

WELL-BEING FOR US



The UPRIGHT manual for families

The manual and supplementary materials are the core programme of the UPRIGHT project created ad hoc by experienced professionals on resilience and positive psychology.

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Contents

What is UPRIGHT?	6
How is WELL-BEING FOR US implemented at home?	6

1	MINDFULNESS	10
	Introductory questions	11
	Why is important to train in Mindfulness?	12
	What is Mindfulness?	12
	How is Mindfulness trained in UPRIGHT?	14



2	COPING	16
	Illustration of the Component	17
	Why is important to train in Coping?	17
	What is Coping?	18
	a. Cognitive Behaviour Modification	19
	b. Conflict Resolution	28
	c. Assertiveness and Communication Strategies	36
	d. Mental Health Literacy	45



3	EFFICACY	58
	Illustration of the Component	59
	Why is important to train in Efficacy?	59
	What is Efficacy?	60
	a. Self-efficacy	61
	b. Growth Mindset	68
	c. Emotional Resilience	76
	d. Social Resilience	86
	e. Leadership	92




4	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING	98
	Illustration of the Component	99
	Why is important to train Social and Emotional Learning?	99
	What is Social and Emotional Learning?	100
	a. Self-awareness	102
	b. Self-management	112
	c. Social Awareness	122
	d. Relationship Skills	128
	e. Responsible Decision-Making	132

References	143
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What is UPRIGHT?

UPRIGHT is a scientifically tested psychoeducational resilience-based intervention based in schools, designed to promote the mental well-being and prevent mental disorders of adolescents. It uses a whole-school approach, involving adolescents, their families and the entire school community. During adolescence, young people can learn diverse skills and strategies to help them to understand themselves, their families, their future and their societies. These skills should promote healthy methods of adaptation and play a crucial role in handling stress.

UPRIGHT was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No. 754919. UPRIGHT acronym stands for: "Universal Preventive Resilience Intervention Globally implemented in schools to improve and promote mental Health for Teenagers".

 The general objective is to promote mental well-being and prevent mental disorders by enhancing resilience among young people, through an integral approach including adolescents (12-14 years of age), their families and professionals in schools. UPRIGHT's researchers have developed a training programme comprising both theoretical and practical elements

Families and their role

UPRIGHT seeks the involvement of families and the school community to foster the mental well-being of adolescents. Safe and supportive families are indispensable if we are to help young people to develop their full potential and attain the best mental and physical health during their transition to adulthood. Your behaviour as a parent can affect the health and behaviour of adolescents directly as it serves as a model. Therefore, UPRIGHT will promote parent involvement by training them in resilience skills and mental health literacy.




How is WELL-BEING FOR US implemented at home?

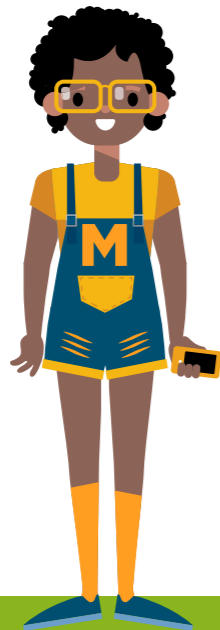
This manual aims to provide the information necessary to work with children/adolescents and their families to promote mental well-being and prevent mental disorders by enhancing resilience. The term family used in this Manual is not limited to biological kinship, but refers to the person(s) responsible for the care and education of the adolescent, such as a primary caregiver or legal guardian.

The information has been divided in four components; being mindfulness, coping, efficacy, and social and emotional learning. Each component has several skills to train at home in different moments across the school year, except training of mindfulness that is a continuing exercise in the UPRIGHT programme.

In each training session at home there is a theoretical part followed by a practical part. The last consists of exercises and activities to learn the skills and how to use them in everyday life. You will need approximately 20 minutes to train each skill and you can practice the skill during the full school year alone or with other members of your family. Each skill is important for personal and family well-being and is applicable in many everyday situations.

Glossary of icons

- **A story for discussion.** Reflect individually or as a family on the story and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.
- **Link to videos/audios.** Links to videos demonstrating and explaining the skill or exercises.
- **This skill is useful, for example, when...** Literal examples from adolescents of when it might be useful for them to master this resilience skill.



Mindfulness

OBSERVATION

DESCRIPTION

ACTING CONSCIOUSLY

ACCEPTING WITHOUT JUDGING

1

Coping

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOUR
MODIFICATION

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

ASSERTIVENESS AND
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

2

Efficacy

SELF-EFFICACY

GROWTH MINDSET

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

SOCIAL RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP

3

Social Emotional Learning

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

4



MINDFULNESS



MINDFULNESS

"Wherever you go, there you are"

(Jon Kabat-Zinn)

Introductory questions

- Have you ever been reading and after one page you don't know what you just read?
- Or somebody is talking and you just don't know what she/he said?
- What is the difference between brain and mind?
- How is it possible to train your brain like your body?
- Why should we train our mind?
- How do you pay attention?
- Have you ever laid in your bed and felt like your thoughts are jumping around and you can't sleep?
- What do you do to calm you down?

Illustration of the Component

- Watch this video about MINDFULNESS: <https://youtu.be/kHPKeIZB9zs>



This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"You have conflicts via social media, or via instant messaging, or with your parents, and you react too quickly and say things without enough reflection."



"You are so busy in exams, using all the time your brain, and you are very much disconnected to what is going on in your body"

"When you are playing with a ball – if you pay attention then you might catch the ball, but if you are thinking about ice cream or something then you might not catch the ball"



1

Why is important to train in Mindfulness?

We often tend to spend a lot of time in our head. Sometimes making stories, true or false, thinking about the past or future, planning, setting goals, and so on. When we spend much time in our head we often get disconnected from our senses and from what is happening right now.

Mindfulness training is attention training where you train your attention to be where you want it to be when you want it.

Mindfulness training is like you are going on a date with yourself, getting to know how your mind works.

Research show that mindfulness can help you with:

- Getting to know yourself better
- Be more in charge
- Act more thoughtfully and less impulsively
- Reduce stress and increase well-being
- Increase good relationship to yourself and others
- Developing your brain more

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the awareness that arises from purposeful, non-judgmental attention, exerted at in the present moment.

We can then intentionally sustain that attention, to the best of our ability (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 2014)

Mindfulness is a practice of carefully focusing attention, not a form of religion (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

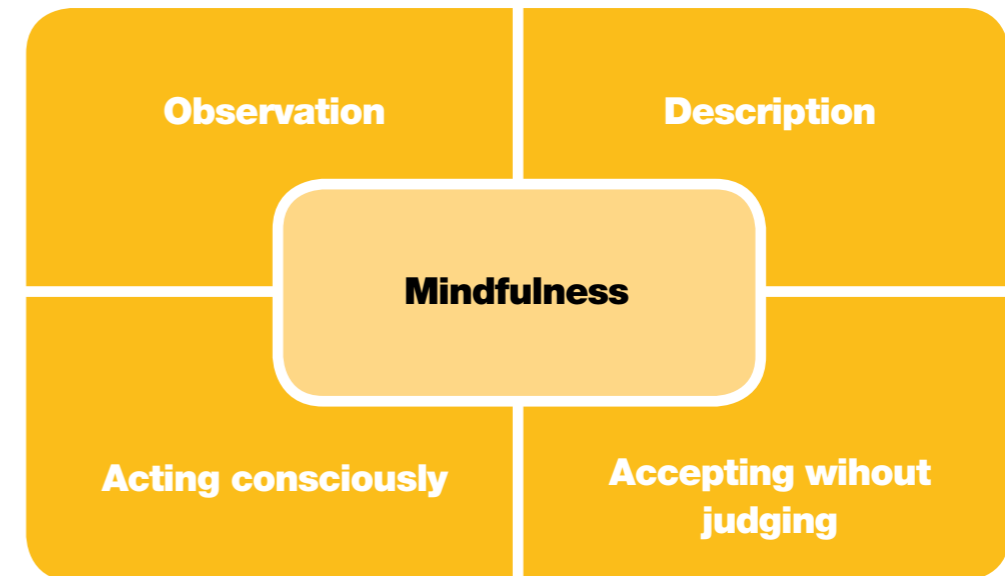
In other words, mindfulness means paying attention to what is going on now, both within us and around us, with kindness and curiosity. However, mindfulness is not just simple attention; it is connected to the heart. We connect with ourselves and the world around us with kindness and curiosity. You should approach life with a mind of a beginner as if you were seeing or experiencing it for the first time; let go of judgement as much as you can.

When you start paying attention in a mindful way, your relationship with the world changes, you see more, and you see more deeply. "Knowing what you are doing while you are doing it is the essence of the mindfulness practice" (Kabat-Zinn, 2004).

Mindfulness does not imply trying to get anywhere or feel anything special. You allow yourself to be where you already are, to become more familiar with your own experiences moment by moment. Each moment is a new beginning, a new opportunity to start over, to tune-in and to reconnect.

There is scientific evidence that mindfulness promotes the processes and outcomes that are the aims of the UPRIGHT programme. Mindfulness increases resilience, helps you to flourish and be at your best in many ways. For example, it increases self-knowledge, self-confidence and stress management and decreases anxiety and depression (Remple, 2012; Weare, 2012). Researches also shows that there are many benefits direct to learning such as improving reading and working memory, better concentration and less mind wandering (Mrazek, Franklin, Phillips, Baird, & Schooler, 2013). In addition it improves kindness to our self and others, our relationships benefits, more compassion and has positive affect on well-being in general (Williams & Penman, 2011).

By cultivating mindfulness, the following four skills are practised simultaneously:



Observation: When we spend much time "in our head", we often become disconnected from our senses. We eat, but we do not really taste or smell the food, we watch, but we do not really see, we hear but we are not listening, and so on; we act in an "autopilot" mode. However, when we focus on our daily life actions, our experiences become clearer and deeper. We can live more fully. Each ordinary day gives us many opportunities for learning mindfulness. When you start to train your attention, you notice that every moment is a new opportunity to experience ordinary things in a new way. For example, where is your attention when you brush your teeth? Are you already thinking about work?, are you busy anticipating the events of the day? You might be totally unaware of how you brush your teeth, of the taste of the toothpaste, the temperature of water and how you move the brush in your mouth etc. Brushing your teeth is an excellent mindfulness exercise; you should try it next time.

