Welcome!

Up We Go! is about helping students just like you ease the transition to middle school. Leaving a familiar place like elementary school can be tough, but Up We Go! gives you tips and strategies that you need in order to deal with a number of common concerns middle schoolers like you face.

Begin by taking Survey A on the next page!
Before beginning "Up We Go!", please take Survey A. If you haven't, get started by clicking on the button below.

Survey A

You're almost there! When you've completed Survey A, take a quick pretest by clicking on the 'Pre-Test' button below!

Pre-Test

After you're done, you'll be taken to the About page where you'll learn more about the cast. Click on the 'Let's go!' button to begin.

Let's go!

When you've finished "Up We Go!", please take Survey B and the Post-Test.

Survey B
Post-Test
INTRODUCTION

Hector McKinley is a new student entering Stumptown Middle School.

Hector and his best friends, Richie, Jen, and Wes are enjoying their last year as 5th graders at Belltown Elementary School. As the school year ends comes to an end, Mr. Carson plans a field trip to Stumptown to get students like Hector and his pals ready for middle school.

On the day of the field trip, Hector and the class go through quite an experience. While at Stumptown, they take a tour of the school's campus and get to sit in on a 6th grade math class. What an experience!

After the field trip, they return to Mr. Carson's class where Hector and his friends have a number of concerns. Mr. Carson rambles on like he always does during his lectures. He tries his best to ease their concerns and ultimately tells the class, "You'll be fine!" The class collectively nods their heads in agreement but Hector isn't so sure.

Fast forward a few months and the school year finally ends. Graduation was a special event shared by Hector, his parents, and his closest family and friends.

Hector and his gang of friends have an awesome summer vacation. Family trips, sleepovers, and laziness fill their last few months of freedom. As summer is coming to an end, the group feels anxious about the upcoming school year at Stumptown Middle School.
Hector McKinley

Hector is a 11 year old who absolutely loves action sports like BMX and skateboarding. If he isn't in school, he's usually practicing tricks at the local skate park. Hector looks forward to middle school but is worried he may be bullied because he's shorter than his peers. Always described as a “good-guy” by his closest friends, Hector always has their back by being supportive and loyal. He doesn't have much interest in school because he finds it boring, so he often daydreams of when he'll land his next big trick.

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Jen Martinez

Jen is also an 11 year old middle school student at Stumptown Middle School. Her family recently moved to town and transferred schools at the end of last year. Jen is often described as shy and quiet and became friends with the group before the start of summer. She’s unsure of where she stands with the group as Hector, Richie, and Wes have been friends since kindergarten. Jen didn’t have many friends at her old school and was picked on for being overweight. At this new school, Jen is worried what others will think of her. She isn’t happy with her looks and appearance and wishes she was more model-like, like her older sister Becky.
Richie is an 11 year old multi-sport superstar in the making! His parents and coaches are tough on him to get good grades and excel on the playing field. Richie really looks up to his older brother Mikey, an 8th grade honor roll student and captain of the basketball team at Stumptown Middle. His parents constantly compare Richie to Mikey. Feeling this pressure, Richie doesn't want to disappoint them so he works tirelessly hitting the books and practicing basketball and football. At the end of the day, Richie feels exhausted and is worried that he won’t be able to please everyone, including himself. He likes his current group of friends like his best friend Hector but he's worried that they aren’t popular enough.
Wes Chang is the definition of cool according to his pals. Always looking sharp and stylish, he really tries to be up to date with the latest and greatest fashions. Wes’ parents are currently going through a divorce and it’s been tough on him and his younger siblings. Ever since his parents split, Wes has to watch over his siblings while his mom heads to work at her second job. He’s beginning to feel stress because he doesn’t know how to handle these new pressures. Wes has struggled in school lately with his grades being less than stellar. At the beginning of summer, he began hanging out with a crowd that doesn’t have the best reputation. Wes knows that some of them experiment with drugs and alcohol. So far, he hasn’t tried them but he feels the pressure to do so.
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Survey
Scenario 1:
Help, I'm Lost! Part 1

Hector can't believe how fast summer flew by! Gone are the days of waking up at noon, watching cartoons, and just hanging out with his best friends. With a sigh, Hector readies himself for the day and gets dressed. He throws on his brand new t-shirt, a pair of jeans, and his squeaky clean tennis shoes.

Hector locks up his bike on the nearest rack in front of the school. He peers at his watch and sees that he only has a few minutes before the start of the school day. Hector pulls out his class schedule and sees his homeroom is in J-Building. Where is that? He looks to see if there is anyone around to ask for directions. Seeing no familiar or friendly faces, he climbs up the school's steps and opens the door.

