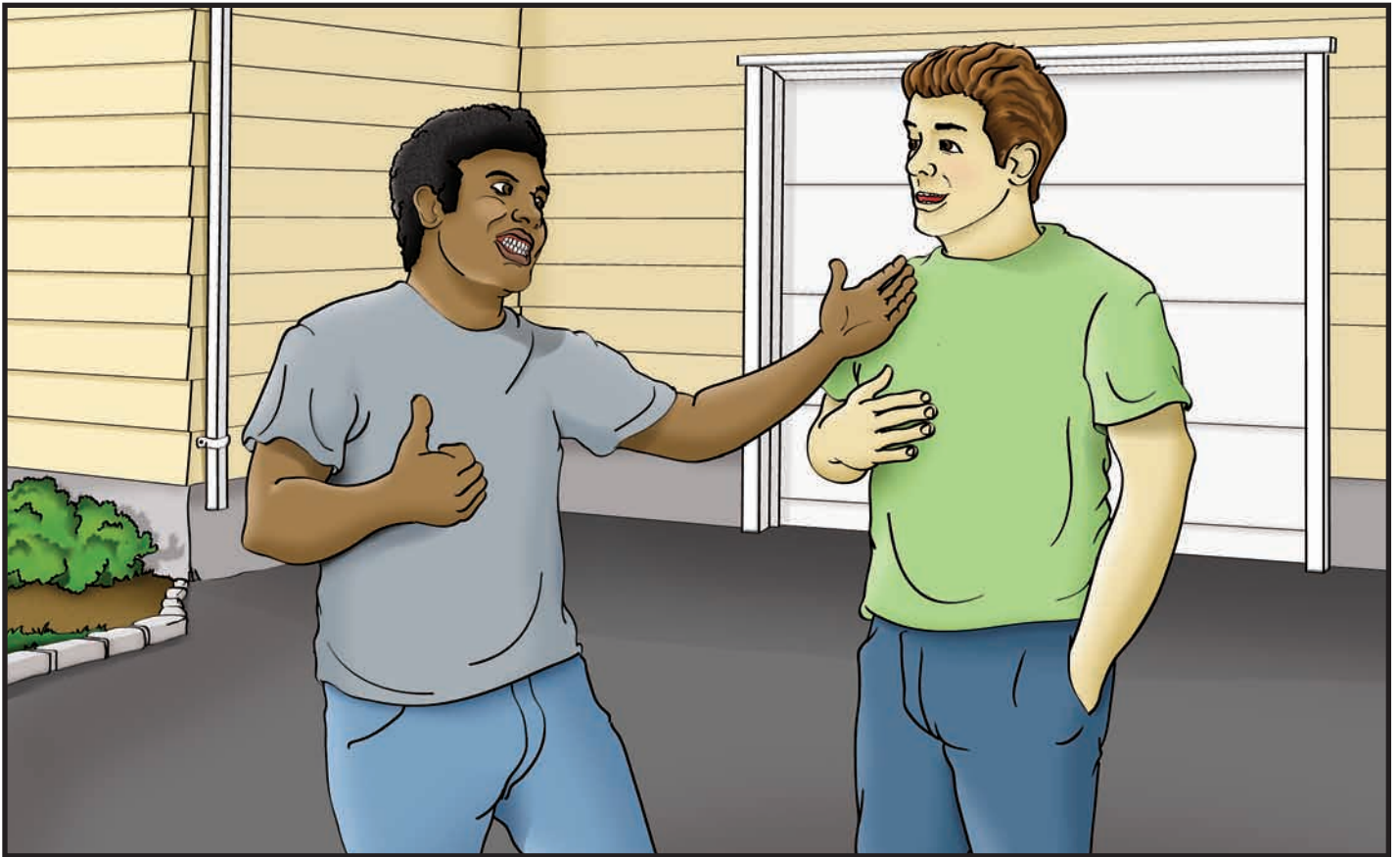
Scene 1 – No Answer (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	55
Scene 2 – Not What I Thought (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	61
Scene 3 – A Matter of Balance (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	67
ACT 3 – Star Wrap-Up	73

ACT 4 – Citizenship

Scene 1 – The Crybaby (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	75
Scene 2 – Down and Out (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	81
Scene 3 – Telling the Truth (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	87
ACT 4 – Star Wrap-Up	93

ACT 5 – Trustworthiness

Scene 1 – A Friend to Trust (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	95
Scene 2 – Posted Nude (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	101
Scene 3 – Out There in Cyberspace (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	107
ACT 5 – Star Wrap-Up	113



ACT 6 – Caring

Scene 1 – The Invitation (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	115
Scene 2 – The Open House Lie (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	121
Scene 3 – Guilty as Charged (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	127
ACT 6 – Star Wrap-Up	133

ACT 7 – Civic Responsibility

Scene 1 – The Deadline (<i>Decision-Making Skill Builder</i>)	135
Scene 2 – Feeling Frantic (<i>Communication Skill Builder</i>)	141
Scene 3 – Returning a Favor (<i>Managing Emotions Skill Builder</i>)	147
ACT 7 – Star Wrap-Up	153

Stars Constellation Chart	155
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Star Certificate of Achievement	157
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Other Publications	159
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Introduction

Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics

Most of us negotiate life in our communities with ease, not realizing how many important decisions we make throughout the course of any given day. This is far from the case for most special needs students. For them, without guidance, practice, and support, navigating the community presents challenges that can be overwhelming.

Challenge, Process and Practice

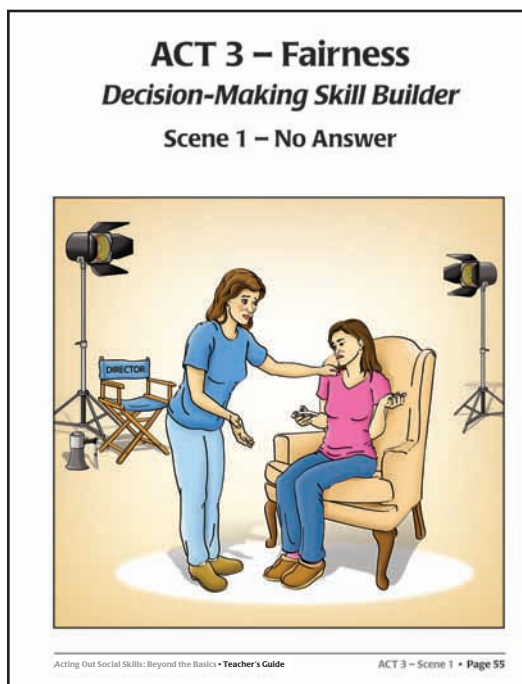
Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics is designed to help students address social interaction challenges. Young adults are presented with seven work-related dilemmas as viewed from the perspective of three different characters. Using a tiered approach, students are guided through a structured process to analyze each situation and then resolve each dilemma through practice.

Social Skills and Character Education

To be most effective, sound decision-making in the community should reflect the ethical core values of the community. *Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics* utilizes the Aspen Seven Universal Character virtues as the framework to guide students toward responsible decision-making. Work-related dilemmas address issues of: *responsibility, respect, fairness, citizenship, trustworthiness, caring, and civic responsibility.*

Learning Through Acting

Most of us learn best by doing. *Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics* utilizes an acting model to help students develop effective on-the-job communication skills and healthy working relationships. Each of the seven acts involves students in planning, reflecting, speaking up, and speaking out as well as responding to dilemmas as seen from alternative perspectives.