Description: During the mindfulness training we are not attempting to change our thoughts or feelings. We are not trying to clear our mind or seek a specific mood or relaxation. We are simply training ourselves to see our thoughts more clearly, to be able to help ourselves. Thoughts come and go, and we cannot stop this process. However, we can train ourselves to choose which thoughts we are going to pay attention and which thoughts we are going to ignore. You could imagine that you stand at a bus station, and the passing buses are thoughts that come and go; you can choose which bus you are going to board and how far you are going to travel. As to other buses, you just let them go by. If you notice a thought like "Oh, I don't want to solve this math problem, I don't know why I am bothering with it. I don't understand a thing, I am terrible at maths". Some people might believe that this thought reflects the reality, and then why bother? Others will realise that thoughts are just thoughts, mental events that are not always trustworthy. Most people will admit that to be able to do the maths well, you need to spend time practising; practice is the key to success. They might experience the same thoughts but decide to respond to them differently. Similarly, it is human nature to be exposed to various feelings such as joy, sadness, nervousness, excitement, anger and fear; all these and many other feelings are natural and normal. Feelings come and go, but it is important to notice them to be able to choose your responses.

Acting consciously: Have you ever been so busy turning over some problems in your mind that you did not notice what you were doing at the time? The brain has a wonderful ability to switch from thought to thought; this can happen very quickly. For example, your phone buzzes, and suddenly your attention is only on that phone. You might forget what you had been doing a moment before and even where you are. While your attention is on texting on your phone, you do not notice what is happening around you. You are on autopilot and not aware. This can happen many times during the day, and you might even find that you are on autopilot most of your waking time. To control your life, you should be awake to the events around you and direct



your attention to what you want or need to do. This means abandoning the autopilot mode and increasing your awareness. Mindfulness can improve your concentration and help you to be successful in everything you do. However, the first step must be to wake up and leave the fast train running on autopilot. Choose your reactions.

Accepting without judging: We often spend a lot of time “in our heads”. We might be composing stories, true or false, thinking about the past or the future, planning, setting goals, etc. We tend to forget that our mind has two main modes, thinking and sensing, often named Doing and Being. Mindfulness training teaches us how to redirect our attention from thinking (Doing) to our senses (Being). In the Doing mode, we tend to judge, compare and analyse. In the Being mode, we can learn to use our senses to experience things as they truly are. Both modes are useful, but the Doing tends to take over. Then, we might be easily carried away by our thoughts; we are often unaware of where our attention is. Using the mindfulness training, we try to give the Being mode a bit more space. We want to experience our life as it happens, be more “here and now” (Segal, Teasdale & Williams, 2013).

How to train Mindfulness in UPRIGHT?

By practising mindfulness, you train yourself in aspects related to social-emotional learning, efficacy and coping (the other 3 components of UPRIGHT).

How can you train Mindfulness outside UPRIGHT?








Mindfulness training is like any other training; the more you commit to it, the more you gain. We can train our mindfulness in two ways, using informal and formal practising.

The formal practice. You can decide to regularly dedicate some time to focus on a particular subject; it can be your breathing, body, thoughts or feelings. You might want to concentrate on your senses (hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or seeing). It is a good idea to start with short practice sessions and then increase their length; you can decide to do this for a few minutes, and then extend it up to 30 minutes once you have acquired some experience.

The informal practice is everything you do with a mindful awareness in your daily life. When you are reading, your full attention is engaged. Similarly, when are you doing sports, playing games, texting on your phone, walking or talking to friends, you pay full attention; you know what you are doing while you are doing it. If you do one thing at a time and you do not think about something else while doing it, your attention is here and now. If you find your mind wandering off, you should just notice it and kindly and firmly direct your attention back to where it belongs.

Both the formal and informal practising trains your attention and increases your self-awareness and the awareness of life around you.

The available audios are:

(1) The anchor		(5) Heartfulness	
(2) Shake it up—calm it down, body and breathing		(6) Shift gears - mindful walking	
(3) Sounds and thoughts		(7) Hear it all - mindful listening	
(4) Body scan			





COPING

- COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION
- CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- ASSERTIVENESS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
- MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY



"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship"

(Louisa May Alcott)

Introductory questions

- Have you ever heard of coping and coping strategies before?
- How do you normally manage a difficult situation?
- What kind of advice would you give a person in a difficult situation?

Illustration of the Component

- Watch this video about coping: <https://youtu.be/NOnFMUoB9m4>



Why is important to train in Coping?

During life, you will always encounter difficult situations and in order to cope with these situations in the best possible way, you need to develop adequate coping strategies.

Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful and they do not have the resources to cope. Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- School demands and frustrations
- Negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- Changes in the body
- Problems with friends and/or peers at school
- Unsafe living environment/neighborhood
- Separation or divorce of parents
- Chronic illness or severe problems in the family
- Death of a loved one
- Moving or changing schools
- Taking on too many activities or having too high expectations
- Family financial problems



What is Coping?

Coping is a complex process that can be defined as "constantly changing the cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person"

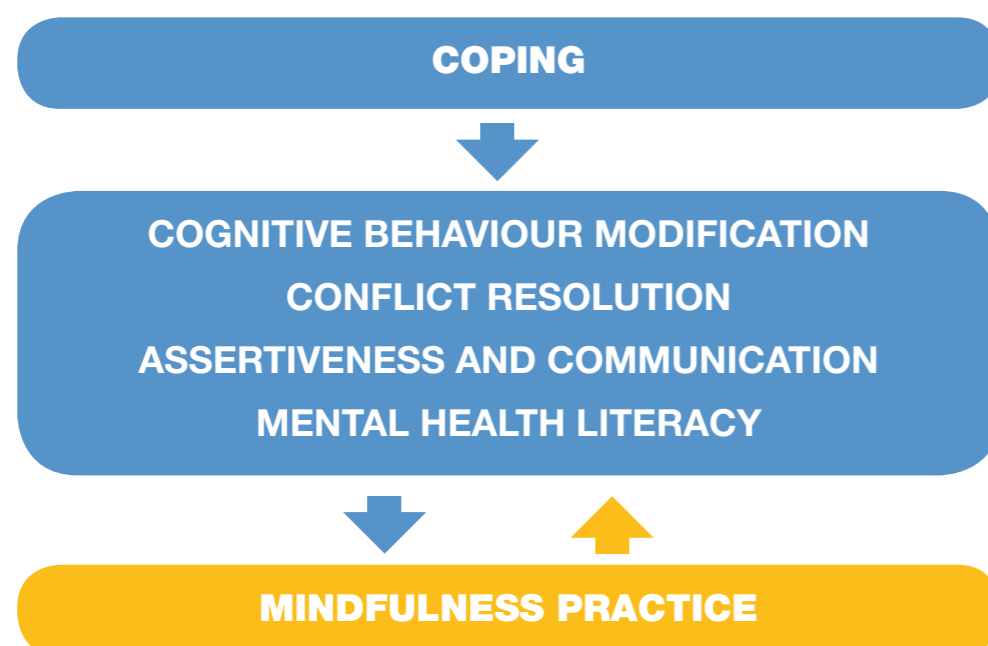
(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

This means that coping is a conscious effort to reduce stress; we can develop coping skills and coping strategies. Perceived control is an important factor in coping; having mastered difficult situations before and previous experiences of being able to cope affect our coping skills.

Coping is an attempt to cover, reduce or master a given psychological conflict, and there are many different ways to cope; they differ from person to person. Coping ability is an important part of health and well-being. Our environment can contribute to and promote our coping skills.

The first step in coping is the cognitive appraisal. Having appraised the situation, individuals can implement coping behaviours to reduce the distress or manage the problem. Increased use of problem-focused coping strategies has been related to an improved psychosocial adjustment in youth.

The coping component consists of four skills:



a. Cognitive Behaviour Modification

Learning to change your thoughts and behaviour

"What you think, you become"

(Buddha)



This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"Your thoughts are running wild or in circles, and you believe that nothing is possible"

"You think that your assignments are too difficult"

"When you are losing in a game by a big difference and you start thinking "I am bad at this" and you start feeling down"



What are the expected results?

Traning Cognitive Behaviour Modification has been designed to help the adolescents to identify negative thoughts and its consequences on the emotions and behaviour, i.e. to develop a different way of thinking, with a positive impact on their feelings and actions.

The objectives are:

- To identify negative thought patterns and thinking traps.
- To reflect on the consequences of thoughts on both the emotions and behaviour.
- To learn strategies for changing thoughts to alter the emotions and behaviour.
- To demonstrate that changing emotions and behaviour can also change your thinking.



What is Cognitive Behaviour Modification?

Cognitive Behaviour Modification focuses on identifying dysfunctional thoughts to change the emotions and behaviour, including:

- 1) Understanding our own thoughts, feelings and actions.
- 2) When necessary, changing the way of thinking to affect the emotions and behaviour.
- 3) Realising that when the emotions and behaviour change, so do the thoughts.

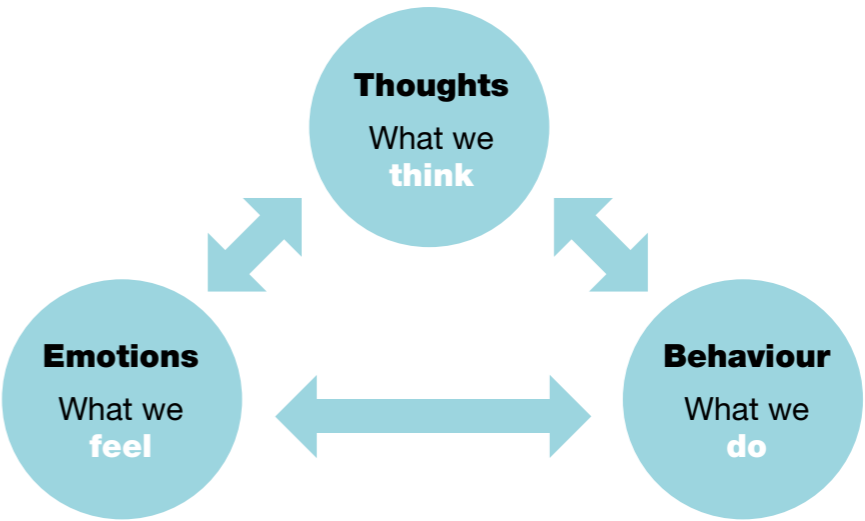
(McLeod, 2008)

According to Cognitive Behaviour Modification at any point in our daily life (A) we produce some thoughts (B), which will have consequences on our behaviour and emotions (C). For example, imagine that you were in a hurry in the morning and you spilt some chocolate milk on your shirt (A). You might think "I am so clumsy, so stupid, I can't do anything right" (B); then, you will become nervous, irritated and you will feel sad (C).