On the other side of the door, the hallway is filled with students. Being sure to not get in anyone's way, Hector does his best to steer clear of the large groups of students hanging out near the lockers. Brrring! Hector remembers the bell schedule from the field trip last year. Students slam locker doors and dart off in different directions heading to homeroom. Looking down he sees the hands of his watch inch closer to the tardy bell. He walks halfway down the hall and doesn't know where to go.
Hector's Stress

Hector opens the front door and is greeted by his mom, Mrs. McKinley. She is standing near the table getting dinner ready. "How was school?" she asks.

Hector drops his bag and opens the refrigerator and searches for an afternoon snack. "It was okay. You know mom, same as every other day. The teacher stands at the front of the classroom and goes on and on. I sit there and try to listen." Hector grabs his snack and heads to the living room.

"Just a minute. Before you go running off I want to talk to you about your grades." On her laptop, she pulls up the results from Hector's science quiz he took earlier this week. "I saw that you got the scores from your quiz back. Can you explain what happened here?

Hector can sense that he's in for a lengthy lecture about his potential and how he should care more about school. "I didn't know we had a test that day so I wasn't prepared."

"Did you write it down somewhere to remind you?" Mrs. McKinley asks.

"No. I thought I would remember it but I didn't." he says. Hector feels a bit silly about the whole thing now. With a sign and a disappointed look, Mrs. McKinley continues preparing dinner.
Scenario 1: Help, I'm Lost! Part 2

Tips for when you can't find your way

Worried you'll get lost like Hector? Most middle schools have an orientation day for students who will be attending in the new year. This is an opportunity to tour the school and get information about what it will be like to go there. Often times, only students in your current grade level will be there. This will help you get more familiar with your surroundings without having to navigate through crowds of students.

Still feeling worried? Talk to older friends who go to school there. Since they have experience and know the lay of the land, it would be helpful to ask them if you need any help once you get there.

Once at school and you still are lost, look for adults on campus to point you in the right direction. Teachers, counselors, and other faculty are positioned around to supervise and help students just like you. Be sure to thank them for their help!
Scenario 1:
Help, I'm Lost! Part 3

Before clicking, circle your answer on the Answer Sheet

Hector is lost and doesn’t want to be late to homeroom. What can Hector do?

A  Ask an adult for directions

B  Open his planner and look for a campus map

C  Slump down on the nearest chair in pity

D  Stand there until somebody helps him
Correct!

You selected A.

Looking around, Hector spots a nearby school staff member. Mr. Munoz, a counselor, sees Hector with a confused look and points him in the right direction.

At a new campus, students can get lost at times. Look for teachers and other staff members to ask for directions.
Correct!

You selected B.

Hector recalls a map of the campus somewhere in his planner. He flips open the planner and finds G-building. Looking up, he turns down the hall and is on his way.

Middle school's often provide students with a planner. Inside this planner will be useful information like a campus map, phone numbers, and reference material.
Try Again!

You selected C.

Frustrated, Hector slumps down on a bench. With his head in his hands, he hears the final bell ring. Being tardy to class in middle school isn't what Hector imagined to happen on his first day.

Feeling sad for yourself? Let's try again and get Hector to class ASAP!
Nope!

You selected D.

Being lost, Hector decides to stand there and wait for someone to approach him. He sees students zip off in multiple directions. Moments later, the hall is cleared and he's standing there alone.

Staying still and standing there isn't going to get him into class any faster. Go back and try again!
Scenario 2:
The Way We Look Part 1

Hector looks at himself one last time in the mirror before heading out. He isn't too happy with his appearance. He stares a little closer and sees the little bumps forming on his skin. What was it called? Oh right, acne. Mr. Carson taught them about pimples and other changes that kids just like Hector would experience.

Hector is a shorter than most kids in 6th grade, especially his friend Richie, who is destined to be the next basketball and football star for the local high school. Hector's hair isn't any better. He tries to comb the curly brown mess one way but it never cooperates. Thinking he doesn't want to stand out during the first day, he grabs an old baseball cap and adjusts it on his head. With a sigh, he straightens his glasses and heads out the door.

After a boring first half of school, Hector meets his crew in the cafeteria for lunch. They all agree that lunches here at Stumptown Middle are much better than back in elementary school. Hector feels his stomach growl. He hasn't eaten since this morning. The usual breakfast meal of Super Sugar Cereal and a slab of bacon seemed like centuries ago. Surveying the lunch line, he sees that he has a number of options to choose from. Feeling famished, he grabs two slices of pizza, a side of onion rings, and a large soda. He pays the cashier and catches up with his friends on their usual table.

While at the table, the group of friends talk about their day. Richie mentions his basketball practice after school.

"Basketball practices I hear are gruelling in middle school! Coach plans for us to do endless drills and sprints. I want to make the team so I need to have my energy to last the entire time. Eating well and getting proper rest is going to be crucial for me." says Richie as he scarfs down his turkey sandwich on wheat bread. "Hey Hector, what did you grab for lunch?"

Hector looks down at his lunch. Slices of pizza, a side of onion rings, and a large soda probably wasn't the best lunch option since he's been concerned with his looks. Looking at what Richie's eating makes him feel bad about himself. He would love to make the basketball team this year but Hector already knows he's too short and unathletic.