Spotlight Page

Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics is similar to a playbook. There are seven acts, each of which has three scenes. Each of the three scenes within the seven acts focuses on one of the Aspen Seven character virtues. Each act is introduced with a cover page that spotlights the principal character on center stage.

In each *Scene 1* scenario, teachers stimulate interest by eliciting responses from students about the message communicated by the character's body language. Student volunteers might talk about or even demonstrate a situation in which a person might appear this way. The body language of the off-stage characters can also be discussed.

In each *Scene 2* and *Scene 3* scenario, teachers point out to students that the former off-stage characters are now center stage. Consequently, the dilemma will now be viewed from alternative perspectives. In a pre-reading activity, students suggest how the new center stage character might see the situation.


The Scene

The top of this page highlights the action. Students are encouraged to carefully examine the picture and describe in detail what is happening. Student volunteers can then be asked to read the *Setting*, *Key Words* and descriptions of *Actors*. The teacher may elect to place key words and character descriptors on the board.

The teacher (or a student volunteer) can read the Scene aloud. The teacher can ask a more able student to summarize the situation. During a second reading, students can participate by underlining emotion words in the story that tell how the main character is feeling (Question #1).

Individually, or as a class, students can circle the letter of the multiple-choice answer that describes the main character's body language (Question #2).

Depending on the abilities of the students, the comprehension questions can be answered individually or as a group (Question #3). Group discussion of alternative responses is encouraged.



Setting: Living room in house
Key Words: downcast, confused, miserable, distressed
Actors: downcast Shana and concerned Dina
Scene: Dina saw her sister Shana slumped down in her chair. Shana was focused on texting someone. It was clear that Shana was **downcast** about something. Dina was concerned and asked, "What's wrong, Shana? You look like you have just lost your best friend."
 Shana was obviously **miserable**. Clearly upset, she said, "I thought Lizbeth was my friend. I sent her four emails today and got no answers. This is the third time I have texted her and I even left her a voice message. Didn't you tell me friends are special people you can count on? What should I do?"
Feelings ...
 1. Underline two words in the scene that tell how Shana is feeling.
 2. Shana's body language shows she feels:
 a. excited b. **downcast** c. pleased
 3. Why does Dina tell Shana she looks like she just lost her best friend?
 Shana is slumped down in her chair and downcast about something.
 Page 56 • ACT 3 – Scene 1 Teacher's Guide • Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics


Preparing for Acting, Thinking about Choices, and Lights, Camera, Action ...

Preparing for Acting asks students to pretend they are characters in the scene, and encourages them to think and react as they believe the characters might. When necessary, students are directed to look back at the illustration and the scene for guidance. Initially, it is recommended that both teacher and students work together. As students become more familiar with the process, the teacher may elect to have students perform this activity on their own.

Preparing for Acting ...

- Why does Shana's behavior make Dina feel that something is wrong?
Shana looks downcast.
- Why does Shana feel distressed? Shana feels distressed because Lizbeth did not respond to her texts, emails and voice messages.
- How does Shana describe a good friend?
Shana describes a good friend as someone you can count on.


Thinking about Choices ...



List Shana's choices:
 1. Do nothing.
 2. Call, email or text Lizbeth again.
 3. Go visit Lizbeth.

Lights, Camera, Action ...

- Reread the scene. Watch and listen as your teacher acts out the parts of Shana and Dina.
- Pretend you are Shana while your teacher pretends to be Dina.
 - Talk out the scene with your teacher.
 - Act out the scene with your teacher.
- Pretend you are Dina while a classmate pretends to be Shana.
 - Act out the scene with a classmate.



Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics • Teacher's Guide ACT 3 – Scene 1 • Page 57

Thinking About Choices... Ask students to brainstorm possible choices that the main character could make. An image of the main character is provided to focus attention. Some students may suggest inappropriate responses. However, all responses open the way for further discussion. The teacher may choose to do this activity on the chalkboard. Students may either select the choices from the board or write their own responses on the lines.

Lights, Camera, Action... After the scene is reread, teachers and assistants can role-play it. After a brief discussion, a student volunteer reenacts the role-play with the teacher. The main goals are to:

- encourage students to speak up and speak out,
- gain confidence to role-play, and
- respond more appropriately verbally, nonverbally, and behaviorally.

The Director's Review...

The *Director's Review* is an assessment tool designed to monitor personal student progress. Students self-assess by filling in the stars that correspond with each completed task from the previous pages. The graphic at the bottom of the page directs students to collect performance data and record achievement.

Students add their earned stars and record their total in the *Filled-in Stars box*. Next, they fill in their earned stars in the *Star Jar*. Finally, they make a simple bar graph by transferring data from the *Star Jar* to the *Star Bar Graph*.

Teachers might find the data collected from the *Director's Review* helpful for sharing with parents, as well as for use in student portfolios.

Director's Review ...

Fill in the star if you:

1. Underlined words to describe Shana's feelings ☆
2. Circled words to describe Shana's body language ☆
3. Wrote why Shana's behavior concerned Dina ☆
4. Wrote why Shana felt distressed ☆
5. Listed Shana's choices ☆
6. Listened to the scene as it was read ☆
7. Watched the actors and their actions ☆
8. Talked out the scene with your teacher ☆
9. Acted out the scene with your teacher ☆
10. Acted out the scene with a classmate ☆

Total Filled-in Stars:

Star Jar
Fill in each numbered star that you earned from above.

Star Bar Graph
Fill in the total stars from the box above.

Page 58 • ACT 3 – Scene 1 Teacher's Guide • Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics

Beyond the Stars ...

1. Shana was distressed that her best friend did not answer her texts or emails. Shana's face showed that she was **downcast**. Circle the cartoon that shows a person who is **downcast**.

2. Facial expression, posture, and positioning of arms and hands communicate feelings. How does a downcast person look?
A downcast person may hang her head and have a sad look on her face. She may hold her hands together in front of her body.
3. What might Shana do about the unanswered emails, text messages and phone calls from Lizbeth?
Shana might talk the situation over with Dina to hear her sister's point of view.

Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics • Teacher's Guide ACT 3 – Scene 1 • Page 59

Beyond the Stars...

Beyond the Stars provides tiered questions that focus on actions, words, and deeds to reinforce positive values and decision-making within the community.

Tier 1

Emotion word cartoons: students are asked to circle a cartoon that shows the emotion of the main character in the role-play. This activity directs attention to non-verbal communication.

Tier 2

Reading non-verbal messages: students are asked to write a brief description of how a person's body language might convey the message. Possible answers are suggested.

Tier 3

What do you think? Students are asked to recognize how a person's verbal or non-verbal behavior can affect others. They are challenged to suggest an appropriate response.

Reflections...


Reflections uses a metaphorical mirror to focus student attention on the main characters and their interaction with others. Students are encouraged to reread and reflect prior to responding to the questions.

Question 1: Students recall the scene in order to answer questions related to the role-play. Answers to these questions will vary.

