Stress BUSTERS

Stress and Coping

for Middle / Senior Secondary
Health / Personal Development
Contents

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Activities for school camps, leadership training or Personal Development class, middle to upper secondary

Rationale ........................................................................65

Session 1 Group support .........................................................67

Session 2 Trust .....................................................................69

Session 3 Relaxation exercises ...........................................72

Session 4 Protective layers ..................................................77

Session 5 Supportive structures .........................................79

Session 6 Goal setting .........................................................81

Session 7 Difficult decisions ...............................................84

Session 8 Conflict maps .......................................................88
Stressbusters

In this collection a series of stand-alone sessions is offered; each addressing a key issue in dealing with stress. The experiential, activity-based lessons are ideal for use as booster sessions to follow the unit on coping and may be spread across the year. Alternatively, the teacher may choose to use a particular session at a relevant time during the school year (leading up to exam period, just before transition, in parallel with decisions about future directions and study programs or on school camps).

The sessions focus on issues such as group support, trust, relaxation, goal setting, conflict and decision-making.

Rationale

These activities are used to assist students:

- to examine the role and effect of supportive groups in assisting individuals to deal effectively with change and challenge
- to identify the role of trust and courage in help-seeking behaviour
- to discuss the role of hope and metaphor in coping
- to identify the importance of setting achievable goals
- to explore options for conflict resolution.

Relaxation exercises, games, group challenges, role-play, discussion and simulation exercises are used to assist students to engage with and reflect on these issues.

National curriculum framework

Health and Physical Education
Human Relations
Level 6

Learning outcome:
‘Analyses the ways individuals and groups may seek to influence the behaviour of others’

Evident when students:

- examine, discuss and practise skills of negotiation, problem-solving, help-seeking, relaxation and conflict resolution
- identify social barriers to help-seeking for self or providing support for others when challenged by stressful personal situations
- examine the influence of others’ expectations on ways in which members of a class or broader community group support each other in dealing with stress, change or challenge.
Learning outcome:
‘Analyses how different contexts and situations influence personal values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours’

Evident when students:
- discuss ideas about adapting personal values, attitudes, beliefs and behavioural patterns to suit different group expectations and circumstances (such as beliefs that one must cope on one’s own, that stress is a sign of weakness or that one must not burden others with one’s own problems)
- identify particular values they consider to be absolute and non-negotiable (respect of and valuing diversity, or calling for help when a friend’s mental health may be at stake)
- consider ethical dilemmas such as whether to breach confidentiality when a friend is clearly in serious need.

Learning outcome:
‘Explains how social and cultural factors influence what people feel and do about their own personal identity’

Evident when students:
- explain how individuals may be affected by the fear of failure or cultural or social notions as to what are acceptable relaxation, coping or help-seeking strategies for a young male or female.

State and territory curriculum frameworks
Refer to the MindMatters website for details of how MindMatters fits with state or territory curriculum frameworks.

www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters
Intention

In this session it is intended that students:

- use a team challenge to examine the role and effect of supportive groups
- examine the role of leisure and social interaction in coping with challenging circumstances
- examine the effect on members of negative group behaviours.

Resources

- Lots of smarties (or use a tub of water / marbles / pebbles / jellybeans / sand)
- One container for the smarties (ice-cream tub or lunchbox)
- Glasses (tumblers, beakers, plastic cups) one for each team
- Teaspoons of like size (packet of plastic teaspoons) one for each person in the game

How to

Activity 1: Smarties relay

1. Explain to the class they will engage in a team challenge with built-in frustrations and rewards. While the game is to be played for the fun of it, it will also be the basis of discussion about what it is like to face frustration, reward, encouragement and blame.

2. Divide class into teams of about four or five. Use a grouping game such as families or numbering off. (See Games collection in Enhancing Resilience 1)

3. Set up the teams with members seated one behind each other. The teams should be arranged in formation around a central point at where tub of smarties is located, with the team’s leader near the tub. Beakers are placed at the rear of each team. Each person holds a spoon. The task is to transfer as many smarties as possible from the central tub to the team’s beaker. The smarties must progress from teaspoon to teaspoon along the line. The
smarties must travel along every spoon in the team and may not be held down or picked up with fingers or other implements. The team with the most smarties in their beaker at the end of the race is the winner. At the end of the game the smarties should be shared within the team and eaten.