Jen chimes in, "You guys are crazy! I'm sure coach will pick both of you to make the team. It's not fair that you can eat whatever you want and not gain a single pound." She looks down at her meal of carrot sticks and water. Jen feels bad because after dinner last night, she devoured a mountain of junk food hidden in her sock drawer. "The moment I even look at food, I gain 10 pounds. I wish I was looked like my older sister Becky. My mom says that I got my dumpy figure from my dad's side of the family. " Disappointed, she packs up the remainder of her lunch and dumps it in the trash.
Scenario 2: The Way We Look Part 2

Tips for feeling better about your body

It’s common for kids your age to have thoughts and concerns about their appearance. Some wish they had a different hair color, taller, thinner, or even stronger. Thoughts like these are natural and a part of growing up.

Youth should know that bodies and their appearance are different for everyone. There is no perfect body size or shape. So many things can determine an individual’s body size. Genetics (traits passed on to you by your parents) and diet can play a factor in your body shape. As you mature, your body will go through puberty. Puberty during adolescence is a stage when an you will go through physical changes. It’s important to know that everyone will go through the stages of puberty at different times.

You can feel better about your body by being active regularly and eating healthy foods. Maintaining a lifestyle that is active doesn’t mean you have to sign up at your local gym. It can be anything that moves your body like swimming, playing sports, or even helping out in the yard. Picking healthier food options also improves how you feel about your body.

If you feel concerned about your appearance, speak to a parent. Together you might decide to seek the help of a doctor. There they can assist you with suggestions to keep you healthier. It’s important to understand that your feelings about your body begins and ends with you. Whether you accept the way you look or choose to make healthy plans to change it, your attitude will determine how you feel about yourself.
Scenario 2:
The Way We Look Part 3

Before clicking, circle your answer on the Answer Sheet

What can Jen do to feel better about her appearance?

A. Begin exercising and eating healthy
B. Change her attitude
C. Stop eating completely
D. Slump down on a chair in pity

What can Hector do to feel better about his appearance?

A. Continue with his same eating habits
B. Speak to his mom and dad about his feelings
C. Choose healthier food options
D. Severely restrict the foods he eats to just orange slices and diet soda

Next Scenario
Incorrect!

You selected A.

Though Hector cares about his appearance, he chooses to do nothing and continue on with his same eating habits.

Making these decisions about diet may lead to weight gain and decreased athletic performance. Hector doesn't feel tired now when he rides his BMX bike but if his eating habits continue he may be unable to have the same endurance and ability he had in the past.
Correct!

You selected B.

Hector decides to speak to his mom and dad, Mr. & Mrs. McKinley about his concerns with his weight and skin.

After their conversation, the family decides to bring Hector to see a skin doctor, or a dermatologist, to talk about the acne he's developing on his face. After speaking with the doctor, they come up with a plan for Hector to wash his face regularly with a special soap 3 times a day.

Mr. & Mrs. McKinley decides the entire family should be eating healthier, so they research healthy recipe and snacks for them to enjoy!
Correct!

You selected C.

Frustrated and no longer happy with his food options, Hector is determined to choose healthier foods during his meals and snacks.

The next day he says goodbye to the pepperoni pizza and decides to choose the lean turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread. He mulls over the french fries but passes it up and grabs an apple and orange slices. Looking to wash down his meal, he skips the long line at the soda machines and instead fills his water bottle at the fountain.
Try Again!

You selected D.

Choosing to only eat orange slices and diet soda is an unhealthy way for Hector to manage his weight. As he is still growing, it's important that Hector choose healthier options that include a combination of food choices.
Correct!

You selected A.

Jen decides to make some changes with her diet and exercise habits. She does some research and finds a great website to get her started on a healthier lifestyle. With a balanced meal plan and a new interest in hiking, Jen is surely taking the right path concerning her health.

Making gradual progress to improve your health should include choosing healthier food choices and limiting the amount of junk food you consume. Finding an activity you enjoy like biking or swimming is a fun way to incorporate exercise as part of your healthier lifestyle.

Now go back and help out Hector with the next question.
Correct!

You selected B.

Jen realizes that her attitude is affecting the way she views her body. With the encouragement of her friends she decides to speak to the school counselor, Ms. Thomas about how she feels about the changes occurring with her body. After meeting with Ms. Thomas a number of times, she suggests Jen continue to improve her self-esteem by complimenting herself and focusing on the things her body can do. With a renewed spirit and improving body image, Jen decides to take small steps to improve her health.

Speaking to a trusted adult, like your parents or school counselor can help begin the process of accepting your body. Having a healthy body image of yourself is vital because feeling good about yourself can affect your mental health and how you behave.

Now go back and help out Hector with the next question.
Try again!

You selected C.

Jen believes that the best way to lost weight is to stop eating completely.