Question 2: Students consider the character's response to a dilemma. Next, they consider what they would do in such a situation. Students are encouraged to think about the *why* behind the behavior. Answers to these questions will vary.

Question 3: Students are provided with an open-ended question related to the scene's dilemma. Students are encouraged to recommend responsible social behaviors and to incorporate one of the seven Aspen virtues as appropriate. Possible answers are suggested.

Reflections ...



Shana was hurt when her friend Lizbeth did not respond to Shana's attempts to contact her.

- In your interact play, how did Shana demonstrate feeling miserable?
Answers will vary.
- If you were Dina, what would you have said to Shana?
Answers will vary.
- How might Dina show her concern for her sister's distress?
Dina could tell Shana that she feels badly that Shana's messages went unanswered. Dina might tell Shana to back off and let it go.


Page 60 • ACT 3 – Scene 1 Teacher's Guide • Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics

The three scenes afford students the opportunity to see how key people may view a dilemma from different perspectives. More able students may answer all questions, whereas others may not. As the class discusses possible responses, even the less able students will profit from the interaction.

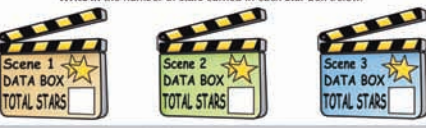
Star Wrap-Up

ACT 3 – Fairness


Fill in the stars you earned in each Star Jar below.



Write in the number of stars earned in each Star Box below.



Fill in each Star Bar Graph.



Star Power: Total the number of stars you earned.

Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics • Teacher's Guide ACT 3 – Star Wrap-Up • Page 73

Star Wrap-Up

Star Wrap-Up is designed to track student progress. It provides an opportunity for students to self-assess while providing a tool for teachers and parents to view student achievement. Such tracking is instrumental in providing insight into student strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, teachers will be able to use this information for future planning.

Students begin *Star Wrap-Up* by referring to the *Director's Review* of the preceding three scenes. First, students put total stars earned into each scene's *Star Jar*. Next, they count the total stars filled in and transfer the appropriate number into each *Scene Data Box*. Finally, students construct simple bar graphs by using the number from the *Scene Data Box* to fill in the *Star Bar Graph* for each scene.

In the *Star Power* section, students provide the grand total of stars earned for all three scenes in the act.

Stars Constellation Chart

The *Stars Constellation Chart* is located at the back of the book. At the end of each act, students transfer data from each *Star Wrap-Up* bar graph onto the *Stars Constellation Chart*. Upon completion, it serves as a visual representation of student performance for all seven acts in a simple line graph.

This activity is designed to incorporate introductory math graphing skills while providing a graphic assessment tool to share with parents and staff. The *Stars Constellation Chart* can be photocopied and placed into each student portfolio.

My Stars Constellation Chart

Directions:

1. Find the number that shows the total stars you earned for each act.
2. Draw a tiny star (★) on the line where the number and ACT lines meet.
3. Connect the Stars.

30							
29							
28							
27							
26							
25							
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21							
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4							
3							
2							
1							
0							
	ACT 1	ACT 2	ACT 3	ACT 4	ACT 5	ACT 6	ACT 7

Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics • Teacher's Guide My Stars Constellation Chart • Page 155



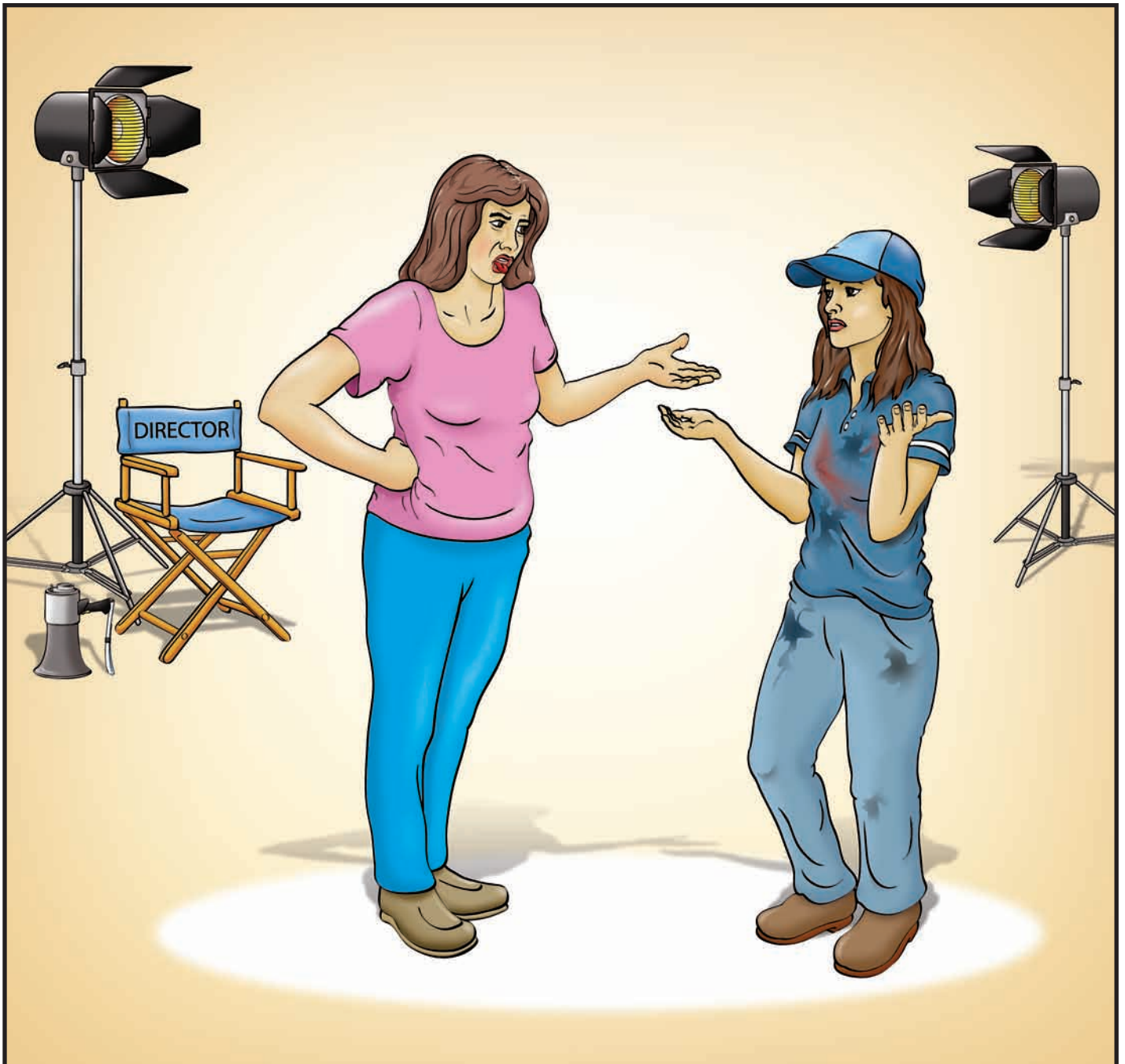
Star Certificate of Achievement

The *Star Certificate of Achievement* is an award presented upon completion of a scene, or the entire *Acting Out Social Skills: Beyond the Basics* playbook. Teachers may elect to recognize student effort, progress, and achievement. The Star Certificates can be sent home or placed in student portfolios along with the *My Stars Constellation Chart*.

