

Topic: Emotional Intelligence**Evidence/research base****Contents**

Topic Overview.....	2
Learning intentions.....	2
Lessons.....	2
Emotional Intelligence: Lesson Overviews.....	3
Research Overview	3
Purpose of Emotion.....	3
Brain Basics & Stress Response.....	3
Coping Strategies	3
Mental health literacy.....	3
Suicide and Self-Harm.....	4
Peer Support.....	4
References	5

Topic Overview

This topic builds students' knowledge of emotions, mental health and wellbeing in order to provide them with effective emotional self-regulation tools.

Learning intentions

The learning intentions for this topic in its entirety includes an understanding of emotional responses and a knowledge of three self-directed emotional regulation strategies, as well as an awareness of mental health and strategies to support peers who may be at-risk.

Lessons

1. Purpose of Emotions
2. Brain basics
3. Stress Response
4. Coping strategies
5. Mental health literacy
6. Suicide and self-harm*
7. Peer support basics

**to be discussed in the pre-session consultation with the school welfare team*

Duration of each individual lesson is approximately 15 minutes; schools do not need to run all lessons and may tailor make a session by selecting 2 – 3 lessons. A counsellor will support you in the pre-session consultation to create a session plan based on your needs and schedule.

Emotional Intelligence: Lesson Overviews

Research Overview

Universal, school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have been found to have a positive effect on social and emotional competencies, prosocial behaviour, attitudes to self, others and school (Durlak, et al., 2013), educational outcomes (Corcoran et al, 2017), mental health literacy and help-seeking behaviours (Department of Health and Ageing, 2013). Universal programs for preventing depression, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based anxiety interventions and suicide prevention interventions have been shown to be effective (Reavley et al., 2015). Key experts in the field also agree that emotional self-regulation is an important protective factor in developing resilience in young people (Beyond Blue, 2017). This topic focuses on psycho-education to support students to develop emotional self-regulation and positive coping skills.

Purpose of Emotion

The concepts within this lesson are based on the research on emotional intelligence by Robert Plutchik (1980) and Dr Jaak Panksepp (2004), and the well-established theoretical principals of and Cognitive Behavioural theory. Learning intentions for this lesson include an understanding of the purpose/meaning behind feeling anger, fear, joy and sorrow.

Brain Basics & Stress Response

This lesson draws upon a trauma-informed, neurodevelopmental model, based on the concepts of key authors within the field including Pieter Roussow (2011), Daniel Siegel (2010), Louis Cozolino (2011), Joseph LeDoux (2015), Paul MacLean (1990), Bruce Perry (2015) and Alexander Luria (1973). The content is a developmentally adapted lesson on triune brain theory and the key concepts of neuropsychotherapy. The learning intentions for this session is an understanding of the brain processes involved in the stress response (fight/flight/freeze).

Coping Strategies

Linking neuropsychotherapy with Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), this lesson provides a simple, three-step coping plan that can be easily remembered by students and used as a starting point for developing their individual coping strategies. The learning intentions for this lesson include an understanding of key emotional self-regulation strategies, and knowledge on how these work. Students will also gain an understanding of the basics of neuroplasticity.

Mental health literacy

An overview of anxiety and depression, based on the DSM V (2013). Mental health literacy increases the likelihood of young people seeking help (Gulliver et al., 2010). The learning intentions for students in this session is a basic understanding of signs and

symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as knowledge on positive coping strategies and help-seeking options.

Suicide and Self-Harm

Universal awareness programs can increase student knowledge of suicide risk factors and help-seeking behaviours (Callear et al., 2017; Cusimano & Sameem, 2011; Portzky, G., & Van Heeringen, 2006). In regards to self-harm, group discussion focusing on positive coping strategies has shown to be beneficial (Richardson, Surmitis, & Hyldahl, 2012). This lesson focuses on mental health promotion through psycho-education. Learning intentions for students includes a basic awareness of suicide and self-harm, and knowledge of both support options and positive coping strategies.

Peer Support

Research has shown that young people are most likely to seek help for mental health from a peer initially (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2014; Price & Dalglish, 2016). The learning intentions for this lesson include a knowledge of how to respond to friends experiencing mental health issues in a supportive way, and when and how to seek professional help for others.

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