Deciding to starve yourself may result in a few pounds being lost but can possibly lead to severe health problems in the long run. Failing to eat doesn’t give your body the nutrients it needs to function properly. It may also lead to serious eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia. Finding a balance of eating and exercise can be tough, but your friends and family are great pillars of support that can help you.
Try again!

You selected D.

Slumping down and just pitying herself will not lead to the changes that Jen wants. With encouragement and support from those closest to her, Jen can work towards making progress for a healthier and better version of herself.
Scenario 3:
Ahh! Stress! Part 1

This next scenario deals with the academic stress that Hector and his friends deal with in middle school.

Click on the buttons to the right to find out about the stressors in each character’s life.

- Hector’s Stress
- Jen’s Stress
- Richie’s Stress
Richie's Stress

“My parents are going to kill me! I got an 88 on that history test,” Richie says as he slams his books into the locker.

“Are you serious man? Are you really complaining about getting an 88? That’s a B!” Wes looks with large bug eyes at his friend. “I got a 75 and I’m so excited!”

“Believe me, I’d be thrilled with my score but my parents won’t be. I can hear my dad right now. He’ll tell me, “Richie, an 88? That is unacceptable. Do you see your older brother Mikey bringing home grades like this? You’re a Stevens, so your mother and I expect more!”

“Gosh man, that’s rough. They know that your score is still passing right? My mom would be thrilled if I brought home grades like that. My dad on the other hand doesn’t really care.” Wes shares.

“You don’t get it Wes! They won’t see that at all. My parents are from another planet when it comes to school, grades, and sports. Sometimes I really just want a break, to take a vacation. School and sports. That’s all I do!” Richie slams his locker door shut in frustration and storms off down the hallway.
Scenario 3: Ahh! Stress! Part 2

Tips for dealing with academic stress

If you’re worried about schoolwork heading to middle school, you’re not alone. In a recent survey by kidshealth.org, over 32% of kids in your position feel the same way. Follow these pointers to head into the new school year on the right path.

Organization - Staying organized in middle school can be a breeze if you plan ahead. Most schools provide their students with a planner. More than just a place where homework is written, you can use it to keep track of important deadlines and assignment due dates. Tests and projects won’t catch you off guard if these things are found in your planner.

Time Management - Many middle schools offer extracurricular activities like band, sports, and clubs. Adding that on top of a day’s worth of classes and assignments can increase your school stress. How do you juggle both? Time management! One helpful tip to better manage your time to set deadlines. Using your planner, set up your calendar by writing down important due dates alongside non-academic events like band practice and soccer games.

School, family, friends, sleep, etc. With so many things stuffed into a single day, you’ll realize that there is never enough time for everything. Putting these into categories of have-to’s and want-to’s will help you prioritize, or realize what’s important. You HAVE to take time for family responsibilities, school, and sleep. These are the responsibilities that just need to get done. Once the have-to’s are under control, you spend the rest of your day with want-to’s like playing video games, searching for new music, or watching your favorite tv shows.

Writing due dates and events in a school planner helps students with organization in middle school.
Scenario 3: Ahh! Stress! Part 3

Before clicking, circle your answer on the Answer Sheet

What would you recommend for Jen to do to help with her academic stress of staying up late to finish her homework?

A  Wait until the late evening to start her homework

B  Complete her assignments before hanging out with friends, as finishing homework is a “have-to”

C  Quit the swim team

D  Start her homework earlier in the afternoon

Jen needs your help, what should she do?
Try again!

You selected A.

Continuing to wait until the late evening to finish her homework doesn't help Jen lessen the stress she feels.

How can we reduce the amount of stress she feels? What can Jen do so she can get a better night's rest?
Correct!

You selected B.

Jen knows it’s important to get enough sleep so she has energy to tackle her busy day ahead. She decides that she’ll hold off on hanging out with her friends until she has more free time.

Knowing she has a new plan to get her "have-to's" done, she quickly drifts off to sleep.
Nope, try again!

You selected C.

Jen thinks about quitting the swim team to make time for homework. She really enjoys swimming and thinks there must be a better option. If she can't handle juggling swimming along with her schoolwork, she knows that her time in the pool will be cut short.

Go back and think of another option Jen can take to relieve her academic stress.
Correct!

You selected D.

Great choice! Starting her work once she got home from school gave her time to start her homework before leaving for swim practice.

After returning from practice later that evening, Jen ate dinner and spent the rest of the time reviewing her assignments before falling asleep at a decent time!
Hector looks up at the clock as it circles the last few minutes before school ends. “Come on, come on, why are you so cruel Father Time?” He stares out towards the window as his teacher continues to drone on about the fall of the Roman Empire. He thinks to himself, “I can’t wait until this bell rings. Richie and I are going to head over to Galactic Comics right after school. The new Toxic City Three comic books just came out. We’ve been waiting for this day since the release date was announced last year!”

