

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Solution focused conversations



Assist students to identify and address problems and conflicting emotions that they are struggling with. Solution focused conversations can enhance well-being, promote emotion regulation and resource realisation. A teacher can develop emotional literacy in students by discussing different emotions e.g. happy, sad, tired, lonely, nervous etc. highlighting that all feelings are ok, but it is how we express them that matters.

Whilst discussing emotions

- Support the student by listening emphatically, validating and labelling their feelings. Gain a clear understanding about the student's concerns: 'You seem a bit frustrated what happened?'
- The teacher can state their own concerns or perspective while incorporating problem-solving skills: 'It sounds like you are feeling a bit angry that....Sometimes I get a bit angry when... however we can't ..., I wonder what you could do about this?'
- Reinforce social interactions and emotional regulation that went well. Be specific: 'When you were moving back to your seat earlier today and Billy was in the way, you politely said 'excuse me', Billy moved and nobody got upset, well done!'
- Student and teacher to brainstorm solutions that would address both their concerns. The student should be given the first opportunity to generate a solution. Work towards a mutually satisfying and realistic solution with the goal of the student obtaining an emotional outcome of feeling good about themselves through their achievement.
- Always consider the student's own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of what works for them. The student is the best authority on their own feelings, even if they have some trouble verbalising those feelings.
- Discuss supportive people in the student's life, who they can approach for emotional support, these people may be for example; a relative, members of staff or friends. Writing down the names or drawing these people may help the student remember their support options.
- Implement the solution and at an agreed time return to discuss whether it was successful. If not, discuss any new concerns and try again with another solution.

Bibliotherapy

Reading and then discussing the key messages of books that contain themes of health, wellbeing and emotional content is an effective way to introduce new ideas and start conversations. Many classrooms and the school library already have a selection of age appropriate books that explore the concepts of understanding and managing emotions, coping strategies, social skills, the importance of friendships and people who are there to help and support. Following the story discuss the nature, causes and regulation of emotions. Reading stories about different emotions can assist students develop emotion recognition and management strategies.

Assisting a shy or reluctant student to speak

Communicating one to one with the teacher through a puppet, toy animal, doll or even cartoon image on a page can help that student feel more comfortable to verbalise and lead to conversations on helpful things to say in a variety of social situations.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>