4. After the game has been played, assist students to move from the experiential level to a reflective mode by use of the sample questions.

**Sample questions**

- What forms of support or encouragement went on in the various teams?
- What forms of condemnation or blame occurred?
- How did the winning team manage to score more smarties / water than the other teams?
- What were the reactions of others if they suspected cheating was going on?
- What did the team do to improve their speed as the game progressed?
- Where else in real life does every member of the team make a difference to meeting the team’s goals?
- In real life, when do you most need to be supported and encouraged, for example, by a team, a friendship group, family, or class?
- In real life, what effect can it have when you are blamed or yelled at by your team, family, friends, class?
- In real life situations, what sometimes stops groups from showing their support for members?
- In real life situations, what sometimes stops people from letting their group know that they want or need support?
- What place can having fun with others have as part of coping with life’s challenges? When would you recommend just doing something for fun?
- What sorts of things can people around your age do just for fun or to let off steam when they are by themselves and when they are with others?

**Workbook**

- Allocate some of the sample questions for a written response.

**Homework**

- Allocate some of the sample questions for homework.
Intention
In this session it is intended that students:
• use experiential games to explore the role of trust in supportive relationships
• identify the role of trust and courage in help-seeking behaviour.

Resources
• One blindfold for every pair of students

How to

Activity 1: Blindfold walk
1. Explain to students that they will be engaged in some trust exercises. They will do this to experience the activity for its own sake, but also to use it as the basis to think and talk about:
   • what it takes to trust other people
   • how we feel when people break our trust
   • what it can be like if others won’t trust us.
2. Remind students that the normal safety rules apply in this activity.

Teacher talk: safety
Due to the fact that you will have other people’s safety in your hands, please be extra considerate. Anyone abusing the activity will have to be asked to sit out. While the greatest value is likely to be gained by being properly blindfolded, those who do not feel they can take a turn at being blindfolded should try the exercise just with their eyes closed. That way they can open them if they need to.
3. Allocate pairs. Set a signal to start and stop the game.

4. Define the territory for the game – are the students to remain inside the room, or are allowed into certain sections of the corridor/yard?

5. The challenge in this activity is one of offering and earning trust. The ‘sighted’ are completely responsible for the ‘blind’. Work out who is person A and person B in your partnership. First person A wears the blindfold and is taken for a walk by person B. Upon the signal for round two, the roles are swapped. (This game can also work in trios with two sighted and one blind person.)

Rules
A. No injuries.

B. The sighted person must hold the blind person by the elbow to guide them, and must keep up a commentary about where they are walking and about obstacles, steps, and so on.

A Mental Health Promotion strategy

Provide mentoring programs
6. When the exercise is complete, process the experience using the sample questions as a guide.

**Sample questions**

- What was the most challenging part of this activity?
- When someone puts their trust in you, what pressure does that put on you in the game, and in real life?
- What does it take to trust someone before they’ve proved they are trustworthy?
- Where else in life do people have to give their trust before they get proof it will be lived up to?
- What sort of trust does it take before you can tell someone that you or someone else needs help?
- What do we feel like when someone breaks our trust?
- What do we feel when we let someone down who has trusted us?
- How do you heal a breach in trust or a broken promise?

**Workbook**

- Use some of the sample questions as a guide to a workbook activity

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**Nicknames**

Don’t use nicknames for students, unless they are a preferred abbreviation of their name. Nicknames are often a put-down in disguise. Students do not always feel free to say they don’t wish to be called by a nickname. Ask all students to use regular names when in class – even if they don’t do that elsewhere. The classroom is a public space and hence rules of courtesy apply.

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**A Mental Health Promotion strategy**

Provide and promote culturally appropriate services
Intention

In this session it is intended that students:

• experience a relaxation technique and discuss the role of relaxation in coping with stress or challenge
• identify instances in which they could employ such techniques.