The final bell of the day rings and Hector’s already out through the door. He dodges past students, zig-zagging through the crowds. He gets to the bike racks in record time and looks around for Richie. He’s joined shortly by the rest of the crew. “Have you guys seen Richie?”

“No, I thought we would have been here by now. Aren’t you two dweebs heading to Galactic Comics to pick up the latest nerd story?” Jen laughs.

“Rude. I’ll ignore that comment” Hector says. He glances down at his watch and sees that 5 minutes have passed. “I thought we would’ve beat me getting here.” Hector glances over and sees that Richie’s bike is still chained to the rack. “He hasn’t left yet, he probably got stuck in class.”

“There he is. Look who else is here.” Wes says as he points out Richie walking alongside the rest of the basketball team.

“Richie! Hey man, hurry up! We have to head over to Galactic before they sell out!” Hector urgently yells. “If we leave now, I’m sure we’ll have a good place in line.”

The team stops and looks over at Richie. Nervously, he walks up to Hector, Jen, and Wes. “Yeah... look. I’m not going to go to the comic book store today.” Richie says flatly.

“What do you mean?” Hector asks.

“No, that stuff is for babies. Come on now, you can’t expect us to be in 6th grade still reading comic books can you?” Richie sarcastically says. The rest of the basketball team behind him snicker.

Hector gives him a confused look and says, “You’re joking right? Stop messing around Richie, we’ve been waiting for this day an entire year.”

“I’m serious Hector. I’m not a little kid anymore and besides, the team and I are going to head over to Stumptown Mall.”

Hector begins to feel the heat rise in his face. “When did you decide this? How come you didn’t tell me? Anyway, Galactic comics is on the way to the mall. We can go before then.”

“I don’t think you heard me clearly. I said the basketball team,” as Richie points to himself and gestures towards the people behind him “and I are going to the mall.”

Jen steps forward. “Okay, we get it. Come on Hector, Wes. Richie doesn’t want us around. Let’s get outta here.” Jen says. The basketball team starts to walk towards the streets.

“No, no.” Hector waves off. “Richie, come on man!”

But Richie and the rest of the team are already on their way. Hector looks at his friend and disbelief. “What just happened? He ditched me for them? Richie was the one who liked The Toxic Three first! Just because he’s the new star on the basketball team, it doesn’t mean he leaves the rest of us behind.”

“You had to know this day would come Hector. Seems like when he’s around his brother and the rest of them, we are completely forgotten,” Wes chimes in. “Jen and I will go with you to the comic store. What do you say man?”

Dejected, angry, and confused Hector begins to climb on his bike. “Nah guys, I’m going to head home instead. I’ll see you guys tomorrow.” Hector hangs his head as he pedals away.
Scenario 4: Are We Friends? Part 2

Tips for dealing with friendships

During this time of mass changes, your social relationships with friends may see changes too. You may learn that a number of your closest friends in elementary school will be attending a different middle school next year. Though it's okay to feel down and discouraged about this, students like you should know that middle school is a great time to make new connections and meet new friends.

Students just like you have opportunities to make new friends in middle school. Middle schools are filled with students from various neighboring elementary schools so you'll definitely have a chance to meet a lot of new people. Joining interest clubs or after school activities can be a fun way to introduce yourself to new friends. If you have tried making attempts at friends and still feel lonely, it'll help to talk to a parent or school counselor about this.

People grow and change, just like you. You may get into disagreements with your friends. It's important to remember that disagreements and changes may mean that some friends are only for a certain period of time in your life. Having friends who are honest and sincere is something we can all agree upon.

Things are changing between this group of friends. Can you help keep the group together?
Scenario 4: Are We Friends? Part 3

Before clicking, circle your answer on the Answer Sheet

What can Hector do to deal with Richie’s friendship?

A. Ignore Richie forever

B. Tell others the secrets Richie shared with him

C. Confront Richie angrily

D. Find a time to talk to Richie calmly

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Incorrect!

You selected A.

Choosing to ignore Richie forever would seem hasty. Hector and Richie have been best buddies since they were youngsters in elementary school so acting so quickly to end their friendship is something that he doesn't want to do just yet.

Let's go back and think of an alternative to helping mend their friendship.
Try again!

You selected B.

Betraying someone who trusted you with sensitive information is low. Telling others secrets about a close friend could damage the two boys’ friendship forever.

What else can Hector do?
Try again!

You selected C.

Hector is steaming mad at Richie for ditching him that afternoon. If he chooses to confront Richie angrily, he doesn't know what words will come out of his mouth. Hector's sure it won't be anything nice.

It's better to let calmer heads prevail, so let's go back and figure out what to do.
Correct!

You selected D.

Hector decides that letting himself calm down before speaking to Richie is a good idea. Hector takes a few days to cool off after the blowup and asks Richie to talk.

The two boys have a conversation about their feelings. Richie apologizes for ditching Hector last minute but explains to him that some of his time will also be spent with his basketball teammates. Hector feels a bit sad but understands.