ACT 1 – Responsibility

Decision-Making Skill Builder

Scene 1 – A Real Mess





Setting: Kitchen

Key Words: responsibility, disapprove, groomed, disgust

Actors: disapproving mother and rushed Alicia

Scene: Alicia was really late getting ready to go to work at Tonia's Taco. She went to her closet for a clean work shirt and pants. None were there. She realized that she had not washed them. She found a shirt in the dirty clothes pile and put it on. She slipped into her blue pants and her work shoes, and ran downstairs for her cap.

Alicia's mother took one look at her. She shook her head with **shock** and **disgust** and said, "Alicia, that shirt is dirty and those pants are wrinkled. You aren't planning to go to work like that, are you? You know I disapprove of you leaving the house poorly groomed." Alicia moaned and said, "I'm really late, Mom. You're too fussy. I bet no one else will notice. Gotta go!" She hurried out of the house.

Feelings . . .

1. Underline two words in the scene that tell how Alicia's mother is feeling.
2. Alicia's mother's body language shows she is:
a. delighted b. calm c. **disgusted**
3. A disgusted person disapproves of something. Why is Alicia's mother disgusted?

Alicia's mother is disgusted because Alicia is leaving the house poorly groomed.

Preparing for Acting . . .

1. Describe Alicia's outfit. _____
Alicia's outfit is a dirty shirt and wrinkled pants.
2. Why does Alicia's mother say, "You aren't planning to go to work like that?" _____
Alicia's mother is disgusted because Alicia is poorly groomed for work.
3. Why does Alicia tell her mom she is too fussy? _____
Alicia is in a hurry and says that no one will notice.

Thinking about Choices . . .



List Mom's choices:

1. **Let Alicia go to work.**
2. **Insist that Alicia change.**
3. **Tell Alicia she must prepare her clean and ironed outfit the day before work.**

Lights, Camera, Action . . .

- **Reread the scene.**
Watch and **listen** as your teacher acts out the parts of Alicia's mom and Alicia.
- **Pretend** you are Alicia's mom while your teacher pretends to be Alicia.



1. Talk out the scene with your teacher.
2. Act out the scene with your teacher.

- **Pretend** you are Alicia while a classmate pretends to be Alicia's mom.













Act out the scene with a classmate.



Director's Review ...

Fill in the star if you:

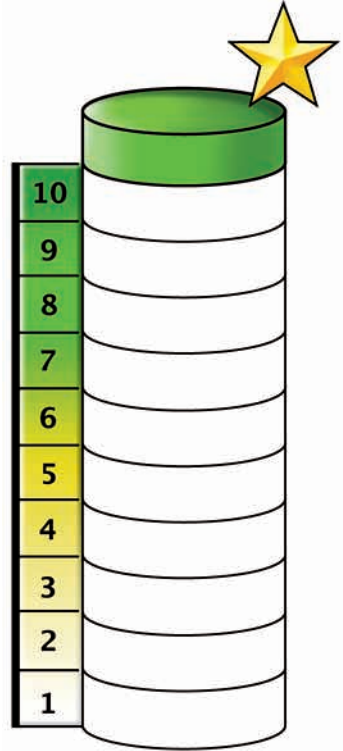
1. **Underlined** Mom's feelings. 
2. **Circled** words to describe Mom's body language 
3. **Wrote** why Mom was disgusted 
4. **Wrote** why Alicia felt her mother was too fussy 
5. **Listed** Mom's choices 
6. **Listened** to the scene as it was read 
7. **Watched** the actors and their actions 
8. **Talked** out the scene with your teacher 
9. **Acted** out the scene with your teacher. 
10. **Acted** out the scene with a classmate 

Total Filled-in Stars:



Star Jar

Fill in each numbered star that you earned from above.

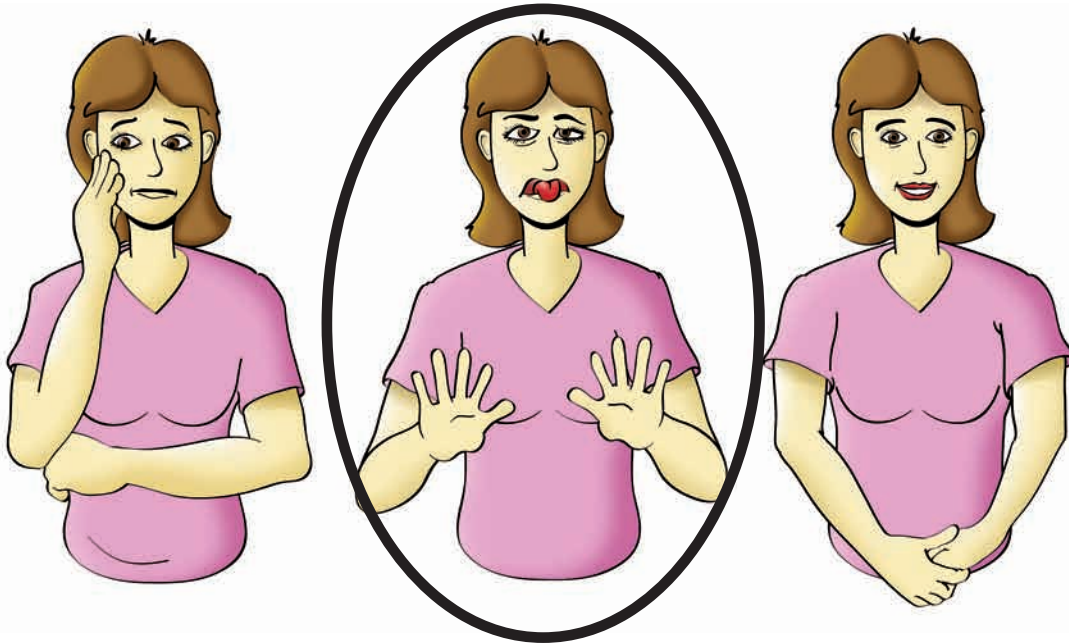


Star Bar Graph

Fill in the total stars from the box above.

Beyond the Stars . . .

1. Alicia's mother was **disgusted** by Alicia's work outfit. **Circle** the cartoon that shows someone who is **disgusted**.