Resources

• Cleared floor space if students are to lie down
• Tape or CD
• Suitable relaxation music
• Information sheets: Guided relaxation – use sample A or sample B

How to

Activity 1: Guided relaxation

1. Explain to the class that they will be sampling a form of relaxation exercise today. It will involve them lying on the floor (or you can do this exercise with them sitting at their desks). As students listen to music, you will suggest ways in which they can use their minds and their imaginations to help them relax. The activity requires a high level of group cooperation in order to work, as all must be both still and silent during the whole activity. Some people might feel tempted to make a joke or mess around. That would mean spoiling the activity for everyone.

2. Organise the music and allow the class time to settle and find a space on the floor.

3. Use one of the information sheets to run a guided relaxation, or use one of your own.

4. Allow the class time to bring themselves back to the room.

5. Invite them to turn to someone near them if they wish and tell them what the experience was like. Suggest that they may wish to share some of the things they saw. Give them permission not to speak if they do not wish to talk about the experience.

6. Organise for the class to return to their seats.

Workbook

• Describe the relaxation exercise and how it worked for you.
SAMPLE A : A journey

Close your eyes. Make sure you are in a comfortable position. Uncross arms and legs. We're going to check now to see if we can let go of any tension we have.

First check for tension in the palms of your hands. Imagine the palms have been stroked with a velvet cloth. Let any tension trickle out of the skin.

Now check the insides of your elbows. Imagine the velvet cloth stroking away any tension from your arms. Now focus behind your knees. Let yourself imagine a soft cloth brushing the skin and allowing the tension to seep out of your legs – just as if they were melting slowly into the floor. Imagine the same sensation on the soles of your feet. Allow the tension to melt away.

Imagine now the skin behind your shoulder blades. Let those muscles melt into the floor. And across the skin under your chin, imagine a soft stroking touch releasing any tension in your face, up beside your eyes, across your forehead.

Let your breath fall in and out of your body.

Let go of any last tension held inside.

Imagine now that you are lying on a soft cushion of green grass beneath a large tree. The sun is filtering through the leaves and flickers on your skin. A gentle wind brushes the leaves and whispers past your skin. Not far from your hand is a small stream of clear, cool water which trickles over a sandy base softly past you. If you reach out your hands, your fingers could touch the water.

Imagine now that you stand up beside this stream, and walk alongside it on a small path. Picture yourself walking beside the stream to a place where the stream widens and becomes a
large pool overhung with ferns and trees. There is a raft in the shallows. You wade out to it, and lie down.

The raft slowly drifts into the centre of the pool. You let your fingers trail into the cool water. There is a white bird high in the sky above you. The raft drifts you across the pool to the other side. There is another path, stretching into the forest. You leave the raft and journey down the path, walking over brown earth, leaves, pebbles, around a turn in the track and into a clearing.

Someone is waiting for you there. Someone you wish to see. This person has come with a message of encouragement or praise for you. Choose who this person is. Chose anyone you like. You can make this person up. You walk towards them, to hear what it is they have to say, to hear the words of encouragement designed for you, or perhaps they are words of thanks or praise. You may have some things you wish to say, some questions, some thought or fears you wish to tell them. You have a short time together. Imagine the conversation.

(Leave a silence)

It is nearly time for you to return to your raft. Allow the person to say goodbye. Arrange to meet again if you wish. Finish up what you want to say or hear. Say goodbye.

Imagine yourself now turning and retracing your steps along the path, over the pebbles, over the leaves, along the brown earth – to the raft.

Lie down on the raft and let it drift you slowly back across the pool, across the cool clear water to the green grass on the other side. Leave the raft and return to your cushion of green grass. In a moment you will return to the classroom.

Move your fingers. Move your toes. Listen to the noises outside this room. Notice the classroom floor underneath you. In a moment you can open your eyes and sit up in your own time. Bring back some of the relaxing or peaceful feelings you had on your journey. As the music fades out, open your eyes and sit up.
SAMPLE B : The beach

Close your eyes. Make sure you are in a comfortable position. Uncross arms and legs. We’re going to check now to see if there is any tension you can let go of.