Friendships between friends won't always be perfect. During the course of your next few years, you'll lose and gain friendships. Being sure to communicate openly with one another can help friendships along the way.
Scenario 5: Feeling The Pressure Part 1

“It’s over!” Mr. Chang screams as he slams the front door and walks away. Wes is hiding in the hallway but peeks over and sees his mother is left crying standing alone in the living room. Why did he leave? Where did my dad go?

“Wesley Chang, please focus your attention to the assignment in front of you.” Mrs. Irvin says.

“Sorry.” Wes mumbles and attempts to get started. The last time he saw his father during his parents argument has been playing in his head constantly. Even though it’s been almost a year since his parents split up, it still feels like it was yesterday. He remembers the ugliness in his father’s voice that night and how his mother pleaded for him to stay. Wes can’t remember what they fought about or when things got so bad in his family. Was it something that he did? How did he not see this coming sooner?

After class, Wes heads over to meet up with Richie, Jen, and Hector at the Quad, an area where most of the students at Stumptown Middle School hang out in between classes. Looking around, he sees a group of 8th grade students hanging out in the stairwell. He knows a few of those boys since they all grew up in the same neighborhood. They don’t have the best reputation in the school since they’re known to get into fights and have been suspended as a result.

“Hey Wes! Come over here for a minute,” an 8th grader by the name of Victor calls out.

Wes hesitates for a moment. “Me?” as he points to himself.

“Yeah man, get over here.” Victor says.

As Wes walks over he notices just how many of these 8th grade boys there are hanging out in the stairwell. Looking up at them, he clutches his backpack and feels beads of sweat form at his forehead.

“6th grade! Look at you man, you and me back in the same school like old times.” Victor lives near Wes and the two were closer friends when Wes’ family first moved to the area. As they grew older, Mrs. Chang warned Wes to stay away from Victor as he was getting into more trouble at school and in the community. Being one to always listen to his mother, Wes did and the two of them went their separate paths.

“Listen up, my boys and I are going to get out of here and head to Plumlee Park. You in?” Victor says as he wraps his arm around Wes’ shoulders.

“Oh, I don’t know Victor. What are you guys going to do? Don’t you have class after recess too?” Wes nervously asks.

“You know, just hang out. What’s up with all these questions? Are you scared your Mom is going to be mad at you for missing just one class? Some of the 8th grade boys begin to snicker.
Beginning to feel embarrassed, Wes improves his posture. No way he’s going to be called out for being a wuss in front of these 8th graders. “No Vic, I’m not worried about anything. Let’s go!”

“That’s more like it!” Victor says as he shakes Wes’ hand.

“Alright, we’re going to wait until the bell rings and then jump the fence near the back of the school. You’re going to go with Tyler and I to the corner store to grab something for all of us.”

Wes and the group of 8th grade boys jump the fence shortly after the bell rings. Walking over to Lambert’s, Tyler tells them to stay outside. Moments later he returns telling the boys to hurry and get to Plumlee Park.

“Why did we run here? What are we in a rush for?” Wes asks as he tries to catch his breath.

Tyler pulls out a 6 large brown bottles. By the looks of it, Wes knows that the bottle in Tyler’s hand isn’t root beer. “This is why we were in a rush to get out of that store! Drink up boys!”

Victor and Tyler pass the bottles around to the other 3 boys, Marco, Felix, and Jermaine. Marco and Felix crack them open and take a long sip. Victor begins to offer a box of cigarettes and lighter for everyone.

Wes takes a moment and looks at the cigarette and bottle in his hand. He notices that Jermaine is a bit hesitant in this situation too. The two boys make eye contact and seem to make an agreement that they don’t feel entirely comfortable with everything going on.

“You going to do this Wes? Stop thinking about what Mommy and Daddy would say and just drink up or light up. Better yet, do both!” Victor says.

Wes tries to ignore Victor’s comment about his parents. He wouldn’t have left school if his parents didn’t get divorced. He would be happy. An hour ago he was in history class listening to Mrs. Irvin drone on about Socrates and Ancient Greece. Wes thinks to himself, “How did I end up here?”

What should Wes do in this situation?
Scenario 5: Feeling The Pressure Part 2

Tips for dealing with pressure

Moving into middle school students like you will be faced with challenging situations, forcing you to make difficult decisions. These decisions are even tougher when you have friends involved too. When these people try to persuade you to act a certain way or do something, this is known as peer pressure. Read on for tips to deal with peer pressure.

Feeling like you want to fit in with others is natural, whether it’s how people dress or the music they listen to, wanting to be like others is normal. But when it comes to others pressuring you into something you’re not comfortable with, be assertive and confident in yourself. It might be difficult for sticking up for what you believe in but doing what you believe is right shows great character. Character is how you act and how you behave. Character defines who you are as a person.