If you think instead, "Well, this can happen to anyone, I'll just change my shirt" (B), you will feel better about yourself, and you will stay calm (C).



Therefore, changing the way of thinking makes a difference in the way we experience life and affects our behaviour. However, it is important to note that altering the emotions and behaviour also changes our thinking because everything is connected.



(Kidsmatter, n.d).

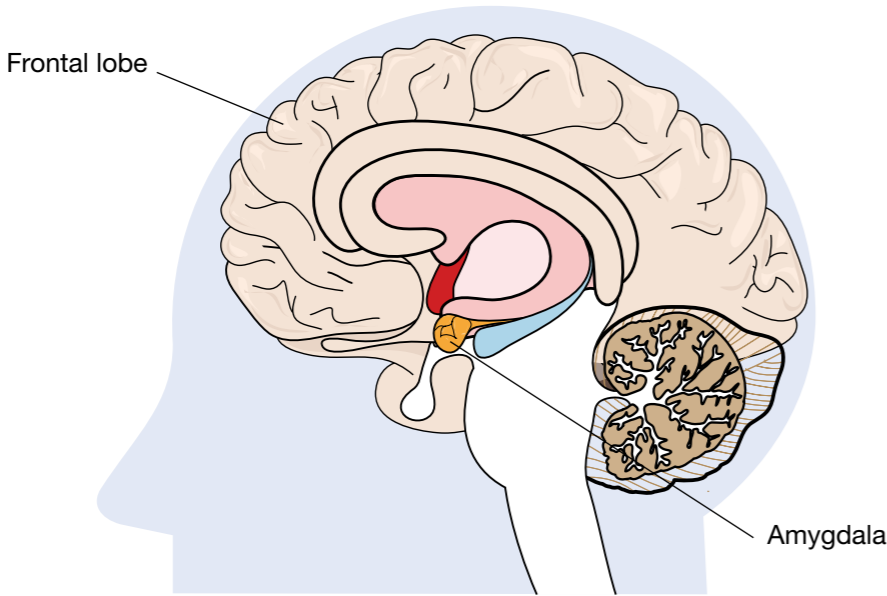
For example, imagine that you are facing an upcoming exam (A) and you think, "There's no way I am passing this test" (B). You will probably be nervous during your exam and, as a result, your performance will worsen (C). However, if you study hard and feel relaxed (C), you will probably think, "I can do this, I will pass" (B).

However, how do we produce those thoughts? Why do we experience thoughts that make us feel bad about ourselves and lead to undesirable outcomes?

Most of the time during our waking hours, we think about all sorts of things. We might believe that our thoughts mirror the world. However, in reality, they are based on what we pay attention to and do not reflect the information we ignore.



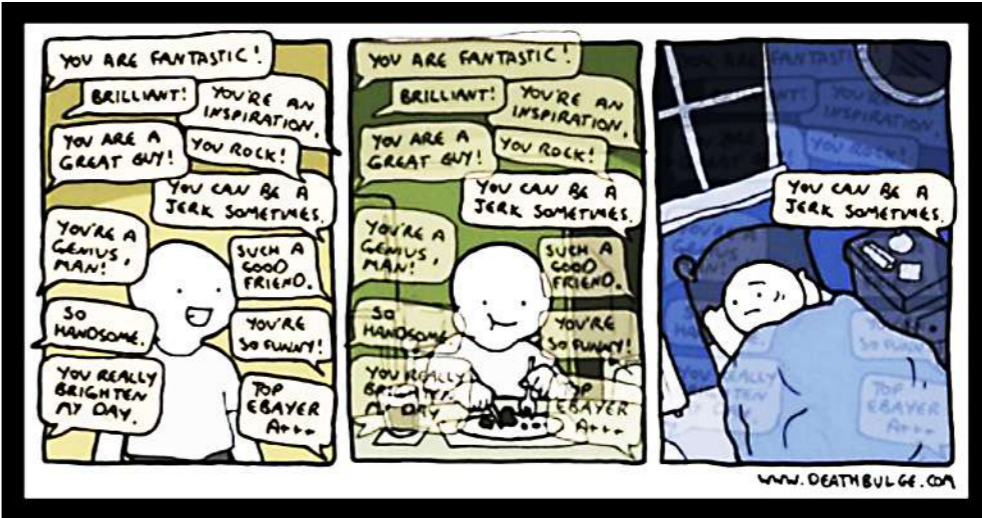
To understand attention, we need to understand how the brain works:



The amygdala, located in the middle of the brain, is the 112 emergency center of the brain; it is activated in cases of danger. The frontal lobe of the brain, the “thinking brain” is the home of our cognition. When we are in danger —e.g. under life-threatening conditions—the emergency center takes over and the “thinking brain” shuts down. Normally, this is helpful because it makes it possible for us to react quickly and automatically without having to think about the best response. Sometimes, however, the emergency center of the brain is activated even though there is no real danger, e.g. before an exam, a presentation at school, etc. Although this may be an overreaction to minor stress, the thinking brain will be put on hold. It will be harder to think rationally and easier to be hijacked by our negative thoughts. Then, we focus automatically on the things that are wrong —or can go wrong —and ignore other information or possible outcomes. These negative thoughts, only reflect the negative aspects of the situation but ignore the rest of the information, are called ‘thinking traps’.

The psychologists have categorised some commonly encountered thinking traps (AnxietyBC, n.d):

- Black or white:** Thinking in extremes (very good or very bad) and not seeing the nuances in-between, e.g., “Nobody likes me” or “He always does that to me”.
- Catastrophizing:** Imagining the worst-case scenario.
For example, your teen’s reaction to getting a bad grade might be: “Now I will never go to university” and observing his/her parents quarrelling: “They are going to get a divorce”.
- Fortune telling:** You believe that you can predict the future, e.g., “No one is going to talk to me at the party”.
- Mind reading:** You believe that you know what others think and you assume it must be negative., e.g., “I know they are talking about me right now. They think I am fat”.
- Negative filter:** Focusing only on the negative without seeing any of the positive aspects or overemphasising a negative event, which might have been only a single episode.



DeathBulge (2013)

The thinking traps make us focus only on the problems, not on finding a solution. To find solutions to our problems, we need to use the “thinking brain” to change our thoughts.

There are several ways of changing your thinking, but the first step is always to become aware of your thoughts and observe how they affect you. Try imagining that your thoughts are like spotlights at a theatre, which only focus on certain objects on the stage. Your thought —or your spotlight—is what you pay attention to. When training and practising new thought patterns, you can take charge of the spotlight and point it in a different direction. When you choose to turn your spotlight towards certain things, this becomes part of your thoughts and behaviour during your daily life. Every moment of your life, you have an opportunity to decide where you will focus your spotlight, i.e. your attention. During a normal day, a lot of things compete for your attention. It is not always easy to control your thoughts because sometimes they come up automatically. However, if you practise, you will become better and better at being in charge of your thoughts—instead of your thoughts being in charge of you. Once you are aware of your negative thoughts, you can start changing them. With a little bit of exercise, you can shift your focus from “I cannot do it” to “It may be difficult, but I can try”.

The Cognitive Behaviour Modification focuses on the following aspects:

- Your thoughts affect your well-being.
- We have thoughts, but we are not our thoughts.
- Thoughts do not mirror the reality. They are often automatic.
- The way of thinking can be changed.
- We can affect our well-being if we are aware of our own thoughts and work to make them more constructive.



Practice

Food for thought:

- Have you ever heard of Cognitive Behaviour Modification and changing your thinking?
- How do your thoughts affect your feelings and behaviour?
- How do your thoughts affect your well-being?
- Can you change your thoughts? How can you change them?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos demonstrating and explaining the skill:

- Cognitive Behaviour Modification: <https://youtu.be/dluDzDK4UuA>



A story for discussion

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.



An old Cherokee chief tells his grandchild about life. He says to his grandchild:

"A war is being fought inside me. It is a terrible battle between two wolves.

One wolf is evil: It is angry and envious. It is greedy, supercilious and hurts other people. It lies and it is selfish, egoistic and arrogant.

The other wolf is good: It is happy, loveable and hopeful and has a peaceful mind. It is modest, friendly, generous and beneficent. It sticks to the truth and is empathic, compassionate and trustworthy.

The same battle goes on inside of you and inside all the other people."

The grandchild thinks about this for some time, and then asks her granddad: "Which wolf is going to win?"

The old chief answers: "The one you feed"

Cherokee Indian legend

Thought detective – challenging thinking traps

A strategy to enhance constructive thought patterns is to start arguing with your negative thoughts and see if they are realistic and accurate. You can do that whenever someone in your family is having negative thoughts or is stuck in a thinking trap.

Now try to act like a detective by questioning your negative or unhelpful thoughts:

- Are they true, are there no exceptions?
- How likely are your thoughts to become real (on a scale of 1 to 10)?
- What would an optimistic friend or your family think or say to you?
- If your thoughts are correct, what is the worst case scenario?
- Are there only negative aspects to your thoughts, or are there also positive aspects?
- How can you get the best out of it?
- Practice saying: "Never mind, what's done is done" – and try to let it go.

Ask these questions whenever they seem relevant to someone in your family. You can reflect on them afterwards:

- Which questions and arguments worked best?
- When is it useful to be a thought detective?
- How can you practice being a thought detective when your family is not there to help you?

Tange (2016)



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

The anchor

Stop for a moment. I invite you to imagine that you are all in your own bubbles. This means that you do not pay attention to the people around you; just give yourself and others some space. You can close your eyes or you can just look at something in front of you.

Now bring your attention to your breathing. Just observe your breathing as it is right now, with kindness and curiosity. You do not need to change it in any way. Just let the breath in and out.

If you like, you can put your hand on your stomach and note the sensations of each breath going in and out. Maybe you will notice a mild movement with every breath. If you are comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just lower your gaze.

There is no right or wrong way to feel it, just breathe in and out; there is no need to control it in any way.

You can try to close one nostril with a finger and breathe through the other. Note your feelings. After a few breaths, change the nostril through which you are breathing. Just observe the sensation of breathing. Maybe you will notice warmth or cold, tingling or dryness.

Return to breathing through both nostrils; just breathe in and breathe out. If you notice that your mind wanders, do not worry; this is just what minds do. Observe where your mind wanders, what thoughts you are experiencing and then, bring your attention back to your breathing. Your breathing is your anchor to the present.