First scrunch up your hands into a fist. Hold on as tight as you can for a few seconds. Now let go. Let any tension out of your hands.

Now scrunch up both of your arms and your hands. Hold on as tight as you can. Now let go. Now scrunch up the muscles in your toes, feet and legs. Scrunch up tight. Now let go. When you let go, let the breath fall out of your body. Now scrunch up the whole of your torso and your arms and legs. Hold on tight. Now let go. This time scrunch up the whole of your body, including your head. Hold on. Hold on. Now let go.

You are going to use your mind and your imagination now to help you relax.

Just lie there and let the breath fall in and out of your body. Listen to the music.

Imagine you are lying on the clean, white sand of a beautiful beach. It is pleasantly warm, with the sun on your skin making you feel relaxed all over. Any tension you have is trickling out of your body into the sand. The waves are crashing on to the beach. There is a faint breath of wind brushing your skin.

Picture yourself standing up and walking over to the shallows. Bathe your feet in the cool water. Let the waves break against your ankles. You look out to sea. It is clear and blue with a gentle swell. In the distance you can see dolphins swimming and leaping in the water. You wade out deeper to get closer to them. The water is making you light and buoyant now. You let yourself slide into the water, and find you are swimming with
long effortless strokes. You find you can glide through the water as easily as a dolphin. You swim deeper and deeper. When you dive beneath the water you find you can glide without needing breath. The water is clear and blue. You see small fish sparkling in the water. You swim towards the dolphins. As you get close they twirl and glide around you. They are playing. You swim with them, as effortlessly as they do. They turn and swim close to shore. You follow. When you are in the shallows, they leave and head out to sea. You float in the shallows amongst the coloured fish. The tide carries you in to the sand. You walk back to your place on the beach, and lie with your eyes closed, the sun warming your skin again. You feel relaxed and at peace.

In a moment you will return to the classroom.

Move your fingers. Move your toes. Listen to the noises outside this room. Notice the classroom floor underneath you. In a moment you can open your eyes and sit up in your own time. Bring back some of the relaxing or peaceful feelings you had on the beach. As the music fades out, open your eyes and sit up.
Intention

In this session it is intended that students:

• use a team challenge as the basis for an examination of the role that protective thoughts can have in building resilience during difficult times

• discuss the role of hope and metaphor in coping.

Resources

• Piles of newspapers
• Reels of sticky tape
• Staplers
• String

How to

Activity 1: Costume race

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Equip each group with a pile of newspapers, the sticky tape, string and staplers. The task is to make four garments or protective layers:
   • a hat
   • a pair of shoes
   • a garment for upper torso
   • a garment for lower torso.

2. For each round of the game, a different member of the group is the model, and the garment is made on them.

3. In round one, each group designs and makes the hat on model one, using the equipment provided.

4. Ring the bell after five minutes and footwear is made on model two.

5. After five minutes, the next member has an upper torso garment built for them, and in the last round, the final member of the group has a lower torso garment made for them.
6. When time is called, each team presents or models their creations to the group. Encourage loud applause.

7. Use the following questions as a guide in processing the activity.

**Sample questions**

- What is it like to be the centre of attention?
- When is being the centre of attention good, and when is it bad?
- How is attention distributed in this class?
- How can you get attention from people when you want or need it?
- What sometimes holds us back in asking for our share of attention?
- How do we feel when others get more than their ‘fair share’ of attention?

Refer back to the costume exercise and ask:

- These paper shoes won’t walk you towards your goals, but what will?
- These paper hats won’t protect you from negative thoughts about yourself, but what will?
- These paper clothes won’t protect you from put-downs or negative comments, but what will?
- How can we fashion ‘protective layers’ around ourselves?

**Workbook**

- Allocate some of the sample questions for written responses.

