 Emotional awareness and self-regulation

Duration: 60 minutes

Purpose of the task

Emotional awareness is the ability to identify emotional experiences and self-regulation is about controlling the emotional response/actions to external events. Emotional awareness and self-regulations are two skills that contribute to resilience and are key in managing tough times. These skills allow a person to be comfortable with, and show their emotions (they don’t keep them inside) and express them according to the situation they are in, promoting their own and others’ wellbeing and moving forward through tough times.

Teacher Further Learning:

* [How self-control develops](http://bigthink.com/the-secrets-of-self-control/how-self-control-develops)
* [Don't! The secret of self-control](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/05/18/dont-2?printable=true)

Course outcomes

1.3 Build positive thinking, self-belief and a sense of empowerment to take action to promote meaningful futures for self and others.

7.3 Apply skills to take personal responsibility for their actions to protect and enhance the independence, health, safety and wellbeing of others.

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Recognise their own emotional responses to situations.
* Develop skills to experience emotions and self-regulate.

Required resources and materials for preparation

Student activities are set around:

* small group
* individual activities
* offline and online

Equipment required:

* 5x7 index cards (enough for one per student)
* 1 large pack of post-it-notes
* Emotions A-Z student worksheet
* List of emotions student worksheet
* Access to the internet and laptop/tablet/phone in order to view the [Ted Talk– Don’t eat the marshmallow!](https://www.ted.com/talks/joachim_de_posada_says_don_t_eat_the_marshmallow_yet)

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Mental health and wellbeing  Focus: Developing self-efficacy and mental fitness | Self-awareness and self-regulation   * emotional awareness and self-regulation * optimistic thinking * perspective taking * positive self-talk * holistic view of life |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Self-management   * using mind-sets for motivation and achievement, e.g. growth mind-set * responsibility for self and actions |

Teaching notes

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Learning experiences

Activity 1- what is emotional awareness?

Brainwriting

* Students use one small index card (5x7) each.
* Students are allocated 2 minutes to write down what they know about emotional awareness.
  + Invite students to place their card on the wall or designated space for display.
  + As a group, students explore the cards on display. Students use post it notes to vote for cards they agree with. Where students agree they put their post it notes on top of the card(s).
* As a whole class, discuss the top three response cards voted for.
* Provide students with a group definition.

How many emotions can you name?

* Using the Emotions A-Z student worksheet, students list as many emotions they can think of for each letter of the alphabet. After 1 minute, students’ pair up and share their lists.
* Invite students to share their ideas as whole group.
* Provide List of emotions student worksheet to all students.

Catch and tag

* Students choose 5 emotions from the List of emotions to display using their faces with a partner. Take turns in guessing what emotion they are expressing.
* Group discussion:
  + how do we use this skill in recognising emotions on peoples’ faces?
  + what can happen when we get it wrong?
  + what can happen when we get it correct?

Activity 2- Self-regulation?

What is self-regulation? (Self-control)

* Students write what they think self-regulation is and share with a partner.
* Discuss self-regulation as a group.
* Students write about a time where they didn’t use self-regulation.
* Students write about a time where they did use self-regulation.
* Encourage students to compare the two situations, what impacted on their ability to self-regulate and the outcomes of each situation.
* As a group, watch the Ted talk ‘[Joachim de Posada: Don’t eat the marshmallow](http://www.ted.com/talks/joachim_de_posada_says_don_t_eat_the_marshmallow_yet)!’
  + Students record three pieces of information they heard or saw during the clip.
  + As a group, discuss the clip.

Self-regulation in practice

* Students work in pairs — one ‘watcher’ and one ‘mover’.
  + Students place a small object in one hand, such as a scrunched up ball of paper.
  + The ‘watcher’ is to count in their head the amount of seconds that are passing by whilst watching or tracking the object and not moving their head.
  + The ‘mover’ holds the paper approximately 20cm in front of the watcher’s eyes and moves the object around in front of the watcher, very slowly (to not strain the watcher’s eyes) left to right, in a figure 8 etc.
  + As soon as the ‘watcher’ moves their head, swap roles (or when 1 minute has passed).
* The student who is able to continuously watch the object for the longest period of time without moving their head is the winner.
* After students have experienced both roles discuss in small groups:
  + who was able to use their self-regulation skills the longest?
  + what did using self-regulation feel like? Look like? Sound like?
  + what situations/places could the skill of self-regulation be used?
  + how could self-regulation be a useful skill for young people?
* Invite small groups to report back to whole group for discussion.

Emotions A-Z

Think of at least one emotion for each letter of the alphabet

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D |
| E | F | G | H |
| I | J | K | L |
| M | N | O | P |
| Q | R | S | T |
| U | V | W | X |
| Y | Z |  |  |

List of emotions

Use the list of emotions below to discuss with a partner your answers to the questions listed on the graffiti sheets.