If your mind wanders more than once, bring it back every time. Repeat it as many times as you need. Practice this in silence?

Jónsdóttir (2018)



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Inside Out - Identify emotions:

Disney Pixar. (2015, May 27). Get to Know your "Inside Out" Emotions: Joy [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIGF-Fkxbk0>



Disney Pixar. (2015, May 29). Get to Know your "Inside Out" Emotions: Disgust [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D4oP8UJQ90>



Disney Pixar. (2015, May 30). Get to Know your "Inside Out" Emotions: Fear [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85z4N_sHXJw



Disney Pixar. (2015, May 28). Get to Know your "Inside Out" Emotions: Anger [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HQLg3ZwAs0>



Disney Pixar. (2015, May 31). Get to Know your "Inside Out" Emotions: Sadness [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8h_6uV7Yzs



- Train your ABC:

Powers, J. (2016). ABC (Thinking Traps, too) Video [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/157306562>



- Challenge thinking traps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nNTujmWpsc>

Reivich, K. (n.d.). 2.1 Thinking Traps Introduction [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.coursera.org/lecture/positive-psychology-resilience/2-1-thinking-traps-introduction-OC0na>



b. Conflict Resolution

Learning to solve problems and conflicts

"Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means"

(Ronald Reagan)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you have to study but have no notes"

"When you go with your parents to buy clothes and you have different opinions on what to buy"

"When you do not agree with your friends on which game to choose"

What are the expected results?

Training conflict resolution is useful to support and develop the ability to solve problems and conflicts in a constructive way. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of conflict resolution and demonstrate how good problem-solving skills can help in times of conflict.
- To develop an awareness of strategies for solving problems and conflicts.

What is Conflict Resolution?

Conflicts occur in situations where the activities, feelings or intentions of the parties involved are incompatible. A constructive conflict resolution prevents negative consequences such as unacceptable behaviour or bullying at school

(WHO, 2003)

A conflict might involve a verbal confrontation or manifest itself via certain types of behaviour. Conflicts can be internal or external. Conflicts can emerge among the adolescents, between students and teachers or other people from the immediate environment. The adopted mode of conflict resolution significantly affects the effectiveness of learning and the pro-social behaviours. Both the school and home environment are the places where many conflicts occur and can be successfully resolved. Learning to solve such clashes can improve the levels of cooperation, tolerance and the ability to compromise. Consequently, it may improve the quality of life. Importantly, it is not the conflict per se that causes problems but the way in which it is resolved.

Conflict is a natural phenomenon in any community, both common and inevitable. To reduce its negative aspects and identify the benefits, it is important to acknowledge its existence and handle it appropriately. Conflicts can have many positive outcomes for the individual or the society. The adolescents who are able to resolve the conflicts adaptively are better at coping with stress and other adversities, show greater optimism, have high levels of self-esteem, and their social skills are well developed. They are more likely to be involved in school life and education-related activities, earn better grades, and they are more inquisitive and creative (Coleman, Deutsch, & Marcus, 2014). Constructive resolution of the conflicts brings benefits to the entire community, improving its cohesion and the interpersonal relations. Organisations capable of such conflict rectification function more efficiently and effectively, and the families become more cohesive and caring.

The process of learning to resolve conflicts constructively comprises four elements:

1: Understanding the character of conflict and its causes and identifying its possible benefits.

Adolescents tend to have a negative approach to conflict. They see it from the perspective of anger, hostility and violence. This is why they need to learn to recognise and define conflict as a phenomenon. This can help in problem solving and bring positive results, such as happiness, peace and fulfilment of needs.

2: Choosing the right resolution strategy.

The adolescent should focus on two questions: firstly, how to accomplish the objective, and secondly, how to maintain a good relationship with the other party. They can decide whether to withdraw from the conflict (abandoning the objective and the relationship), impose their will on the other party (accomplishing the objective and abandoning the relationship), adapt (abandoning the objective and maintaining the relationship), compromise (partially relinquish the objective and disturb the relationship) or negotiate (accomplish the objective and maintain the relationship).



3: The ability to prioritise

The adolescent determine which problem should be solved first.

4: Negotiation to solve the problem

To reach a win-win agreement, it is necessary to use the so-called integrative negotiation (accomplishing the aims while maintaining or improving the relationship). The integrative negotiation procedure consists of six stages (Coleman, Deutsch, & Marcus, 2014):

1. Describe what you need, e.g. "I want to use the book now."

This stage requires good communication skills.

2. Describe what you feel, e.g. "I'm frustrated."

The other person must be able to understand your feelings, so try to use simple words.

3. Describe the reasons for your needs and feelings, e.g. "You've been using the book for an hour. If I cannot use it now, I will not be able to meet the deadline. It is frustrating that I have to wait for the book for so long."

This stage involves the expression of intent to cooperate, the ability to listen carefully, separate interests from positions and establish the difference between the positions before attempting to reach a compromise.

4. Assume the perspective of others; show your understanding of their needs, feelings and motivations, e.g. "I understand that you feel..."

This stage requires the ability to look at the problem from both perspectives and to understand the point of view of others.

5. Devise three plans of conflict resolution that will maximise mutual benefits.

At this stage, creative solutions to the conflict are developed.

6. Agree on one action plan and formalise the agreement with a handshake or another accepted gesture (high-five, etc.).

Choosing the right solution to the conflict maximises mutual benefits and strengthens the ability to solve the future conflicts constructively.

Practice

Food for thought:

- What is a conflict?
- What kinds of conflict do you know?
- Do you often participate in or witness conflict situations?
- What are the most common reasons for conflict?
- Which conflict resolution strategies do you know?
- What feelings/emotions accompany conflict?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skills

- Conflict resolution: <https://youtu.be/psJr4fwoqYI>



A story for discussion

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.



Bart and Paul used to be friends for many years. They went to the same class in the primary and secondary schools. Their paths diverged when they went to university; Paul chose history, which had always been his passion, while Bart decided to study mathematics. Although they studied different subjects, they kept in touch. One day, Paul asked Bart to lend him a significant sum of money. As it turned out, Paul was in serious financial problems. Without giving it a second thought, Bart lent him the money, and Paul promised to repay it on a certain day. Then, because they were both very busy, the two friends did not meet for some time.

One day Bart realised that the agreed date of repaying the debt had long passed. He got very angry with Paul and thought, "My best friend had stolen from me!" Bart could not understand why Paul behaved in this way; the longer he thought, the angrier he became, and in the end, he decided to take revenge. He wrote on Paul's social media profile an offensive message in which he called his former friend a thief. When Paul read the message, he felt sorry. He did not know what to do, so he also decided to post an insulting comment about Bart. The war went on, Bart and Paul kept writing insulting comments. Christine, a friend of both men, who had so far remained on the sidelines, decided to help her friends to solve the conflict. She organised a meeting and invited both Bart and Paul (of course, without telling them about each other's presence). When the former friends saw each other at the restaurant, they almost started fighting. Christine managed to calm them down and asked Paul why he did not repay his debt on time. He replied, "I forgot, I had so much to study that I even forgot about my grandma's birthday. If Bart had reminded me about the money, I would have paid it back immediately." Bart listened to this explanation and said, "Why did you not tell me right away? I thought that you had done it on purpose, that you wanted to cheat me!" In the end, the two friends buried the hatchet and forgot about the whole story.

Mazur, Królicka-Deregowska, & Czyz (2018)



Integrative negotiation model

Everyday situations at home may sometimes become a source of conflict.

Remember when you wanted to watch football match of your favourite team on TV and at the same time a movie was broadcast on another channel that your children wanted to watch or you rushed to work, and a family member occupied the bathroom for a long time?

Negotiations are one of the possible ways to resolve the conflict. Imagine that holidays are coming, and your family is planning a holiday together.

Some of you want to go to the sea and some to the lake. Prepare post-it with the word "sea" or "lake" on it (remember that there must be as many of them as family members).

Each of the family members should draw one card with the holiday destination (sea or lake). Take 5-10 minutes to prepare for negotiations, write down your ideas if needed.

Use the integrative negotiation model (Coleman, P; Deutsch, M. & Marcus, E. 2014). You can find in the theory section an example regarding the need to use a book. Practice it in two groups (remember that some of you want to go to the sea and some chose the lake).

- Describe what you need, e.g. "I want to use the book now." This stage requires good communication skills.
- Describe what you feel, e.g. "I'm frustrated." The other person must be able to understand your feelings, so try to use simple words.
- Describe the reasons for your needs and feelings, e.g. "You've been using the book for an hour. If I cannot use it now, I will not be able to meet the deadline. It is frustrating that I have to wait for the book for so long."
- Assume the perspective of others; show your understanding of their needs, feelings and motivations, e.g. "I understand that you feel..." This stage requires the ability to look at the problem from both perspectives and to understand the point of view of others.
- Devise three plans of conflict resolution that will maximise mutual benefits. Agree on one action plan and formalise the agreement with a handshake.

I-message

Naming your emotions results in using I-messages. It is worth learning to talk about yourself. First of all, this form of communication leaves no room for ambiguity and misunderstanding. It is the simplest and most efficient way of expressing yourself. In the situation of conflict and tension, I-messages make it possible to avoid judgements and accusations that hinder reaching agreement.

How to formulate I-messages:

- Be brief
- Use simple language
- Avoid trigger words: but, finally, at all, obviously
- Follow the "here and now" principle
- Never generalise
- Own your feelings

Formulating I-messages: 1. Description of feelings 2. Specific description of the other person's behaviour 3. Description of consequences for me 4. Description of the expected behaviour 5. Potential sanctions, consequences

Example: "I am upset when you disturb me. I can't focus then. I would like you to give me 15 minutes to finish reading this chapter. Otherwise, I won't be able to help you with your task."

In the shortened version of the I-message, points 3 and 5 can be omitted. Example: "I am upset when you disturb me. I would like you to give me 15 minutes to finish reading this chapter."

Formulate I-messages for the following situations:

- 1) Friend from work accuses you of cheating in a competition for the position of manager and threatens to tell the boss. You know this isn't true. I-message:
- 2) The boss is dissatisfied with the effects of your work. You don't agree. I-message:
- 3) Somebody has been disturbing you in the reading room. He keeps asking you questions. I-message:
- 4) Your partner thinks you haven't been doing your chores. You don't think so. I-message:
- 5) You have agreed with a friend that you would both work on an assignment. He hasn't done his part. I-message:



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

The anchor

Stop for a moment. I invite you to imagine that you are all in your own bubbles. This means that you do not pay attention to the people around you; just give yourself and others some space. You can close your eyes or you can just look at something in front of you.