**Teacher talk: in the mind**

One technique that people sometimes use when they are finding it hard to cope is to imagine a protective layer between themselves and the hurtful things that are happening. Sometimes people visit a favourite place in their mind to help themselves to find strength, confidence or courage.

**A Mental Health Promotion strategy**

Challenge all staff to cater for differences in abilities and coping styles.
Intention

In this session it is intended that students:
- identify a range of ways to offer support to their peers
- identify barriers to acceptance of support from others.

Resources

- Furniture cleared to provide room to move

How to

**ACTIVITY 1: Five ways to lift**

1. Explain to students that they are to engage in a short group cooperation exercise.
2. Use a grouping game to organise them into groups of three. (see Games collection in Enhancing Resilience 1)
3. Remind students that the safety rule applies in this activity.
4. Set each group the task of finding five different ways to lift one of their members.
5. Allow five or six minutes for this.
6. Ask each group to choose their most artistic lifting structure to show to the group.
7. Display in two rounds: first with one half of the class showing their structures, and then the other half.
ACTIVITY 2: Designing social support

1. Acknowledge the students’ work from activity 1. Explain that the discussion will centre on how to offer social support, or offer support for a friend in need. Ask students to continue working in their trios, this time to design five things to do for a friend who is down or facing tough times, rather than five ways to physically support them. Get a few suggestions from the class to start the ideas flowing, then set them to finish the tasks in their groups.

2. After they have had time to work out their five ways to support, collect one suggestion from each group, avoiding duplicates.

3. Write the class’s suggestions on the board.

4. Use the following questions to guide discussion about the offering and acceptance of support.

Sample questions

- What can we do to offer support in a general way?
- How can you be supportive to a particular person?
- What sometimes stops people from accepting offers of support?
- How can you deal with the barriers to support that friends sometimes put up?

Workbook

- Copy the list of supportive actions from the board.
- Assign some of the sample questions for written response.

A Mental Health Promotion strategy

Ensure sufficient structures are in place to support staff and students in times of need.
**Goal setting**

**Intention**
In this session it is intended that students:
- identify the importance of setting achievable goals
- understand the importance of reviewing and restating goals and timelines.

**Resources**
- Room to move
- Packet of balloons or collection of soft toys or sheets of newspaper

**How to**

**ACTIVITY 1: Hot-air goals**
1. Explain to the students that they will be playing a game, partly for the fun of it, but also to use it as a way of thinking and talking about goal setting, and ‘success’ and ‘failure’.
2. Explain how the game is played. Play a few rounds with different teams having a turn.

**How to play the hot-air goals game**
- Seat the class in a large circle. Ask for a team of around four to six volunteers to take on a balloon challenge.
- Have the team collect inside the circle, forming a smaller circle out of their chairs.
- Tell them that the challenge is to keep a collection of balloons in the air for two minutes. The players may not leave their seats, or hold the balloons, but must keep the balloons in motion in the air.
If you have a large space, it is possible for teams to play simultaneously or in batches of two or three.

The team must set their goals before they start. They need to state how many balloons they think they can keep in the air for that time.

Allow them a minute to meet and choose their goal, and then announce it to the class.

Ask for a show of hands for how many of the observers think the group will meet their goal.

Appoint a timer and some assistants.

Start the play, using assistants to help you release the balloons into their circle when the timer calls the start.

Stop the game as soon as one of the balloons hits the ground, or when time is up (whichever occurs first).

Record the team’s time, and number of balloons.

If they did not meet their goal, ask them if they wish to revise their goals and try again.

If they did meet their goal, ask them if they set too small a challenge and would like to aim higher in a replay.

3. Play the game a few times over, giving different teams a chance to play. For variety you may wish different teams to take on different challenges.

Alternative challenges

- How many people can you fit on a sheet of newspaper for two minutes?
- How many stuffed toys can you catch as a team if all are thrown to you upon the starting command?

4. Use the sample questions as a guide in processing the activity.

Sample questions

- How did the teams respond when they failed to meet their stated goal?

