Curriculum links

WA HPE Curriculum

Sub-strand: Interacting with others

- Strategies to cope with adverse situations and the demands of other
- Strategies to identify and manage emotions before reacting

International technical guidance on sexuality education

Key concept 5.3 (9-12 years)

- Effective communication uses different modes and styles, and is important to expressing and understanding wishes, needs and personal boundaries

Materials

- Student Activity Sheet: *Things that make me go Grrr...* [one per student]
- Book: *How to take the Grrr out of Anger* (Elizabeth Verdick and Marjorie Lisovskis)
- Student Activity Sheet: *I know how to manage intense emotions*
- Optional: Feelings Wheel (for identifying and naming a range of emotions)

Before you get started

- The Year 4 activity: Responding to challenging situations should be completed before this activity to ensure students have an understanding of the concepts of optimistic thinking and positive self-talk.
- Ensure that students understand and consider internal and external body signals (in self and others) associated with a range of feelings.

Learning activities

Whole Class

Students will discuss different intensities associated with similar feelings and then consider coping strategies to deal with intense emotions, e.g. ways to calm the body; optimistic thinking; and problem-solving.

1. Split class into four equal groups. Display the following lists of emotions on the board or electronic display. Use the first set of emotions to demonstrate the task. You might wish to use other emotions from the Feelings Wheel during this activity.

   (1) furious, enraged, cross, irritated, angry, annoyed

   (2) unhappy, despairing, grief-stricken, sad, blue, a bit down

   (3) puzzled, confused, shocked, stunned, surprised

   (4) satisfied, happy, pleased, delighted, overjoyed, ecstatic

   (5) worried, nervous, stressed, overwhelmed, anxious

2. Ask for 6 volunteers to demonstrate each of the emotions in the first list (furious, enraged, etc.). Introduce the word and concept of 'intensity'. Ask student volunteers to act out various levels of intensity for their allocated emotion, then ask the class to order the 'emotional acts' from low to high intensity.
3. Allocate lists 2-5 to the four groups, check students' understanding of each of the listed emotions. In their groups, have students sort their group list of emotions from low intensity to high intensity. Ask:
   - *Which of the emotions were difficult to sort? Why?*
   - *Which of these emotions are pleasant and which ones are unpleasant?*
   - *Why do we have feelings?* (pleasant feelings tell us when something feels good and unpleasant feelings can tell us we need to look after ourselves and others, fix a problem, or notice that something not-so-good has happened)
   - *What are some possible bad effects of intense or strong feelings?* (feeling overwhelmed, may harm self or others, may do things we regret, may make bad decisions)
   - *Can we change how we are feeling? How?* (sometimes, but it may take a while. We can use positive self-talk or optimistic thinking to try to change the way we are thinking, which can change the way we feel about a situation)
   - *Why is it useful to feel anger?* (we may need to stand up for our rights or protect ourselves in some way)
   - *When is it not useful to feel anger?* (when it controls us so that we can't use optimistic thinking and we act in a way that we may regret)
   - *What other feelings can we sometimes be hiding when we feel angry?* (jealousy, sadness, guilt, fear)
   - *Why is it useful to feel sad?* (it is a useful way to grieve, it helps us move on, it lets us know what we value)
   - *Is it useful to feel a little bit of worry or nervousness before we take on a challenge like talking in front of the school?* (yes, a little bit keeps us motivated and makes us try hard. Too much makes it difficult to think properly and not worrying at all could make us feel overconfident)
   - *Why is it important to correctly name and recognise our feelings?* (this helps us to use the right emotion management tools, such as optimistic thinking and problem solving. For example, we may think we are furious when we are really just annoyed. The way we respond to each of these emotions may be different)
   - *Is there one best way to manage intense emotions?* (no, it depends on the circumstances. Usually, it helps if you can find a way to name the feeling, calm down or bring awareness to what's happening in your body; use optimistic thinking; and then find a way to solve the problem in a calm way)
4. Have students complete Student Activity Sheet: *Things that make me go Grrrr...* after reading through the anger example with the class.