Now bring your attention to your breathing. Just observe your breathing as it is right now, with kindness and curiosity. You do not need to change it in any way. Just let the breath in and out.

If you like, you can put your hand on your stomach and note the sensations of each breath going in and out. Maybe you will notice a mild movement with every breath. If you are comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just lower your gaze.

There is no right or wrong way to feel it, just breathe in and out; there is no need to control it in any way. You can try to close one nostril with a finger and breathe through the other. Note your feelings.

After a few breaths, change the nostril through which you are breathing. Just observe the sensation of breathing. Maybe you will notice warmth or cold, tingling or dryness.

Return to breathing through both nostrils; just breathe in and breathe out. If you notice that your mind wanders, do not worry; this is just what minds do. Observe where your mind wanders, what thoughts you are experiencing and then, bring your attention back to your breathing. Your breathing is your anchor to the present.

If your mind wanders more than once, bring it back every time. Repeat it as many times as you need. Practise this in silence. Remember that your breathing is always there when you want to step out of the autopilot mode and calm down. Just be.



Suggestions for films/videos clips

- Sesame Street. (2012, January 9). Robin Williams: Conflict [Youtube video]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI3e-OUnavQ> (available in all languages with subtitles)



- Brain Pop. (2017, August 23). Conflict resolution [Youtube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EABFICZJy8> (available in all languages with subtitles)



- CPP, Inc. (2014, March 5). Four Tips for Managing Conflict [Youtube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJiJ95mHfE> (available in all languages with subtitles)



c. Assertiveness and Communication Strategies

Learning to listen and respond constructively

"Good communication is the bridge between confusion and clarity"

(Nat Turner)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you disagree with someone, and you do not want to lose your temper"

"When you want to communicate with others the way you want them to communicate with you"

"When you need to listen to another person (for example, parents, or teachers) and be nice".

What are the expected results?

Training assertiveness and communication strategies is useful to support the development of communications skills by both speaking and listening. It should help to express needs and ideas clearly and directly, in a respectful way. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of communication, to be aware of their own ways of communicating and those of other people
- To develop different strategies of good communication.

What is assertiveness and communication strategies?

The ability to present things in a clear, precise and meaningful way. Active listening is needed, as well as the ability to express your thoughts clearly to convey your own ideas and to motivate and convince others

Fullan, 2013

Assertive communication relies on the ability to express the positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest and direct way. At the same time, this form of communication respect your rights and those of the others (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008).

Assertiveness is based on balance. You say what you need to say firmly, fairly and with empathy but you consider the needs and wants of others. Sometimes communication is not assertive and based on aggressiveness; you say what is in your own interest without considering the rights, needs or feelings of other people. Communication might also be passive; this happens when you do not clarify your needs and opinions and/or let others decide for you. To communicate assertively means:

- Saying what you think and feel without demeaning or hurting others.
- Communicating in an open-minded, honest and direct manner.
- Basing the communication on yourself; using "I" instead of "you", thus avoiding direct confrontation.
- Consistency in speech, body language and tone.
- Respecting others and still being able to set your own limits.







Within the framework of communication, it can be divided into four different styles:

Passive	Aggressive	Passive-aggressive	Assertive
You avoid expressing opinions and feelings	You express and advocate your own feelings and opinions, violating the rights of others	You are passive on the surface but expressing your anger in a subtle way	You clearly state your opinions and feelings and firmly advocate your rights and needs without violating the rights of others
You say too little too late	You say too much too quickly	You say nothing but think differently	You say the right thing at the right time
Feelings: You have feelings of fear, anxiety, guilt, fatigue or nervousness	Feelings: You have feelings of anger, rage, hate or hostility	Feelings: You avoid showing your true feelings	Feelings: You have feelings related to the situation and act upon them constructively
Verbal expression: Oh, it does not mean a thing If you don't mind Sorry	Verbal expression: Oh, you had better take care because.... What delusions do you have? Ridiculous Foolish	Verbal expression: Oh, I don't mind (but I do) It's okay (but it is not) Don't think of me (do)	Verbal expression: I think... I feel... I wish... What do you mean?
Body language You twist your hands. You bend your head. Your eyes are unfocused. Your voice is hesitant, insecure.	Body language You point with your fingers. You lean forward. You stare. You raise your voice.	Body language You mutter to yourself instead of confronting the issue. You use facial expressions that do not match your feelings. You use irony and sarcasm.	Body language You have a natural body posture. Your movements are relaxed. You maintain good eye contact. You use a strong, calm voice.

Andreasen, R. & Tange, N. (2014). Assertiv kommunikation. Presentation at Lederne, Denmark.

Communication is more than words. Our body language, facial expressions and tone of voice are all part of communication. In assertive communication, the words you say are in alignment with your feelings and your body language.

Shelly Gable (2004, 2006) has researched the significance of our response to others and to our mutual relationships. Her theory, called Active-Constructive Responding, states that our way of responding has a significant effect on our relationships. We can strengthen or weaken a relationship depending on whether our response is constructive or destructive, active or passive. In dialogues with others, we can respond in four different ways:

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
CONSTRUCTIVE	Listening with engagement Good eye-contact Being present  Fantastic. I knew you could do it. Tell me about it	Low on energy Delayed response Quiet  Well, that is nice ... for you.
DESTRUCTIVE	Demears what is said Repellent Condescending  I don't believe you. Why would you do that?	Listening without paying real attention Avoid responding Ignoring the person speaking  Okay, keep going, I am listening (while doing something else)

Our self-perception is reinforced when we feel that others:

- **Understand us:** I understand what you say.
- **Approve of us:** I understand how you feel—even if I disagree.
- **Care for us:** I want what is best for you.

Although the active-constructive response looks easy in specific examples, it might be hard to achieve in practice.

In communicating with others, dialogue is often the chosen way. A dialogue means that two or more people communicate and the situation is characterised by open-mindedness, good will and collaboration. In a dialogue, we listen attentively to each other. We stay open and curious and want what is best for each other. To listen attentively and actively is an important component of communication.

Communication is paramount to the quality of our relationships. Having talked to us, the others can feel happier or sadder, or their mood might remain unchanged. Marcial Losada has investigated communications in groups. He concluded that similarly to the positivity ratio (we need more positive than negative emotions to thrive), we need more positive than negative statements in communication processes. For a well-functioning group, we need approximately 5 times more positive than negative statements. For an ordinary group, we need approximately twice as many positive as negative statements. In a dysfunctional group, only a third of the communication statements are positive (Losada, 2004)

To connect and communicate effectively, use of humour can be very helpful because it activates positive emotions and brings feelings of relatedness. To communicate using humour, you must have the ability to appreciate jokes and describe things in an amusing manner. An important issue to remember is that the sense of humour differs from person to person, from culture to culture and its expression varies widely, ranging from funny remarks and humorous statements to irony and sarcasm.



Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know about communication?
- What does good communication consist of?
- Have you ever failed to communicate with someone? If so, why or why not?

Illustration of the skill

Link to videos showing and explaining the skills.

- Assertiveness and communication strategies: <https://youtu.be/82QKek-3BkY>



A story for discussion

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.



Bucket and dipper

Everyone in the family can contribute to positive emotions and positive communication.

Imagine that we all have an invisible bucket. When your bucket is full, you feel happy, connected, and full of energy. When your bucket is empty, you feel poorly and exhausted.

Imagine also that we all have an invisible dipper, which we can use to refill or empty the buckets of others. What fills a bucket is positive communication such as positive comments, active listening, paying attention, strength spotting. What takes away from the contents of buckets is negative communication such as bad comments, negative criticism and lack of attention.

When you fill the buckets, you and others find out how to communicate to create good days, good experiences, and good relations.

Reflect upon the communication in your family:

- Are you good at filling each other's buckets?
- Do you have a person in the family who is most often in charge of filling/emptying the buckets?
- What can you do to improve the communication in the family?
- How can you help your children?

A pocket full of beads

Fill your right-hand pocket with beads at the beginning of the day.

Every time you feel that you have contributed to positive communication, move a bead into your left-hand pocket.

At the end of the day, check how many times you have succeeded in supplying a positive communication input.





Being aware of your own communication helps you to be a role-model for your child. You might even have a positive-communication-day in the family where you complete to feel a jar wish as many positive comments as possible.

Type of responding

Watch one of the following videos with the family:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ymm86c6DAF4>

You will see 4 different ways of responding to each other:

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
CONSTRUCTIVE	Listening with engagement Good eye-contact Being present  Fantastic. I knew you could do it. Tell me about it	Low on energy Delayed response Quiet  Well, that is nice ... for you.
DESTRUCTIVE	Demeans what is said Repellent Condescending  I don't believe you. Why would you do that?	Listening without paying real attention Avoid responding Ignoring the person speaking  Okay, keep going, I am listening (while doing something else)



Active listening

Try this exercise at the dinner table. In the first part of the exercise, you tell your family about your day. Your family members use as many techniques for active listening as possible: smiling, nodding, humming, eye contact, etc.

Next, you tell your family about the plans for the weekend. Your family members should try to avoid listening actively by avoiding eye contact, fiddling with something, turning their heads away, being a bit restless, etc.

Then, you swap places and let a family member tell you some stories while you listen first very actively and then very passively.

Talk about how this made you feel and what happens in situations in your family when you are listening actively to each other and when you are not.

Bad habits

Below is the list of nine bad habits in listening.

Find a bad listening behaviour of which some of you in the family might be guilty when communicating with each other and discuss it. Try to be honest.

- I interrupt often or try to finish the sentences of others ...
- I jump to conclusions ...
- I am often too paternalistic and answer with advice, even when not requested ...
- I make up my mind before I have all the information ...
- I do not give any response ...
- I am impatient ...
- I lose my temper when I hear opinions with which I do not agree ...
- I try to change the subject to something that relates to my own experiences ...
- While the other person is speaking, I think more about my reply than of what he or she is saying ...
- Each of you now pick a bad habit you would like to improve.

Write it on a list and put it somewhere visible.

Review your progress after a week.

Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below

Shake it up—calm it down, body and breathing

Stand up, with your chair behind you. Be careful not to be too close to the next person. Create your own bubble, giving you and the people around you sufficient space. Just look straight ahead and follow my guidance. Start by shaking your left hand 8 times, your right hand 8 times, your left foot 8 times and your right foot 8 times. Then shake your left hand 4 times, your right hand 4 times, your left foot 4 times and the right foot 4 times. Now shake twice your left hand, your right hand, your left and right foot. Repeat the same exercise, once for each hand and foot, then jump and clap your hands.

Sit down slowly and mindfully. Notice, to the best of your ability, how your body moves as you sit down, remaining in your own bubble; just be aware of yourself and your body.

While you are sitting, pay attention to your feet flat on the floor, your legs uncrossed and your spine straight.

Imagine that you are sitting majestically like a mountain. The posture is strong but comfortable. Your intention is to be awake and aware. You can lower your gaze or allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable.

Imagine that your attention is like a flashlight that you will use to examine your body and look at what you find there, with curiosity and kindness. You can start with moving the flashlight of attention to your feet. Then, include your feet and ankles. Are there any sensations that you notice there: the touch of your socks, heat or cold, or maybe nothing? If there are no sensations and you simply register a blank, this is just fine. You are not trying to make anything up or change anything; you are just paying attention to what is already there. Now, expand your attention to the lower legs... and then the knees... and the thighs. Thus, you are "holding onto" both your legs now, centering your awareness. Now, expand your attention again, up to the hips, the lower back and the lower abdomen. Then, gradually broadening your attention, move up the torso to your chest and the back, right up to your shoulders. Do you notice any physical sensation here?

Now, expand again to include your arms, your neck, face and your head until you are aware of your whole body. See if it is possible to allow the sensations in your body to remain just as they are, not trying to control or change anything. Just sit. Now, bring your awareness to the centre of the body, to the sensation of breathing. Notice that your breath moves in and out of the body. If you like, you can place your hand there for a few breaths and feel the abdomen rising and falling. Just breathe in and out. Do not try to control your breathing at all. When you notice that your mind wanders away from the breathing to thinking, planning, remembering or daydreaming, do not criticise yourself, simply notice where it goes and then gently bring back your attention to breathing. This is the only thing that you need to do: pay attention to your breathing.

Just come back to breathing whenever your mind wanders. Remember that breathing is always there, an anchor where you can attach your attention and bring you back to the present. It is always there, deep within you, a place of stillness and peace. Now, slowly emerge from the exercise and notice the people around you.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Inside out (2015):

Disney Pixar. (2014, December 11). Inside Out – Official US Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRUazGQ3nSY>



- Active Listening (available in all languages using automatic translation):

SpunOut.ie. (2015, October 4). 6 Tips for Active Listening #LittleThings [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWe_ogA5YCU



- Active Listening (available in all languages using automatic translation):

Optimal Lifestyle. (2014, April 14). Active Listening. How to be a great listener [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_-rNd7h6z8



- Active-Constructive Responding (available only in English):

ksResiliencyCenter. (2013, May 30). Active Constructive Responding [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI05ST5LLIQ>



- Example of assertive, aggressive and passive communication (available only in English):

Centerforconfidence. (2008, April 24). Assertiveness scenarios: 10 examples [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ymm86c6DAF4>



d. Mental Health Literacy

Learning to recognise mental illness
and act accordingly

"The only thing more
exhausting than having a mental illness
is pretending like you don't"

(Healthyplace.com)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"You feel sad, and you do not know if it is normal."

"You or someone close to you feels very sad or nervous and you would like to know how to help."

"You do not know what depression or anxiety is."

What are the expected results of this session?

Training mental health literacy is useful to improve the understanding of mental health issues and the ability to face them appropriately. The objectives are:

- Understanding of mental health literacy.
- Recognising depression and anxiety disorders.
- Finding ways of preventing depression and anxiety.
- Developing an awareness of causes of depression or anxiety during adolescence.
- Obtaining the available professional help and searching for the mental health information.



What is mental health literacy?

Mental health literacy refers to the “knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders, which aid their recognition, management or prevention”

(Jorm et al., 1997).

In UPRIGHT we will focus on providing the information on anxiety and depression and strategies to cope, because these are two of the most common disorders during adolescence. Approximately half of the adolescents diagnosed with depression also suffer from anxiety disorder. A large European study (Polanczyk et al., 2015) assessing approximately 12,000 adolescents from 11 countries has estimated the prevalence of anxiety disorder in youths as 5.8%. They have also found some anxiety symptoms in 32%, depression in 10.5%, and some depression symptoms in 29.2% of the adolescent populations.

The basic knowledge of depression and anxiety disorders can help to respond appropriately to the symptoms of psychological distress. Most people know how to prevent flu, or how to take care of yourself when you have a fever. However, the methods to prevent depression or to treat anxiety are not commonly known. In this chapter, we will focus on the need for improved mental health literacy in the whole community.

Depression in adolescence

Depression is a mood disorder; it is characterised by prolonged periods of low-mood state. Even though not all teenagers experience depression in the same way, there are some common symptoms in most cases of depression.

Most of the symptoms are similar to those of depression in adults; however, some adolescents may appear angry or engage in risky behaviour, sometimes called “acting out”. This disorder can be difficult to diagnose in young people because they often lack the vocabulary to express their feelings. For example, the teenagers developing depression are likely to use terms such as “stressed” rather than “depressed”.

To differentiate between “normal low mood” and “depression”, the following symptoms should be observed for at least 2 weeks, and they should be severe enough to affect the daily activities (ability to play, make friends, and complete schoolwork):

Is the teenager depressed or stressed? Symptoms of teen depression (Smith et al., 2018)



- Constant feelings of irritability, sadness or anger.
- Nothing seems fun anymore, and the teenager just does not see the point of trying.
- The teenager feels bad about himself/herself—worthless, guilty, or just “wrong” in some way.
- Problems with sleeping too much or not enough.
- Frequent and unexplained headaches, body pains, muscle tensions, upset stomach, digestive problems, dizziness.
- Extreme sensitivity to criticism. Depressed teenagers are overcome by feelings of worthlessness, making them extremely vulnerable to criticism, rejection and failure. This is a particular problem for “over-achievers”.
- Withdrawing from some, but not all, people. Depressed teenagers usually keep up at least some friendships. However, individuals with depression may socialise less than before, pull away from their parents, or start “hanging out” with a different group.
- Crying easily (even watching commercials).
- Gain or loss of weight without consciously trying to do it.
- Problems concentrating; the school grades may be plummeting as a result.
- Feeling helpless and hopeless.
- The teenager may have thoughts about death, dying or suicide (if this is true, the teenager should talk to someone right away!).

Causes of depression in adolescence (Smith et al., 2018)

- Chemical imbalance in the brain.
- Hormonal changes.
- Problems at home or school.
- Being bullied at school or online.
- High social media usage (teenagers tend to compare themselves unfavourably with their peers on social media, which promotes feelings of depression and isolation).
- Doubts about who you are and where you fit in.
- Family history of depression.
- Early childhood trauma, such as loss of a parent or physical or emotional abuse.

How to prevent teen depression (Smith et al., 2018)

- **Being well informed:** Knowing the warning signs and symptoms can help the adolescent to identify feelings of depression.
- **Doing exercise:** Exercise triggers biological changes (increasing endorphin levels), which can assist in improving the mood.
- **Connecting:** The teenager should be surrounded with trusted, positive people with whom he/she feels safe and comfortable in case she/he needs to confide.
- **Sleeping well:** Sleeping is essential for a healthy and balanced lifestyle.
- **Eating healthily:** The diet should be low in sugar, low in fat and processed foods, which can make one feel sluggish and tired. The teenagers should eat more fruit, vegetables and whole foods. They should drink plenty of water.
- **Understanding the negative thinking patterns:** The teenagers should learn about the effect of negative thoughts, and challenge themselves to acquire a more positive outlook.



Anxiety in adolescence

Anxiety is associated with the brain response to perceived danger, the stimuli that an organism attempts to avoid. Anxiety has a useful adaptive role when well balanced. Anxiety disorders are generally more common in adolescent girls than in boys.

What does anxiety feel like?

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

Common examples include:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Stomach pain or discomfort, nausea
- Feeling dizzy, lightheaded or unsteady
- Feelings of foginess, as if everything were unreal, feelings of detachment from oneself
- Feeling very hot or cold
- Feeling a lump in the throat or choking
- Headaches
- Numbness or tingling
- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid breathing (hyperventilating), feeling short of breath or holding your breath
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking

ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

Worries about a current situation or about some future event.

Examples:

- I'll fail my exam
- My Mom might forget to pick me after school
- My teacher will yell at me and students will laugh
- That dog might bite me
- The world is a dangerous place
- What if I fall off my bike and everyone laughs?
- What if I throw up at school?
- What if my Mom or Dad dies?

ANXIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Anxious teens avoid!

Avoidance means not doing things or refusing to go out. In situations with no real danger, avoidance makes it difficult to cope with challenges or to engage in age-appropriate activities.

Common examples include:

Difficulty in raising hand in class or reading aloud, excessive fear of making mistakes or desire to be "perfect" in appearance and in work projects, not getting routine injections or dentalwork, not going out with other children or having few friends because of social fears, not sleeping in his or her own bedroom or refusing to attend sleepovers, refusing to go to school for any number of reasons (e.g., exams, performances, bullying, difficult social situations), refusing to participate in sports, dances or other performance-related activities.

Experiencing for at least 3 months (Siegel & Dickstein, 2012):

- Excessive fear
- Avoidance of whatever is feared
- Anticipation and worry when expected to face whatever is feared
- Physical symptoms such as shortness of breath, palpitations, stomach ache, and dizziness
- Social withdrawal from both peers and activities

Youngsters may express their anxiety behaviourally, (for example crying, throwing tantrums, "freezing" or clinging) rather than verbally describe their fears.

Even though the above symptoms are common to all anxiety disorders, there are several known types of anxiety:

- Separation anxiety disorder (fear of separation from those to whom the individual is attached).
- Specific phobias (fear of specific objects or animals, e.g., spiders).
- Social phobia (fear of being embarrassed in social situations).
- Agoraphobia (fear because the environment is perceived unsafe).
- Panic disorder (People experience unexpected and repeated panic attacks. They become terrified that they might have more attacks. They fear that something bad will happen because of the attack [such as going crazy, losing control or dying]).
- Generalised anxiety disorder (excessive and uncontrollable worries about daily life events and activities).

Is anxiety normal during adolescence?

Although experiencing anxiety is acutely distressing, it happens to most adolescents and is typically transient.