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**Goal setting**

Some people respond to stress by working harder and harder (overworking), or setting very high standards or goals for themselves, and telling themselves they are failures if they don’t meet them. They may need to set more realistic goals. Others may respond to stress by denying the real challenge, failing to set any short-term goals and not even beginning to work towards achieving them. They may need help to define their short-term goals.
Getting it said
Acknowledge that knowing what to do is one thing but that actually carrying out the planned action is the real challenge. Sometimes communicating can be a challenge, requiring courage and assertion.

Different people, different reactions
It is important to normalise the fact that people react differently. What one person finds very stressful may not concern another. One cries, another loses their temper.

• How did the teams respond when they met their goal without any real effort?
• How did the teams respond when they met their goals after significant effort?
• In real life, what are some of the common responses to ‘failure’ or not meeting a goal, particularly when it is public?
• In real life, what can help people to cope better if/when they don’t meet an important goal?
• In the game, teams of people restated their goals (sometimes revising them up or down), planned strategies and repeated attempts to achieve their goals. When could this approach be used in real life situations?
• When approaching a big challenge – such as studying for exams or final years of school, or training for an important competition – how can the setting of short-term and long-term goals help?
• Who should know what your short-term and long-term goals are?
• How can you use others to support you in reaching your goals or in defining some manageable goals?
• In real life, how do people sometimes respond to success? What about when it is their own success; when it is someone else’s success?
• Can succeeding be stressful? How? When?

Workbook

• Choose some of the sample questions for workbook responses or
• Find out about how an older person went about achieving a goal or dealing with a challenge. The challenge may be something like getting a job, raising a family, moving to a different town or country, starting a business, getting an education, coping with illness, and so on. The interview may be with a parent, relative, friend, neighbour, teacher, older student, coach, or business person.
Intention

In this session it is intended that students:

• understand that difficult decisions often involve a conflict of needs or wants
• identify techniques and help-seeking strategies to assist when faced with a difficult decision.

Resources

• Room to move
• Activity sheet: SharkMeat cards, cut into six separate cards

How to

Activity 1: SharkMeat role-play

1. Seat the class in a circle.
2. Explain that they will engage as participants or observers in a game, which they will use as the basis for a discussion about difficult decisions.
4. Allocate the players a role card and arrange them seated on chairs as an inner circle.
5. Read out the role cards so both the players and the observers know who is who.
6. Tell the observers that when time is up on the conversation between the players, they will be commenting on what they observed as they watched people dealing with a difficult decision.
How to play SharkMeat

The players in the SharkMeat simulation are survivors of a shipwreck. They are on a small life raft built for four. The life raft is sinking as presently there are six people aboard. Sharks are circling. Unless the boat is lifted higher in the water they will be able to attack any of the six survivors. If two agree to leap over board, then they will face certain death, but the others will be clear of the sharks and can hope for rescue. No-one wants to die.

An agreement must be reached in the next five minutes about whether all will be attacked, because the boat is too low in the water, or whether two will leap. Each character must argue according to the instructions on their role card. These players will not be playing themselves, but will assume the character on their card.

7. Allow time for play. Call a stop. Ask players to stand behind their chairs whilst processing their responses.

Processing questions for each of the players:

- What was it like to have to argue for that person’s life?
- What was it like when other characters said things like ‘blank’ about your character?
- Was your character misunderstood at any time?
- Was your character given a fair hearing?
- In real life, how would that affect someone?
- From playing that part, what did you notice about being under pressure to make a decision?

8. Thank players and ask them to return to their seats in the outer circle after their interview is complete.

9. Direct processing questions towards the observers. Use the sample questions as a guide.
Sample questions

- What did you notice were some of the responses people made when they were put under pressure to make a decision?
- Were any of the characters treated with less consideration than others?
- Why did they get unequal treatment? Were some people given higher status?
- What happens when there is a conflict of loyalties?
- What is it like when you face a situation where it is hard to stick by your beliefs?
- In real life, people don’t often have to make these sorts of decisions, but sometimes they are faced with on the spot decisions which involve doing something they feel to be wrong or which goes against their standards of fair play of right and wrong. What are some examples of these situations? For example:
  - friends involved in a prank which will hurt or scare someone
  - friends involved in cheating or stealing
  - lying to someone you respect, love or trust
  - breaking a promise.
- Being in situations like this can put people under a lot of stress – especially when they are going against their own beliefs. Feeling guilty can be a type of stress. What do people need to do if they are stuck in a cycle of guilt, lies or actions that make them feel bad about themselves?