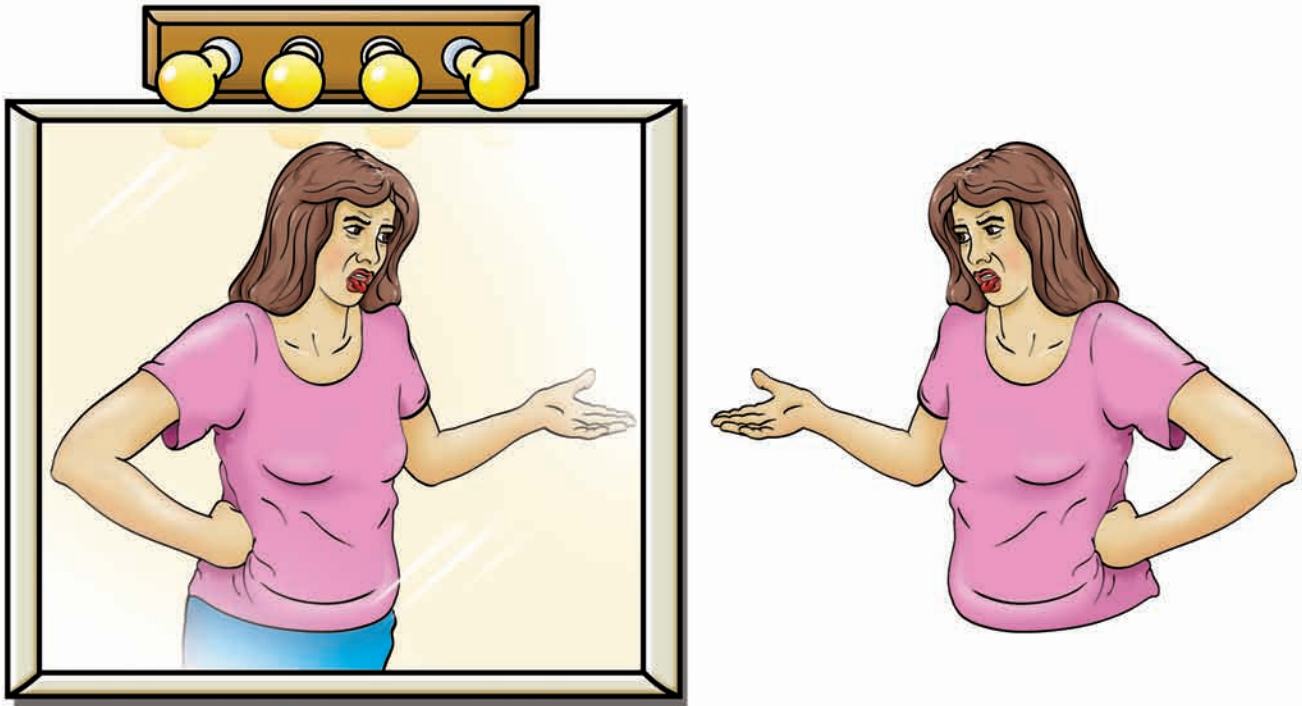
2. Facial expression, posture, and positioning of arms and hands communicate feelings. How does a person who is disgusted look?

A person who is disgusted often frowns. She might make a face that shows displeasure. She might put her hands up and back away.

3. Alicia was late and in such a rush that she left the house wearing a messy, dirty outfit to work. How could Alicia have prepared responsibly to have clean and neat clothes for work?

Alicia could have washed and ironed her clothes the day before.

Reflections ...



Mom tried to get Alicia to wear a clean, neat outfit for work.

1. In your interact play, how did Mom encourage Alicia to think more responsibly about the condition of her work shirt and pants?

Answers will vary.

2. If you were Alicia's mom, what would you have said or done? Why?

Answers will vary.

3. Not planning ahead often causes problems. Why is it important to wear neat, clean clothing to work?

It is important to wear neat, clean clothing because you represent your company to the public.

ACT 1 – Responsibility

Communication Skill Builder

Scene 2 – “My Bad”





Setting: Restaurant kitchen

Key Words: annoyed, insulted, embarrassment, groomed

Actors: unkind Tom and embarrassed Alicia

Scene: Alicia hurried and managed to get to work on time. Her entrance to the restaurant caused quite a stir. Her coworkers laughed at her. One of her favorite people, Tom, pointed at her and said, “Alicia, you look like you don’t know how to use a washing machine. Did you sleep in your dirty work outfit?”

Alicia’s face burned with **embarrassment**. She felt **insulted** that her coworkers laughed at her. She especially felt **hurt** by Tom’s unkind remarks because she had a crush on him. Alicia looked down at her dirty outfit. She compared her outfit with the neat and clean outfits of her coworkers. She was annoyed with herself for ignoring her mother’s suggestion to be well groomed for work.

Feelings . . .

1. Underline two words in the scene that tell how Alicia is feeling.
2. Alicia’s body language shows she feels:
a. tired b. embarrassed c. happy
3. How do Alicia’s coworkers insult her?

Alicia’s coworkers insult Alicia by laughing at her.

Preparing for Acting . . .

1. How does Tom describe Alicia's outfit? _____
Tom tells Alicia she looks like she slept in her dirty work outfit.
2. Why is Alicia especially hurt by Tom's remarks? Alicia is especially hurt by Tom's
remarks because she has a crush on him.
3. Why does Alicia feel annoyed with herself? _____
Alicia is annoyed and embarrassed because she is not well groomed.

Thinking about Choices . . .



List Alicia's choices:

1. Ignore her coworker's comments.
2. Say something unkind to get back at her coworkers.
3. Quit her job.

Lights, Camera, Action . . .

- **Reread the scene.**
Watch and **listen** as your teacher acts out the parts of Alicia and Tom.
- **Pretend** you are Alicia while your teacher pretends to be Tom.



1. Talk out the scene with your teacher.
2. Act out the scene with your teacher.













Act out the scene with a classmate.



Director's Review ...

Fill in the star if you:

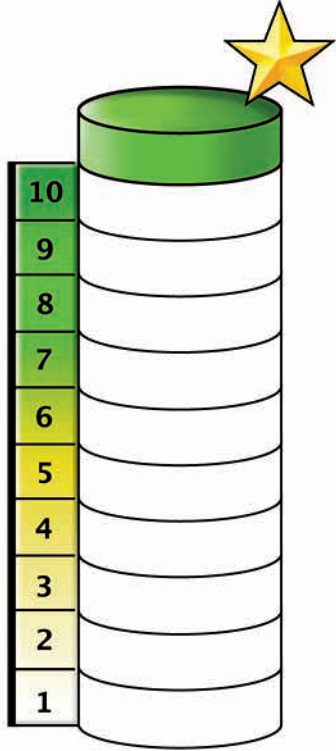
1. **Underlined** Alicia's feelings. 
2. **Circled** words to describe Alicia's body language 
3. **Wrote** how Alicia's coworkers insulted her 
4. **Wrote** why Alicia was especially hurt by Tom's remarks 
5. **Listed** Alicia's choices 
6. **Listened** to the scene as it was read 
7. **Watched** the actors and their actions 
8. **Talked** out the scene with your teacher 
9. **Acted** out the scene with your teacher. 
10. **Acted** out the scene with a classmate 

Total Filled-in Stars:



Star Jar

Fill in each numbered star that you earned from above.