Before being pressured by drugs or other risky situations, think about the peers you surround yourself with. You’ve heard parents and teachers say to “choose your friends wisely” and this is why. Being surrounded with friends who also have great character will limit the likelihood of having to make difficult choices when you’re faced with these situations. Believe in yourself and make the smart choice!
Scenario 5: Feeling The Pressure Part 3

Before clicking, circle your answer on the Answer Sheet

What can Wes do in his current situation?

A: Join in with the boys and use the alcohol and cigarettes

B: Please Victor and decide to only drink the alcohol

C: Walk away from the situation with Jermaine joining him as well

D: Please Victor and decide to only smoke the cigarette
Try again!

You selected A.

Choosing to participate with the rest of the boys in drinking the alcohol and smoking cigarettes is clearly a bad choice.

Go back and make it right!
Nope, try again!

You selected B.

Doing one of them compared to all of them isn't bad, right? Wrong!

Wes really needs your help. Let's make the best choice for him and try again.
Correct!

You selected C.

Wes looks at the rest of the boys and meets eyes with Jermaine. The two boys nod to each other in agreement.

"I'll pass. I'm going to head back to school. I've got a test that I missed and hopefully I can convince my teacher to let me take it. You wanna come along Jermaine?"

The two boys walk past Victor and the rest of the group and head back towards school.

"Hey Wes, thanks for having the guts to say no. If you weren't here, I'm not what I would've done."

"Yeah, no problem man. We've got to stick together right?"
Try again!

You selected D.

Doing one of them compared to all of them isn't bad, right? Wrong!

Wes really needs your help. Let's make the best choice for him and try again.
Congratulations!

You've successfully navigated Hector and his friends through their first week of school. With your help, these four friends have addressed the problems middle school students like yourself are concerned with.

Now that you've finished, please take a short survey to share your experience with Up We Go! Also take the Post-Test to see what you've learned.
Survey A

Instructions: Your answers will help determine if the module you're about to participate in meets the learning goals. Your responses will be confidential.

Please answer every question.

* Required

What is your student number? *


What is your age? (R) *

- 10 years old
- 11 years old
- 12 years old

How concerned are you with moving from elementary to intermediate/middle school? (A) *


not at all concerned extremely concerned

Do you know how you can make it easier to go from 6th grade to 7th grade? (A) *

If yes, list up to three:


Do you feel confident using websites and links? (C) *


not confident very confident
Do you think it would be helpful if there was a website that shared tips about moving to middle school? (R) *

1 2 3 4 5

not helpful ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ definitely helpful

Would you tell your friend about a website that shares tips on the move to intermediate and middle school? (R) *
Do you think you would tell a friend about a website that shares tips and strategies for moving on to intermediate/middle school?

1 2 3 4 5

no ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ definitely

Do you think a website with text and pictures about moving to middle school would help students like you? (A) *

1 2 3 4 5

not at all helpful ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ extremely helpful

Have you asked friends and family about transitioning to intermediate/middle school? (R) *
Has anyone spoke to you about going on to intermediate/middle school? Did they give you any advice or share stories?

○ Yes
○ No

Do you want to learn more about transitioning from elementary to intermediate/middle school? (S) *

1 2 3 4 5

no ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ definitely

Submit

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Survey B

Instructions: Thank you for completing the "Up We Go!" instructional module. Your responses will help me make changes to make it a more effective tool for helping students with the transition from elementary to intermediate/middle school. Your answers will be confidential.

Please answer every question.

* Required

What is your student number? *

What is your age? *

○ 10 years old
○ 11 years old
○ 12 years old

How concerned are you with moving from elementary to intermediate/middle school? (A) *

1 2 3 4 5

not at all concerned ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ extremely concerned

After "Up We Go!", do you know of any strategies that ease the move from elementary to middle school? (A) *

If yes, list up to three:

Do you feel confident using websites and links? (C) *

1 2 3 4 5

not confident ○ ○ ○ ○ very confident
Please check which areas of the module you remember visiting: *

- Scenario 1: First Day of School
- Scenario 2: The Way We Look
- Scenario 3: Are We Friends?
- Scenario 4: Feeling the Pressure
- Scenario 5: School Stresses Me Out
- About the Cast
- Surveys
- Contact

List the areas of the module that you like the best; if none, write "none": *

Which pages in the "Up We Go!" module did you like best?

List any area or page that you found confusing or difficult to use and why: *

Please make any comments that you think would help improve the website such as design or content changes, additions, or deletions: *

What can Mr. De Vega do to improve "Up We Go!"? What would you like to see more or less of?

Submit

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Up We Go! Pre-Test

Instructions: Take this pre-test before beginning the instructional module. Though some answers may seem correct - please choose what you think is the best answer.