Anxiety may start at any age. Most adolescents experience some anxiety related to fear of negative evaluation by their peers, their school performance, social competence and health issues. These fears are normal and are a part of the psychological development in the adolescence. However, the adults should look for help when anxiety symptoms presented by the teenagers are severe, persistent (more than 3 months) and interfere with their functioning at home, school or in peer encounters.

Causes of anxiety in adolescents (Helpguide.org, ND)

- People who are distressed and nervous in new situations and shy around unfamiliar people are particularly vulnerable to anxiety.
- Parental anxiety disorders: overall, children of parents with at least one anxiety disorder carry a substantially increased risk of acquiring such a disorder.
- Difficulty with peer relationships.
- Avoiding feared situations can maintain, continue or worsen the anxiety.
- Parental overprotection or parental rejection.
- Adverse experiences in childhood (e.g., loss of parents, divorce, physical and sexual abuse).
- Threatening events tend to precede anxiety disorder.

How to prevent teenager anxiety

- Obtain information about the feared situation or object.
- Use positive self-talk when faced with the feared situation.
- Practice relaxation techniques to control physical arousal.
- Practice mindfulness to control the focus of your attention.
- Disclose your fears to someone you trust.
- Believe that you can control, and shape your own life.



Practice

Food for thought:

"Raise your hand when the answer is YES".

- Do you know what the flu is? YES / NO
- Do you know what to do if you have the flu? YES / NO
- Do you know how to help if someone has the flu? YES / NO

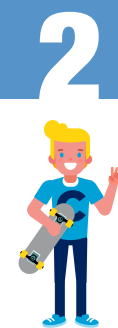
"People generally know something about taking care of their physical health. However, if we ask you about other illness types such as ANXIETY or DEPRESSION, the picture might be different":

- Do you know what anxiety or depression is? YES / NO
- Do you know what to do if you suffer from anxiety or depression? YES / NO
- Do you know how to help if someone suffers from anxiety or depression? YES / NO

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill

Mental health literacy: <https://youtu.be/semiahBpzl>



A story for discussion

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.



Depression can strike anyone at any time. Take me for example. I was a typical teenager at high school but I was struggling with my depression and anxiety. One day I found myself in tears and contemplating suicide. I felt very overwhelmed and alone. During this crisis, I managed to take a deep breath and contact a friend. I hadn't seen this friend in almost 12 months but something inside of me told me to reach out for support and that she would understand.

My beautiful friend stayed in contact with me as I told her how I was feeling. My anxiety tried to overpower me – it told me not to waste her time, not to get the help and support I needed. My friend told me she was coming to get me. She was coming to get me from the other side of town to take me back to her house for the weekend. I sent back messages asking her not to come, not to let me burden her with my problems. She came anyway.

She provided me with some much needed emotional support. She listened to me and she sat with me during my time of distress. At the time, I felt so overwhelmed by her love and support. I also felt surprised. Surprised that she honestly cares about me, more than I realised and surprised that she was willing to help. I also felt guilty. Guilty about confiding in her and having her come to me, to support me. This is false guilt – guilt fueled by my depression and anxiety.

The outcome from this recent crisis and the support from my friend has been very positive. I have managed to connect with my counsellor and my GP about what happened and our friendship is now stronger and more important than it has ever been.

Further suggestions:

Reflect upon what can you learn from it? What are the important messages from this story?

As guidance:

You don't have to be a mental health expert to be able to help a person with depression or anxiety. Being just someone that cares, and provides company is the best help you can give. Always seek for professional help in addition to informal care.

Beyond Blue Ltd. (2016). Personal stories ("Steph"). Retrieved from <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/personal-stories/story/steph>



Dilemma for family discussion

You know that your friend has an anxiety disorder, is afraid of social gatherings and prefers to be just with you. You have been invited to a birthday party and you are told that you are welcome to bring your friend along.

What do you do?

As guidance:

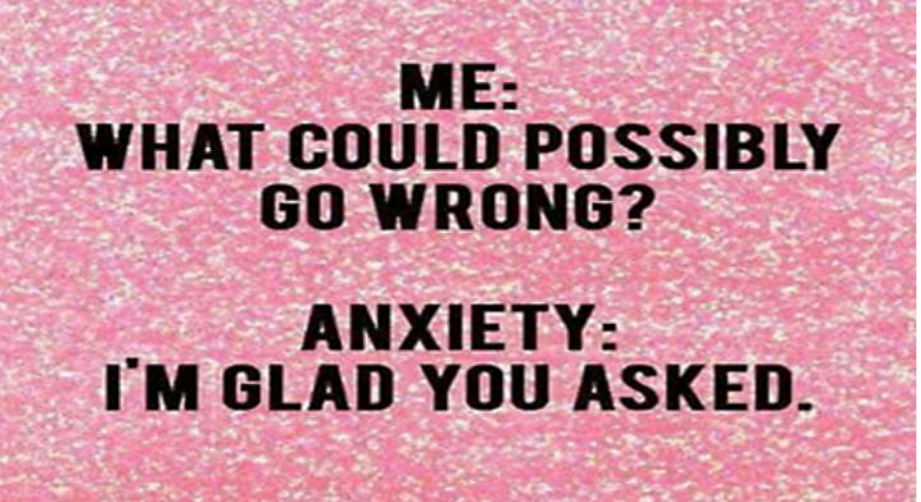
Avoiding the feared situation leads to maintenance of the anxiety disorder. A possible strategy is to plan ahead how to deal with the situation, so the person does not feel so anxious about it. For instance, as a friend you could introduce him/her some of the people that goes to the party, so she/he is less anxious.

Cartoons – Anxiety Joke

Objective:

A strategy to improve the knowledge of mental health issues is to understand the meaning of mental health literacy.

Reflect on your own or discuss with a family member the meaning of this joke.



As guidance:

This joke refers to the fact that anxiety will always produce a negative response to any question you ask. It is advisable to know how to distinguish between a realistic response and an anxious response.

Further suggestions:

Reflect on your own or with a partner, and discuss: There are many jokes about mental illness. Maybe you know some. Are they funny? Why/why not?

Purple Clover. (2017, March 02). Me: What could possibly go wrong? Anxiety: I am glad you asked [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/purpleclvr/photos/a.375609882543951.1073741828.369508529820753/1719187524852840/?type=3&theater>

Cartoons: Depression

Objective:

A strategy to improve the knowledge of mental health issues is to become aware of the causes of depression.

Reflect on your own or discuss with a family member the meaning of these cartoons.



Mental Health America. [cartoons by Gemma Correll. Reproduced with expressed permission] (2018, June 04) #mentalillnessfeelslike. Don't keep mental illness to yourself. There's power in sharing. Retrieved from: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike>

Suggestions for debriefing:

Discuss the meaning of these cartoons.

Cartoon 1:

When you are feeling depressed, it is common to look at those around you and think that they have everything sorted out and that you are the only one who does not get things right. However, we all have similar thoughts from time to time; this is normal. In other words, the reality is not always what it seems. Such thoughts lead to feelings of inferiority common in depression.

Cartoon 2:

People who know little about depression often think that the sufferer somehow causes the disorder; it is their own fault, they brought it down on themselves, etc. They might even think that the person wants to be depressed! This is not true; depression is an illness. When you break your leg, you cannot walk; when you are depressed, you feel that you are incapable of doing many things. Depressed people are doing their best every day, trying to recover. Instead of criticising the sufferers; you should offer help, understanding and compassion.



Is one depressed?

Objective:

A strategy to improve the knowledge of mental health issues is to become aware of the available professional help and the ways to seek mental health information.

Your child's friend seems very low or troubled; you may suspect depression.

How do you know it is not just a passing phase or a bad mood?:

Look for common warning signs of teenage depression:

- Your child's friend does not want to do the things that you both used to love.
- Your child's friend starts using alcohol, drugs, or hangs out with a bad crowd.
- Your child's friend stops going to classes and after-school activities.
- Your child's friend talks about being bad, ugly, stupid, or worthless.
- Your child's friend starts talking about death or suicide.

Brainstorm on how you can help your child's friend and how else can he or she get help.

Source: Smith MA, Robinson L, Segal J. Teenager's Guide to Depression. (2018 June). Retrieved from: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/teenagers-guide-to-depression.htm>

Further suggestions:

Reflect or discuss with a family member possible way of helping your child's friend

Professional help available for anxiety and depression

Family doctor. Paediatricians and primary-care doctors are not mental health professionals. However, some are trained to recognise the symptoms of mental health disorders and can help to distinguish between these and other health problems. They can make a referral to another doctor/mental health professional if such need arises.

Psychologist. Psychotherapy helps by teaching new ways of thinking and behaving and changing habits that may be contributing to depression/anxiety. Therapy can help any person understand and work through difficult relationships or situations that may be causing or worsening depression. The treatments for depression and anxiety disorders include psychoeducation, relaxation techniques, exposure and systematic desensitisation and cognitive behaviour therapy.

It takes time to get better. A person could be going through a trauma associated with a particular situation. This might gradually improve if the person has time to process his/her feelings (for example, grieving the death of a loved one or a difficult break-up). The person might be just trying to adjust to a new environment (e.g. switching lockers to get away from a bully), or the person might have other long-term mental health issues. Medication may also help, if needed (always under the supervision of a doctor). Depression is difficult to deal with and hard to treat; however, it is important to remember that, when treated, 80% of the sufferers recover.

Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Shake it up = calm it down

Stand up, with your chair behind you. Be careful not to be too close to the next person. Create your own bubble, giving you and the people around you sufficient space. Just look straight ahead and follow my guidance. Start by shaking your left hand 8 times, your right hand 8 times, your left foot 8 times and your right foot 8 times. Then shake your left hand 4 times, your right hand 4 times, your left foot 4 times and the right foot 4 times. Now shake twice your left hand, your right hand, your left and right foot. Repeat the same exercise, once for each hand and foot, then jump and clap your hands.

Sit down slowly and mindfully. Notice, to the best of your ability, how your body moves as you sit down, remaining in your own bubble; just be aware of yourself and your body.

While you are sitting, pay attention to your feet flat on the floor, your legs uncrossed and your spine straight. Imagine that you are sitting majestically like a mountain. The posture is strong but comfortable. Your intention is to be awake and aware. You can lower your gaze or allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable.