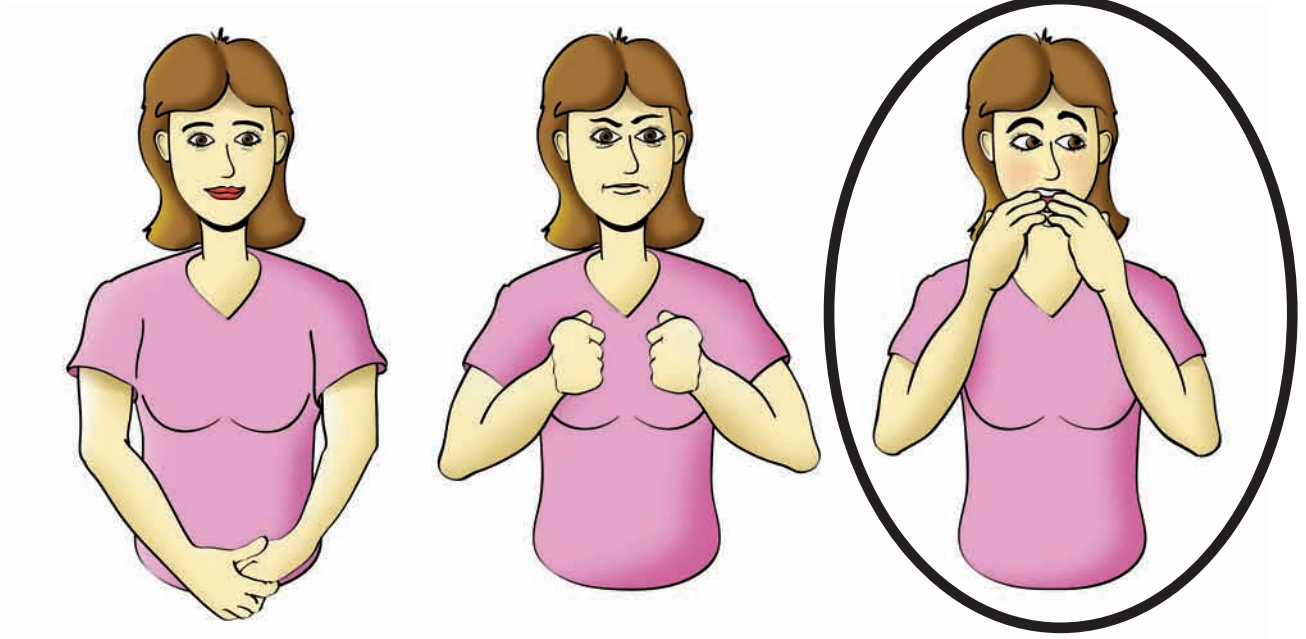


Star Bar Graph

Fill in the total stars from the box above.

Beyond the Stars . . .

1. Alicia felt **embarrassed** when her coworkers laughed at her. **Circle** the cartoon that shows someone who is **embarrassed**.



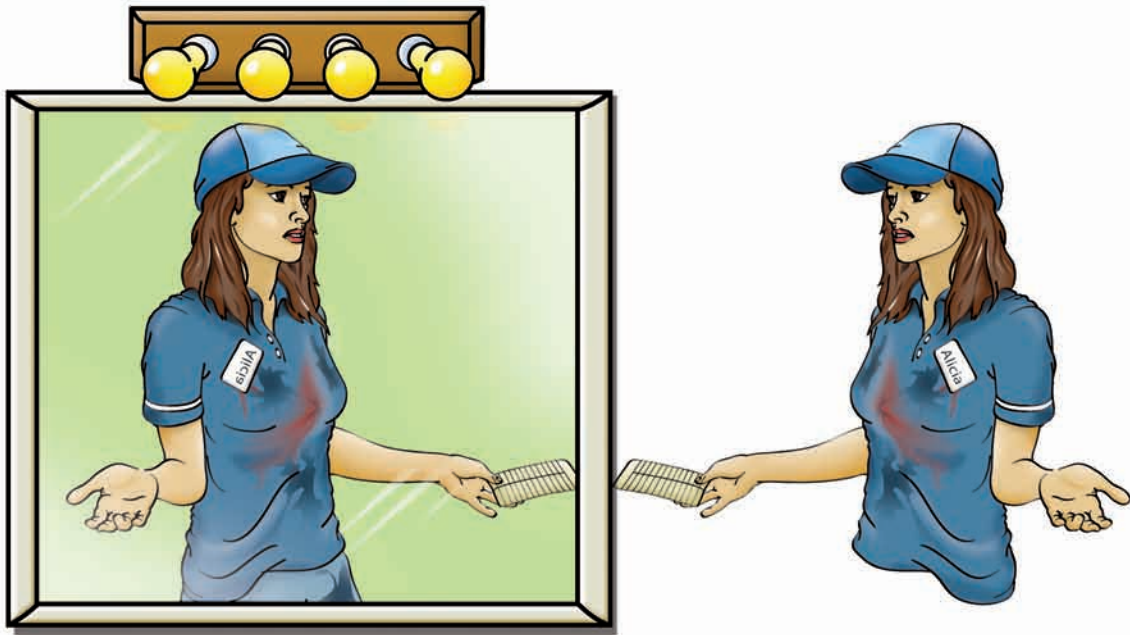
2. Facial expression, posture, and position of arms and hands communicate feelings. How does an embarrassed person look?

An embarrassed person might turn red. She might put a hand
up to cover her mouth. She might look away or hang her head.

3. Alicia's coworkers' behavior and comments made Alicia realize that she was not appropriately dressed for work. What else could they have said or done to let her know that her outfit was inappropriate?

Alicia's coworkers could have talked to Alicia privately about
how her dirty and messy outfit makes the whole team
look bad.

Reflections . . .



Alicia was embarrassed by her coworkers' behavior when they saw her.

1. In your interact play, how did Tom and the other coworkers behave when Alicia presented herself for work?

Answers will vary.

2. If you were Alicia, what would you have said or done? Why?

Answers will vary.