- Students then choose one feeling and tick the methods of managing emotions that they already use and underline the methods that they could try in the future. Share these with a partner.

Independent or Small Group

Students explore the intense emotion of anger, and role-play ways to calm the body; use optimistic thinking; and find a way to solve a problem in a positive way when intense emotions are at play.

1. Conduct a circle talk on the following and share findings as a class:
   - *Share a time when you felt angry* (remember to not mention names).
   - *What do you think is the best thing people can say to themselves to calm down when they are angry?*
   - *What is one kind of exercise that you think would calm you down if you were feeling angry?*
   - *Can a person or a situation make you angry or are you responsible for your own anger?*
   - *Is it true that the best way to deal with anger is to just let your feelings out?*
   - *What are some bad results that might happen if you let anger get on top of you?*
   - *What are some helpful ways of handling angry feelings in a way that others don't get hurt but the problem gets sorted out?*
   - *Is sulking (refusing to talk to someone because you feel angry) a helpful way to deal with feeling angry? Why/why not?*
   - *What might happen if you sulk instead of speak up in a calm and honest way?*
2. Stress that anger is a helpful feeling because it warns us to stand up for our rights or protect ourselves, but it can be an unpleasant feeling if it controls us or stops us from using optimistic thinking and act in destructive ways. These destructive ways can lead to breaking up or damaging friendships, getting in trouble at school or with authorities, feeling guilty, losing self-respect or damaging our reputation.
3. Conduct a shared reading of *How to take the Grrr out of Anger* and discuss ways to manage anger and what to do when adults become angry.
4. In small groups, have students decide on the most effective calming, optimistic thinking and problem-solving strategies for anger from the Student Activity Sheet: *Things that make me go Grrrr...*.
5. Students think of a group scenario that involves someone putting demands on them that make them feel angry.
   - Have students conduct a role-play where the characters use 'asides' to the audience to describe how they are calming themselves and what optimistic thinking they are using so that they can create a change and solve the problem.
   - Ask:
     - *Do you think the way character X used to calm down the body in this situation was appropriate? If not, what else could they have done?*
     - *Do you think the optimistic thinking that character X used in this situation would have helped them manage their anger in real life?*
     - *Do you think the way that character X solved the problem would be a realistic way in real life?*
     - *If not, what do you think might have happened in real life?*
     - *How do you think character Y might have felt about the way they solved the problem?*

3-2-1 Reflection

Give each student a copy of Student Activity Sheet: *I know how to manage intense emotions*.

- Explain that they are to apply all they have learnt about managing intense emotions to their own personal examples. These situations may already have occurred or they may be ones that students think may create

intense feelings in the future.
- Students complete the activity sheet individually.

Health promoting schools

Background teacher note: Health promoting schools framework.

Partnerships

Family

- Talk Soon. Talk Often: a guide for parents talking to their kids about sex is a free hardcopy resource that can be bulk ordered by schools and website. Send a copy home to parents prior to starting your RSE program. The booklet offers ages and stage related information on puberty (and other topics) so that parents can reinforce the topics covered in class. (How to order hard copies.) Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
- Run a parent workshop and run this activity with parents to model the content that will be covered in your RSE program.
- Run a parent and child evening session, where the children can teach the parents what they have been learning about.

Staff/Professionals

- Identify, discuss and connect students in with school support staff (e.g. Counsellor, Psychologist, Wellbeing Leaders, Chaplain) who can help when they are experiencing intense emotions. Promote these services in a way that normalizes help and support seeking.

Community

- Coordinate whole-school practices that promote emotional management and regulation and help seeking behaviour.
- Mentally Healthy Schools - Act Belong Commit Act Belong Commit framework embeds mental health initiatives in the classroom, whole school environment and broader school community.
- Display the Feelings Wheel in classrooms for students to develop greater emotional awareness.



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