* Required

What is your student number? *

Shane is lost and doesn’t want to be late to gym class. What would you advise Shane to do? *

- Ask a nearby teacher or staff member for help
- Look around the campus
- Have a seat on the nearest bench and wait for someone to help you
- Stay where you are and wait

Malia looks into the mirror and notices bumps appearing on her cheeks, chin, and forehead. She’s not to sure what course of action she should take next. What can Malia do? *

- Ignore the bumps on her skin
- Speak to her mom about this concern
- Cover her skin with make up
- Wear oversized hats and scarves that cover her face

Damian has gained some weight and notices that his clothing doesn’t quite fit anymore. Looking to wear his winter gear, he can’t zip up his jacket to the top and the button on his snow pants doesn’t close. How can Damian help solve the problem with his weight gain? *

- Buy new clothes
- Accept yourself the way you are
- Speak to a medical professional about developing healthy habits like exercise
- Start an extreme diet plan where he only eats oranges and drinks water everyday

Courtney continues to miss out on turning in her assignments on time. When she leaves class that day it’s in her head but after a long day of school and dance practice, she forgets what was due the next day. What can Courtney do to help this situation? *

- She can write down her class assignments in a designated tablet before leaving class everyday
- Bet on her memory getting better in order to remember her assignments
- Call her classmates every evening to ask for the nightly assignments
- Find out the assignment the next morning and get it done before class begins
Winnie and Valerie have been best friends since elementary school. Entering middle school, both girls tried out for the varsity volleyball team but only Valerie was chosen. Winnie has to start the year on the junior varsity team. With Valerie being on a team with older girls, she ignores her longtime friends like Winnie. Winnie is feeling hurt and upset about her friendship. What would you advise Winnie to do in this situation? *

- Start a vicious rumor about Val and hope that the older girls lose interest in being friends
- Find a time to speak with Val calmly
- Confront Valerie angrily
- Quit the junior varsity volleyball team

Chester’s mother recently passed away after a lengthy illness. He is going through a tough time dealing with it. This problem is affecting his friendships, his life at home, and his efforts in school. He doesn’t feel any motivation to do anything and thinks about turning to drugs and alcohol to remedy his problem. What would you advise Chester to do in this situation? *

- Choose to experiment with alcohol and drugs
- Speak to a counselor at school about his situation
- Do nothing; he will get better eventually.
- Isolate himself further from friends and family

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Up We Go! Post-Test

Instructions: Now that you’ve completed the instructional module, let’s use the information you’ve learned.

* Required

What is your student number? *

-Theodore’s new to Franklin Middle School. His first class of the day is at the music room but he doesn’t know where it is. What can Theodore to find his class before he’s late? *

☐ Ask a student nearby
☐ Walk around the campus until he finds his class
☐ Wait until the tardy bell rings and have someone approach him
☐ Ask a teacher nearby

-Sherman has always been able to eat large amounts of food and never gain weight when he was in elementary school. Now in middle school, he is concerned about his appearance and thinks about severely limiting the amount of food he eats to only a handful of grapes and diet soda. What alternatives can Sherman decide upon? *

☐ Continue on with his choice of only eating grapes and diet soda
☐ Use the nutrition lessons from his Health class to plan his meals
☐ Speak to his dad about his weight concerns
☐ Wear oversized clothing to hide his weight gain

-Sally has been having trouble seeing the whiteboard at school. Every time she looks at what’s written on the board from her seat, the words look fuzzy. Sally is worried her peers will make fun of her if she gets glasses. What should Sally do? *

☐ Do nothing because glasses are not fashionable
☐ See a doctor about her sight concerns
☐ Copy off her peers sitting next to her
☐ Squint harder so she can see better
Kam feels flustered with his performance and grades in all of his classes. Last year in elementary school, he did really well in school. But this year, with so many other classes and teachers, he’s struggling to keep up with the amount of work and he’s worried. It seems like there’s an assignment or project due everyday. What option can Kam take to improve his performance in the classroom? *

- Ask his teachers during what’s due the next day
- Write down important due dates in his school planner
- Text his friends after school to ask what’s for homework
- Do nothing and hope he figures out how to juggle all of his classes eventually

Lawrence and Gerald have been friends since elementary school. Lawrence’s family decided to send him to a private school while Gerald went to the local middle school with the rest of their classmates. Now that Lawrence is alone on a new campus, he doesn’t know how to make friends. What can Lawrence do to make friends at his new school? *

- Join clubs he has an interest in
- Sit alone and hope that someone approaches him
- Beg his parents to send him to Thomas Middle School with his old friends
- Be friendly and start conversations with group mates in class

Charlie’s family life has been tough the past year. His father was laid off last year from his job and hasn’t been able to find work since. As a result, his mom has had to go back to work. With these new changes, he Charlie notices his parents are always fighting about how money is tight. He sees that this constant fighting is negatively affecting his family. Charlie is looking to get away from the stress at home, what can he do? *

- Hang out with the rough crowd that seem to have no care in the world
- Talk to his close friends about these problems
- Blame his parents for ruining their family
- Run away from home

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