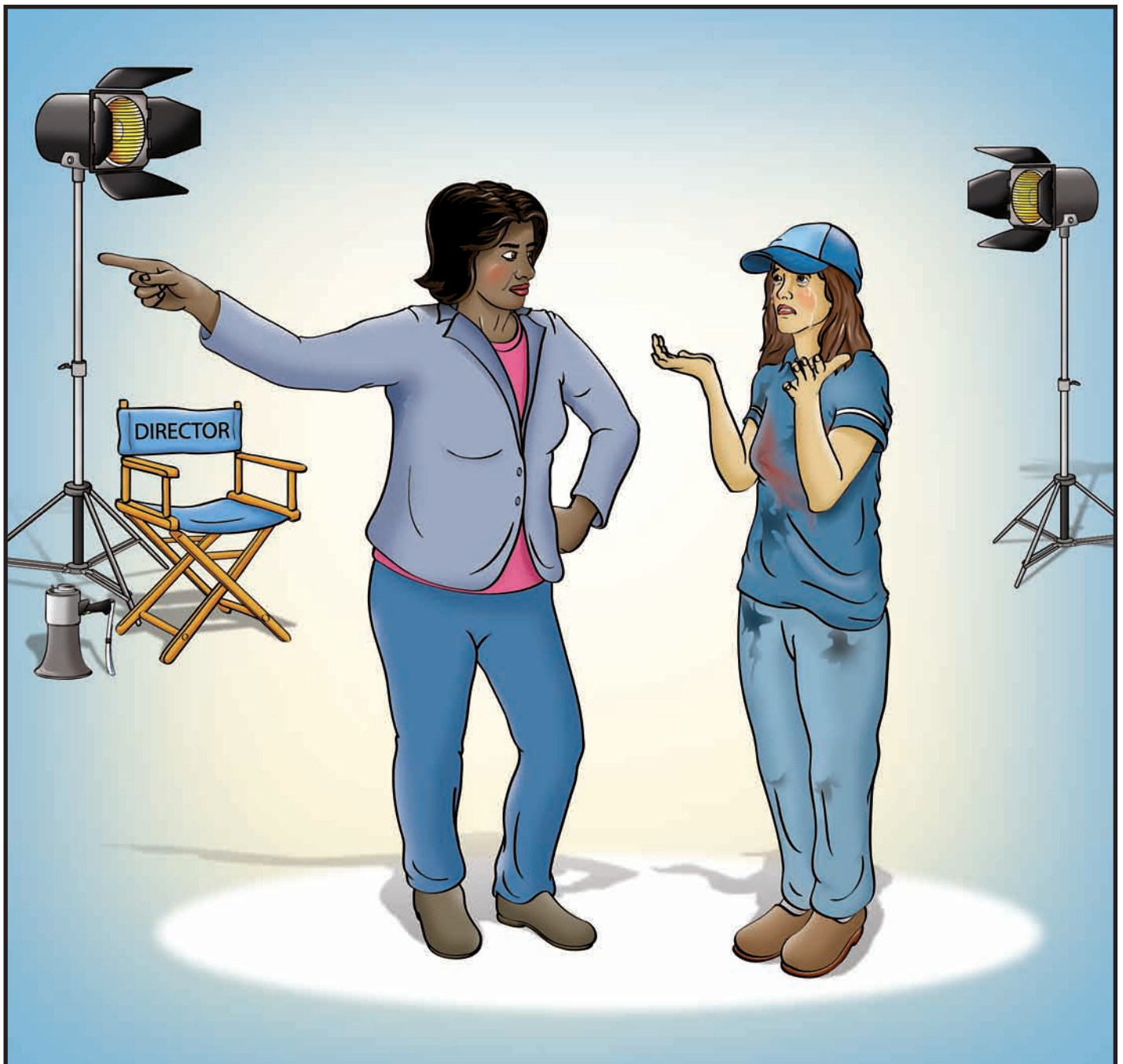
3. Employees have a responsibility to themselves, their employers, and their coworkers. How did Alicia fail to be responsible to each?

Alicia showed no self-respect. She disrespected her employer and coworkers with her poor grooming.

ACT 1 – Responsibility

Managing Emotions Skill Builder

Scene 3 – Disappointing the Manager





Setting: Sign-in area at Tonia’s Taco Restaurant

Key Words: disappointed, penalized, irresponsible, upset

Actors: disappointed Ms. Taylor and irresponsible Alicia

Scene: You are Ms. Taylor, Alicia’s manager at Tonia’s Taco Restaurant. You are strict about enforcing the employee guidelines. Employees are expected to report to work well groomed and on time. Failure to meet those guidelines is cause for an immediate penalty of a day off without pay.

You tell Alicia, “I am very **upset** and **disappointed** that you came to work in a dirty outfit. Your irresponsible behavior leaves me no choice. Do not punch in. You are not properly dressed for work and will have to go home.” Alicia is shocked. Tears begin to stream down her cheeks.

Feelings . . .

1. Underline two words in the scene that tell how Ms. Taylor is feeling.
2. Ms. Taylor’s body language shows she is:
 - a. relaxed
 - b. bored
 - c. **disappointed**
3. It is the manager’s job to make certain the employee work guidelines are followed. How does Alicia fail to follow them?

Alicia does not report to work well groomed.

Preparing for Acting . . .

1. Ms. Taylor is upset with Alicia. What can Alicia learn from her mistake? _____
Alicia can learn to be more responsible. She can make sure that she is well groomed for work.
2. What does Ms. Taylor say to Alicia? Ms. Taylor says that she is upset and disappointed with Alicia. She tells Alicia that she is not properly dressed and must go home.
3. How can Alicia respond to Ms. Taylor? Alicia can apologize and promise not to make the same mistake again.

Thinking about Choices . . .



List Ms. Taylor's choices:

1. Do nothing.
2. Give Alicia a warning.
3. Send Alicia home.

Lights, Camera, Action . . .

- **Reread the scene.**
Watch and **listen** as your teacher acts out the parts of Ms. Taylor and Alicia.
- **Pretend** you are Ms. Taylor while your teacher pretends to be Alicia.



1. Talk out the scene with your teacher.
2. Act out the scene with your teacher.

- **Pretend** you are Alicia while a classmate pretends to be Ms. Taylor.













Act out the scene with a classmate.



Director's Review ...

Fill in the star if you:

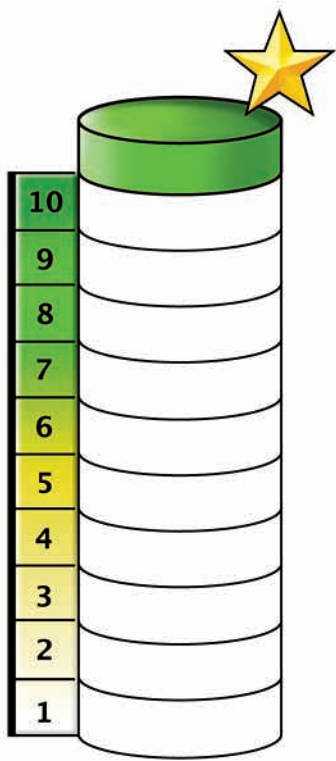
1. **Underlined** Ms. Taylor's feelings 
2. **Circled** words to describe Ms. Taylor's body language 
3. **Wrote** how Alicia failed to follow employee guidelines. 
4. **Wrote** how Alicia can respond to Ms. Taylor 
5. **Listed** Ms. Taylor's choices 
6. **Listened** to the scene as it was read 
7. **Watched** the actors and their actions 
8. **Talked** out the scene with your teacher 
9. **Acted** out the scene with your teacher. 
10. **Acted** out the scene with a classmate 

Total Filled-in Stars:



Star Jar

Fill in each numbered star that you earned from above.

