

# HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

## lesson + activities

- For grades 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup>
- Teaches students about 4 different problem sizes using a weather theme!





# teaching problem sizes



Use the slideshow to teach students about four problem sizes and how to handle each.

A call-and-response chant with hand motions is included to help the ideas stick in student brains.

# whole group practice

For classes of earlier readers, go through 16 relevant example problems (with editable problem size "answers" to best fit with your specific school) to practice identifying problem size.





# small group practice



OR, have students practice identifying the size of the problem through a movement-based activity.

# self-referral forms

Three different self-referral forms are included (if lesson is also used to introduce self-referring to the school counselor).



**LET'S TALK!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the size of your problem.

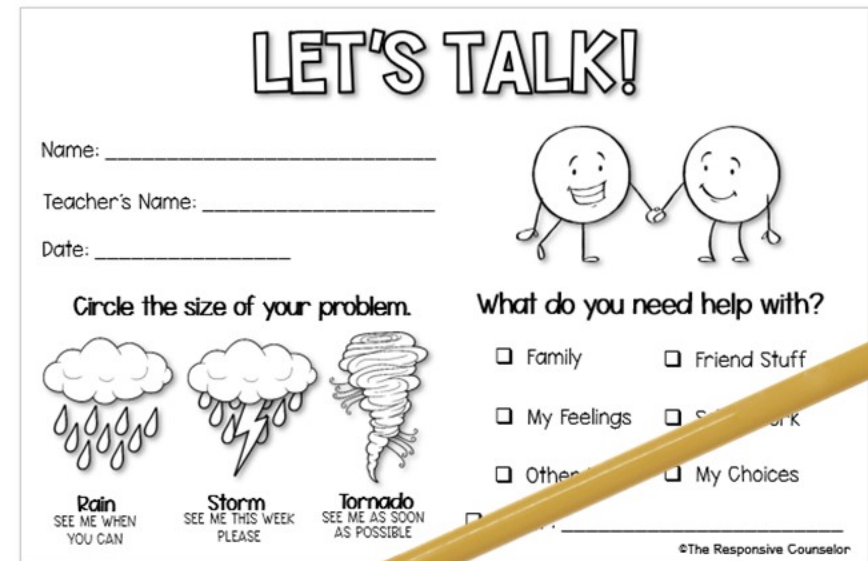
**Rain** SEE ME WHEN YOU CAN    **Storm** SEE ME THIS WEEK PLEASE    **Tornado** SEE ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

What do you need help with?

☐ Family    ☐ Friend Stuff    ☐ Other Kids

☐ My Feelings    ☐ Schoolwork    ☐ My Choices

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

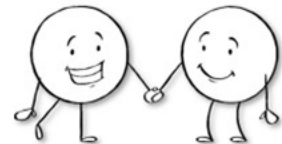


**LET'S TALK!**




Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Circle the size of your problem.

**Rain** SEE ME WHEN YOU CAN    **Storm** SEE ME THIS WEEK PLEASE    **Tornado** SEE ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

What do you need help with?

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☐ My Feelings    ☐ Schoolwork

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ My Choices

\_\_\_\_\_

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# written lesson plan

ASCA and  
CASEL aligned  
lesson plan

**SIZE OF PROBLEM**

**Objective(s):** Students will distinguish between four different problem sizes using a weather theme. Students will learn how to appropriately self-refer for counseling.

**ASCA Mindsets/Behaviors:** Demonstrate critical thinking skills to make informed decisions; Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem

**CASEL Domains:** Responsible Decision-Making; Self-Management

**Additional Materials Needed:** Whiteboards (optional)

**PLAN/PREP**

**Slideshow:** Review the suggested scripting and slides ahead of time.

**Practice Activity:** Print, copy, and cut Problem Solving cards along with gallery walk signs.

**SIZE OF PROBLEM LESSON**

Slides 1-2

- Ask students, "Are all problems equally as serious? Or are some bigger and some smaller?" (Give example of spilling milk on the floor vs. waking up to the house being flooded).
- Explain that one way to think about problems is to compare them to the weather. Ask students for the scariest/most serious weather situation (tornado) and write it on the board. Ask them to work backwards until you get to windy.

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**SIZE OF PROBLEM LESSON**

**Closing**

- Then students do a silent gallery walk to read the problems of each size/at each spot. Then gallery walk again, allowing students to move cards if they can find 2 other people that agree with them that it belongs in a different spot.
  - For groups where this would be too much movement, print multiple sets of the cards and have them sort in small groups using the four corner board.
  - For younger grades, you may use the PPT instead. For each problem slide, students will either use the hand gesture or draw the weather size on a personal white board.

**Practice**

- The end of the PPT has problem size "answer" slides. You can copy/paste these slides and drag these after problems throughout the slideshow if you want to incorporate answers.
  - For example: "Someone pushed you by accident" you would copy and move the "windy" slide and place it after slide 10
- Introduce students to the self-referral form for seeing the school counselor. Explain which types of problems they should refer themselves for vs. which to solve on their own vs. which to see the teacher about.
- Project the form, discuss the components. Show some non-examples and ask students to identify what's wrong with them (forgot name, didn't circle problem size, circled wrong problem size, etc.)

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Optional/  
suggested  
scripting to  
use

Outline  
breakdown  
with activity  
directions



Hi, I'm Sara! I create resources for elementary students, counselors, and teachers that improve social emotional learning and help students be their best selves. My focus is creating resources that are *effective* (using research-based best practices) and *engaging* (through collaborative learning and relevant scenarios) for all types of learners and populations.

## Education

B.A. from Michigan State University  
Psychology and Anthropology

M.S. from Vanderbilt University  
Community, Research, and Action

M.Ed. From Vanderbilt University  
Human Development Counseling:  
School Counseling & Mental Health

## Experience

I'm a former school counselor from a large southeastern school district with a wonderfully diverse group of students. I created and implemented a data-based comprehensive school counseling program while helping classroom teachers and administrators implement schoolwide SEL and restorative practices. Now, I share my ideas and resources to reach students and help educators across the world!



the **RESPONSIVE**  
**counselor**

Let's Connect:

