

Activity: 7-8.5.2

Key Messages

- We are learning strategies to reverse unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Thinking in a more positive way helps us to feel better.

Activity Details

Victorian Curriculum

Health & PE Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older
VCHPEP124

Capabilities VCPSCSO042

Time 40 minutes

Levels 7 & 8

Equipment

- a copy of Helpful and unhelpful thinking worksheet for each pair
- Helpful and unhelpful thinking Teacher reference sheet
- paper and pen
- whiteboard and textas

Used with permission from Glover, S, Patton, G, Butler, H, Di Pietro, G, Begg, B, Ollis, D, Cahir, S and Watson, J 2002, *The Gatehouse Project*, Centre for Adolescent Health, Parkville, Vic.

Helpful and unhelpful thinking

Purpose

To help students acknowledge that ups and downs are a normal part of life.

To consider how thoughts and feelings are linked.

To explore how there can be better or worse ways of thinking about a situation which will affect the way people feel and the actions they take.

Teaching notes

This activity requires the students to create their own character, who is about their age. It can also be completed using a character from a set text, or using an adult, such as an historical figure, artist, or a famous sportsperson. It might be preferable to do this first as a class activity before students complete the activity using their own character. Teachers could undertake background reading about the *Gatehouse Project* which is an excellent project for teaching wellbeing. See www.rch.org.au/cah/research/the_gatehouse_project/ for further information.

Procedure

1. Ask the students to brainstorm, in their books, situations when they might feel up or down.
2. Ask for volunteers to share some of these responses with the class and write them on the board. Acknowledge that sometimes young people don't know why they feel a certain way.
3. Divide the students into pairs for the next part of the activity. Distribute a copy of the worksheet to each pair.
4. Ask each pair to make up a character with a fictitious name, who is about their age. They have to put the character in a difficult everyday situation which would cause him/her to think negatively.
5. Ask the students to brainstorm the character, and the situation, together, using *The slippery slope of unhelpful thinking* worksheet. Refer to the *Teacher reference* sheet for guidance and an example.
6. Still in pairs, ask the students to rethink the character in the situation, by filling in the bubbles in *Reversing Unhelpful Thinking*. Consider how the character's thinking could be more helpful.

Discussion

A class discussion could focus on the following questions:

- How did the character's thoughts and feelings about the situation affect the way he/she felt about him/herself and about others?
- What effect does more helpful thinking have on feelings?

Teacher reference sheet

The slippery slope of unhelpful thinking

Questions to ask:

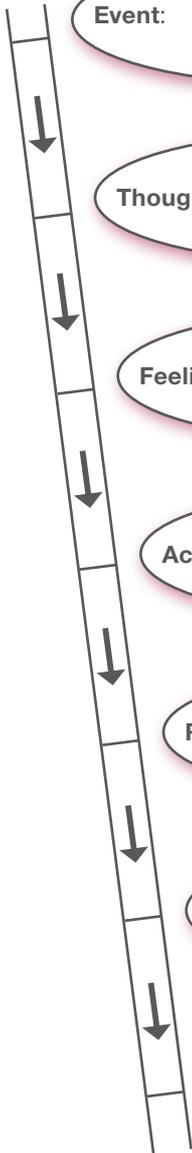
- What might the character be thinking/feeling?
Fill in the *Thought and Feeling* bubbles.
- What action might the character take?
Fill in the *Action* bubble.
- What are the reactions of others?
Fill in the *Reaction* bubble.
- What does the character think and feel now?
Fill in the remaining *Thought and Feeling* bubbles.

Example of the slippery slope of unhelpful thinking

- Event:** I wasn't invited to Peter's party
- Thought:** Peter doesn't like me
- Feeling:** Unhappiness
- Action:** Become withdrawn and avoid other people
- Reaction:** Others think I am avoiding them so they avoid me
- Thought:** Nobody likes me
- Feeling:** Despair

Student worksheet

The slippery slope of unhelpful thinking



Event:

Thought:

Feeling:

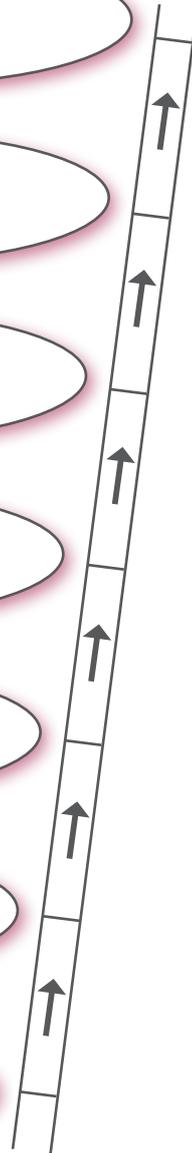
Action:

Reaction:

Thought:

Feeling:

Reversing unhelpful thinking



Feeling:

Thought:

Reaction:

Action:

Feeling:

Thought:

Event:



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