Workbook

- Allocate some of the questions for written responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Doctor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Millionaire</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believes s/he has developed a cure for AIDS, but has yet to prove this</td>
<td>Earned most of his/her money through the drug trade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Musician</strong></th>
<th><strong>War veteran</strong> <em>(75-years-old)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought to be the greatest living composer and also pregnant (seven months)</td>
<td>A hero in last war, saving many from death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Human rights activist</strong></th>
<th><strong>Environmental leader</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important leader in fighting for the rights of his/her people</td>
<td>Important in speaking out about threat to environment and animal rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Intention**

In this session it is intended that the students:

- identify the varying needs and wants of those in a situation of conflict
- explore options for conflict resolution
- practice conflict resolution techniques around common scenarios.

**Resources**

- Activity sheet: Conflict map

**How to**

**Activity 1: Dealing with conflict**

1. Divide students into three groups.
2. Allocate each group one of the brainstorm and record tasks.
   
   **Brainstorm and record:**
   - the sorts of things friends/classmates get into conflict about
   - the sorts of things families get into conflict about
   - the sorts of things teachers and students get into conflict about.
3. Collect and compare the lists. Acknowledge that conflict is a part of daily life and we all need strategies to deal with it in healthy and useful ways.
4. Explain that a conflict map can be useful when looking to see what the issues are within the conflict. Often an argument can sound like it is over one little thing, but in fact there are bigger issues at stake.
5. Use the model provided on the Activity sheet: Conflict map to draw up a blank conflict map on the board.

Choose an example from the brainstorm list to use with the class to model the technique of making a conflict map. You will need to expand the item and make it into a little story.

Example: family conflict about choice of friends.

Jo’s parents don’t want Jo to hang out with his/her current group of friends. They think this group is the wrong sort. Jo thinks they are fun to socialise with even if they do get a bit wild. Jo’s parents have refused to let Jo go out with those friends today. A fight occurred.

Work with the class to fill in the conflict map on the board for this situation.

6. Use an additional example if you feel this would assist students to better understand the process.

7. Ask students to choose and develop a conflict scenario, using input from those next to them. They should then ‘map the conflict’ using the activity sheet provided.

8. Use the following questions to guide discussion.

9. Explain to students the distinction between ‘I’ statements and ‘You’ statements. Give examples.

10. Ask the students to complete the advice section in the conflict map activity sheet.

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**Expressing needs, feelings or wishes**

When people say ‘I need...’ or ‘I feel...’ these are called ‘I’ statements. More commonly people in conflict make ‘You’ statements which sound more like blame or accusation.

Finding out what the other person needs or feels can be a useful strategy, as well as telling about one’s own needs or feelings.

“What can we do about this?” is another useful question.

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**What if a student seems upset by this topic?**

Acknowledge that some people have upsets in relation to this topic. Invite students who wish to speak to you privately to do so.

Follow-up with a one-to-one conversation rather than in front of the class.

Be prepared to offer referral according to school protocols, but maintain a concerned interest.

Offer a buddy to accompany if immediate comfort is required.

Be aware of mandatory reporting requirements.

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**A Mental Health Promotion strategy**

Structure schools in such a way that each student can feel known and valued.
Sample questions

- What happens when you have to work out the needs and fears for those on both sides of the conflict?
- What are common behaviours or responses that people use when they are involved in a conflict with family members / friends / teachers?
- Do these actions help the two (or more) parties to understand each others’ needs?
- What would some examples of ‘I’ statements sound like as opposed to ‘You’ statements? (Use conflict maps to help generate these.)

Workbook

Ask students to give a piece of advice to each of the players on their conflict map. Challenge them to include the wording of an ‘I’ statement in that advice.