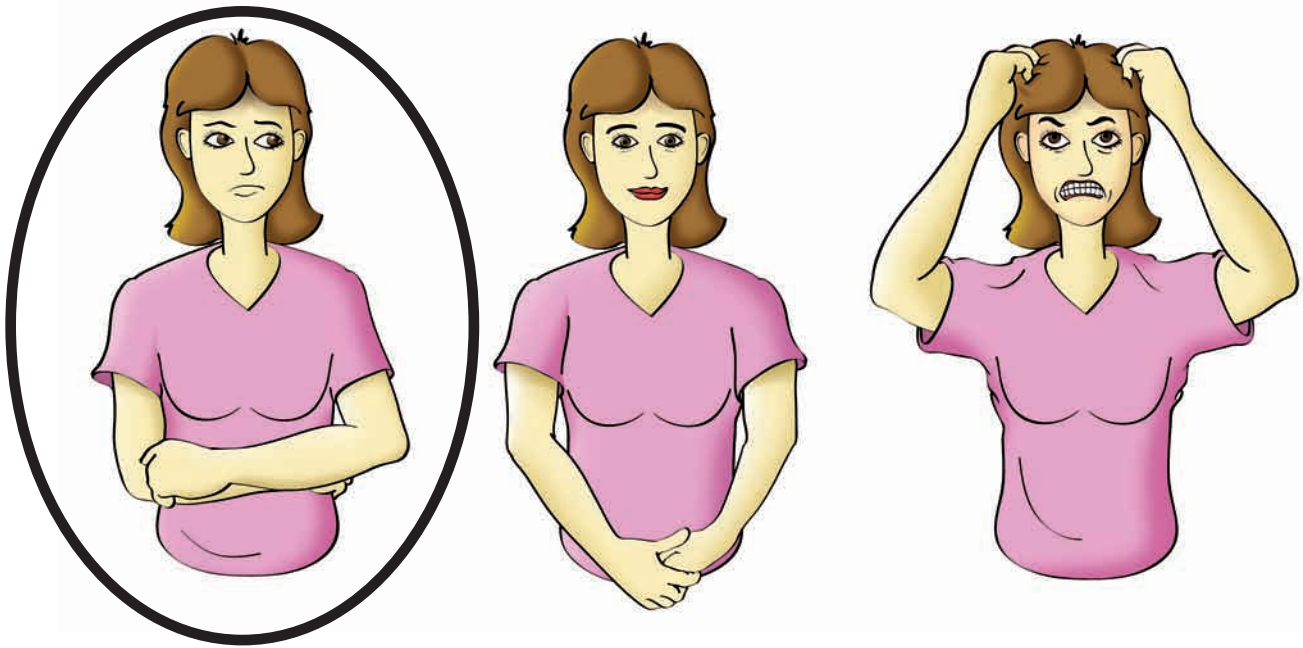


Star Bar Graph

Fill in the total stars from the box above.

Beyond the Stars . . .

1. Ms. Taylor, manager of Tonia's Tacos, was **disappointed** that Alicia reported to work poorly groomed. **Circle** the cartoon that shows a **disappointed** person.



2. Facial expression, posture, and positioning of arms and hands communicate feelings. How does a disappointed person look?

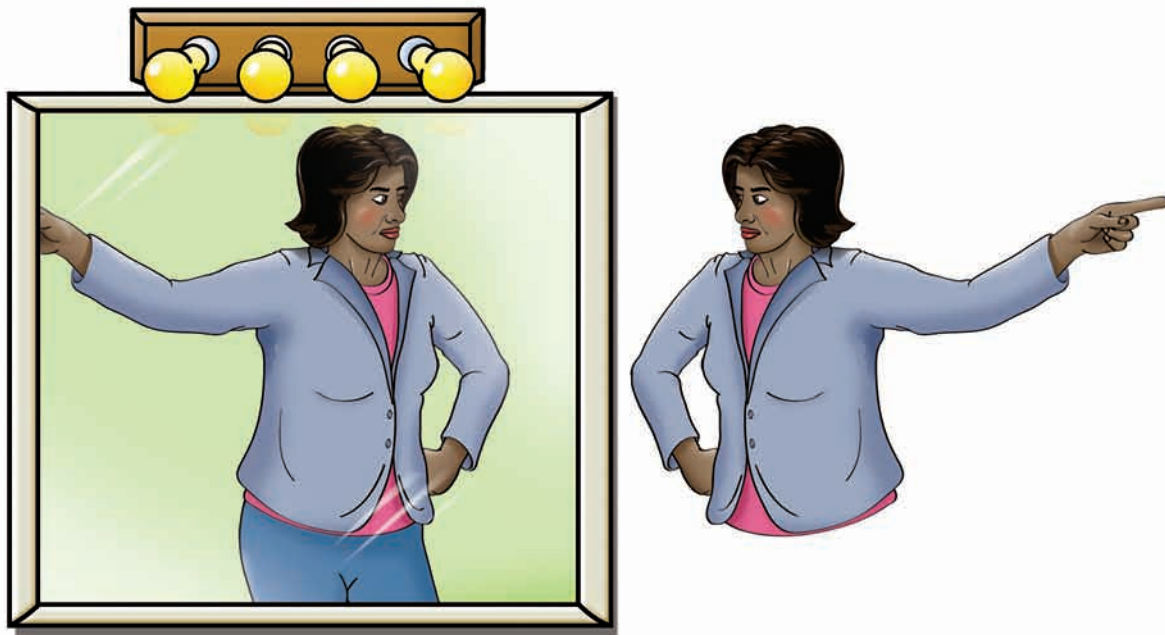
A disappointed person often has a sad look on her face.

She might fold her arms on top of one another.

3. Ms. Taylor felt that she could not permit Alicia to work in her dirty, messy outfit. How could her decision to send Alicia home affect the work staff and the customers?

Ms. Taylor's decision to send Alicia home sends a message to the work staff that being well groomed for work is essential. Sending Alicia home could create longer lines for customers because Tonia's Taco would have one fewer worker waiting on customers.

Reflections ...



Ms. Taylor has the responsibility of making certain that employees follow the work guidelines.

1. In your interact play, how did Ms. Taylor handle the situation with Alicia?

Answers will vary.

2. If you were Alicia, what would you say to Ms. Taylor when she told you that you couldn't work and would not be paid for the day?

Answers will vary.

3. Good grooming shows respect for yourself and your employer. How does it show your responsibility to your job?

Being well groomed shows that you care about yourself, your employer and the customers. It's your responsibility to look your best because you represent the company.



Star Wrap-Up

ACT 1 – Responsibility

Fill in the stars you earned in each Star Jar below.



Scene 1
A Real Mess



Scene 2
"My Bad"

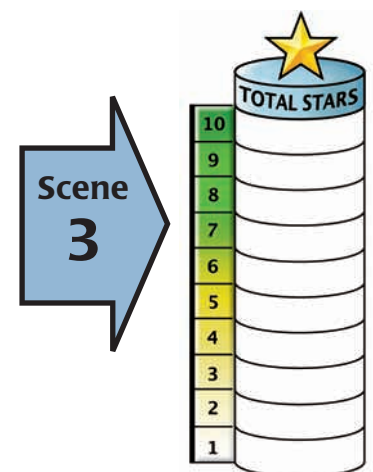
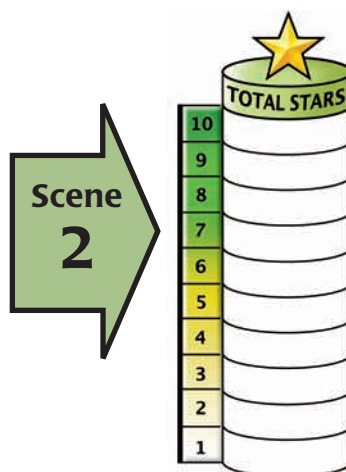
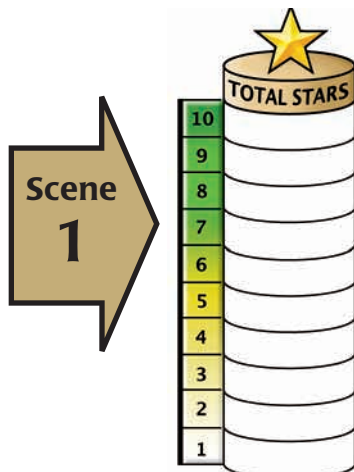


Scene 3
Disappointing the Manager

Write in the number of stars earned in each Star Box below.



Fill in each Star Bar Graph.



Star Power: Total the number of stars you earned.