Imagine that your attention is like a flashlight that you will use to examine your body and look at what you find there, with curiosity and kindness. You can start with moving the flashlight of attention to your feet. Then, include your feet and ankles. Are there any sensations that you notice there: the touch of your socks, heat or cold, or maybe nothing? If there are no sensations and you simply register a blank, this is just fine. You are not trying to make anything up or change anything; you are just paying attention to what is already there. Now, expand your attention to the lower legs... and then the knees... and the thighs. Thus, you are "holding onto" both your legs now, centering your awareness. Now, expand your attention again, up to the hips, the lower back and the lower abdomen. Then, gradually broadening your attention, move up the torso to your chest and the back, right up to your shoulders. Do you notice any physical sensation here?

Now, expand again to include your arms, your neck, face and your head until you are aware of your whole body. See if it is possible to allow the sensations in your body to remain just as they are, not trying to control or change anything. Just sit. Now, bring your awareness to the centre of the body, to the sensation of breathing. Notice that your breath moves in and out of the body. If you like, you can place your hand there for a few breaths and feel the abdomen rising and falling. Just breathe in and out. Do not try to control your breathing at all. When you notice that your mind wanders away from the breathing to thinking, planning, remembering or daydreaming, do not criticise yourself, simply notice where it goes and then gently bring back your attention to breathing. This is the only thing that you need to do: pay attention to your breathing.

Just come back to breathing whenever your mind wanders. Remember that breathing is always there, an anchor where you can attach your attention and bring you back to the present. It is always there, deep within you, a place of stillness and peace. Now, slowly emerge from the exercise and notice the people around you.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

Videos of depression:

These videos illustrate depression using real examples, and short films.

Available with automatic subtitles in different languages:

- Reach Out Australia. (2013, February 20). Olivia's story.



- Mind, the mental health charity. (2014, October 8). Mental Health: In Our Own Words.



- TED-Ed. (2015, December 15). What is depression? - Helen M. Farrell.



- MHACentralCarolinas. (2016, April 27). Eliminando el Estigma Asociado con la Salud Mental.



Available in English only:

- Barking and Dagenham Council. (2017, February 1). Breaking the Stigma - A short film about mental health.

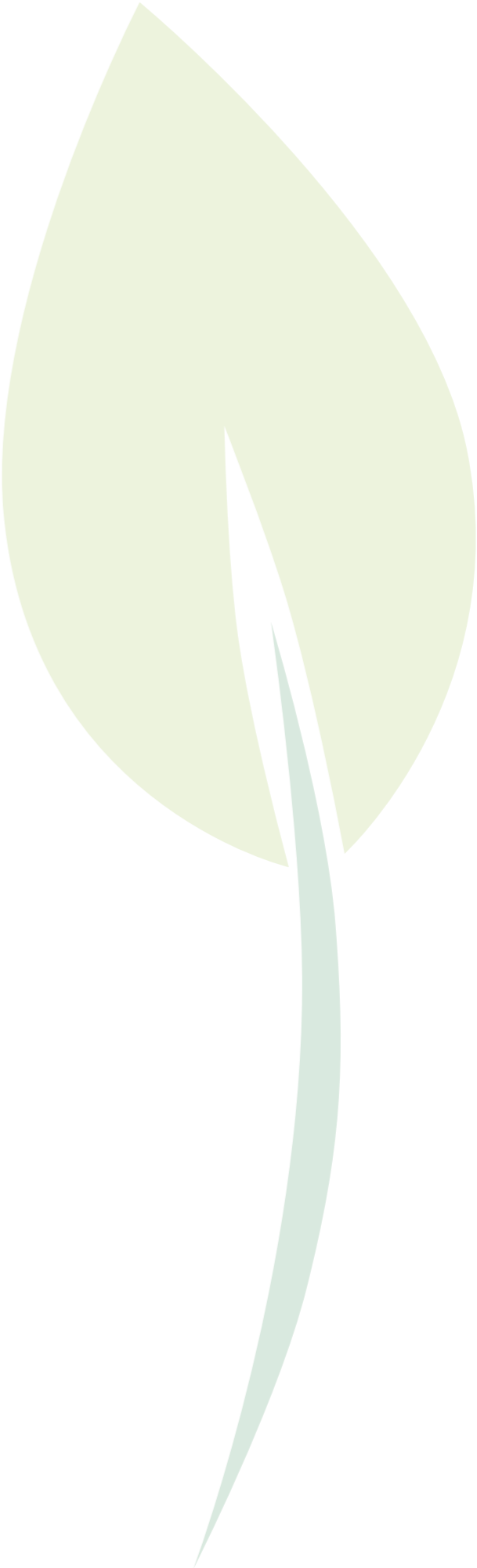


- Jack Innanen. (2015, April 7). Stronger Than Stigma | Mental Health Short Film.



Movies (trailer):

- Disney - Pixar. (2014, December 11). Inside Out - Official US Trailer.



3



EFFICACY

- SELF-EFFICACY
- GROWTH MINDSET
- EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE
- SOCIAL RESILIENCE
- LEADERSHIP

3 EFFICACY

"In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life"

(Albert Bandura)

Introductory questions

- Have you ever heard of efficacy before?
- Do you know what it means?
- What do you think it includes?

Illustration of the Component

- Watch this video about EFFICACY: <https://youtu.be/TjG6jurP6Yo>



Why is important to train in Efficacy skills?

Efficacy skills help you develop your mindset and you expectancies for yourself and it helps you become more resilient.

The UPRIGHT program for teaching efficacy will work to improve trust in own abilities, understand that effort is something valuable and worth it, bounce back from setbacks, be strong as a group and be able to influence and take responsibility in a group.

What is Efficacy?

Efficacy is defined as the ability to produce a desired or intended result. It is the competence of behavioural performance of an individual associated with his perception of performance capabilities

(Nugent, 2013)

The efficacy related skills consist of:



a. Self-efficacy

Learning strategies to trust in own abilities

“They can conquer who believe they can”

(Virgil)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

“When you have to stay at home alone for the first time, or cook your meal for the first time, and you need to be more independent and feel confident.”



“When you feel insecure or shy because you think different from the rest of your group and you want to have the courage to stay true to who you really are.”

“When you are going to start a new activity in which you don't have much experience, e.g. to stand on a stage, speak in public, or speak in a new language that you are learning.”

What are the expected results?

Training self-efficacy is useful to support and develop self-efficacy of the adolescents. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of self-efficacy and the way it affects our actions.
- To develop different strategies to improve self-efficacy.



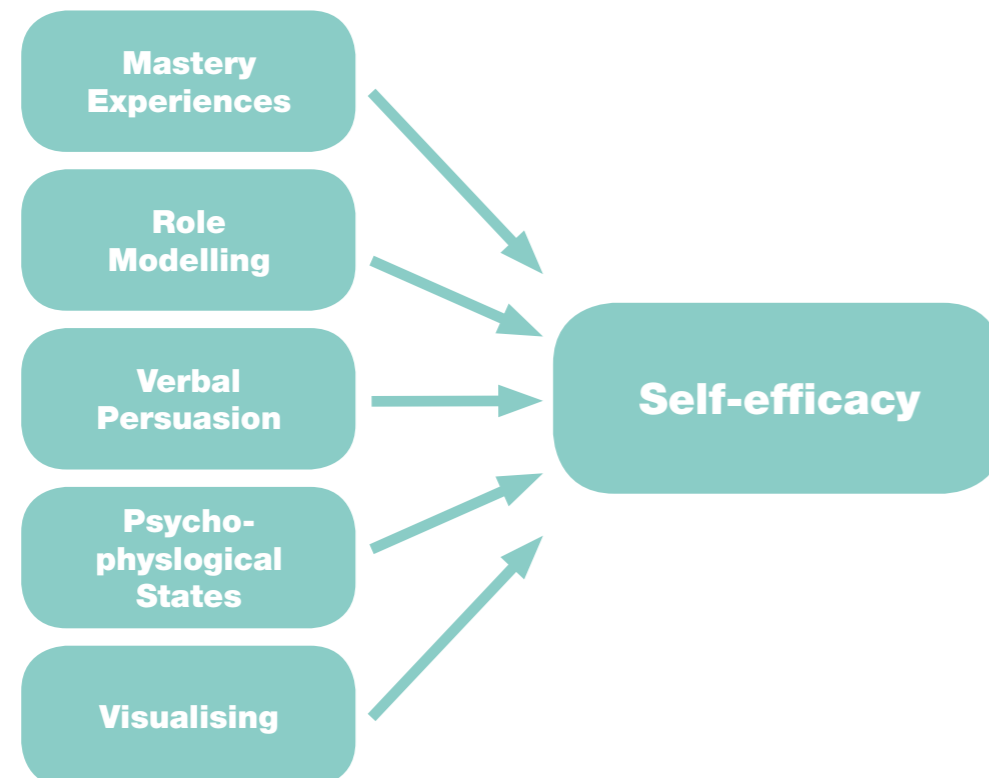
What is Self-efficacy?

Perceived self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform the behaviours that produce the outcomes. The main cause of behaviours is people's beliefs on their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave

(Bandura, 1997)

Believing that you can accomplish what you desire is one of the most important ingredients—perhaps the most important one—in the recipe for success. In other words, self-efficacy means having positive expectations in your ability to successfully master a given task. Encouraging the strategies leading to such mastery experiences is vital. A person with a high level of self-efficacy will approach exercises and assignments as challenges and will make an effort to reach the goal, often showing strong ambition. People with a low level of self-efficacy doubt on their own abilities and try to avoid difficult tasks, often demonstrating (unnecessarily) little ambition. One tends to give up in the face of difficulties. We might display high levels of self-efficacy in some areas and low self-efficacy in other areas of life. However, we can use our strategies from an area of high self-efficacy to support those of low self-efficacy.

The strategies to create self-efficacy are shown below (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 2005)



Mastery experiences (or performance accomplishments) affect our own view of our abilities. Successful attempts at control that we can attribute to our own efforts will strengthen self-efficacy. If we succeed in some tasks, we are more likely to try again, while failing will make us more reluctant to do so.

Role modelling (or vicarious experiences) can inspire people to perform a task by imitation after observing someone else conduct a similar task or successfully handle a difficult situation. Observing people of the age or background similar to ours succeed strengthens our belief in our own ability to master similar activities.

It is important that the families/legal guardians provide role models that are not far-away icons or idols but real people who can show the way in the right direction.

Verbal persuasion can encourage us and convince us to perform a task, by augmenting the level of trust in our own abilities. Constructive feedback is important for maintaining a sense of self-efficacy; it may help us to overcome self-doubt.

The families/legal guardians should encourage the adolescents and supply useful and constructive feedback to show them their trust and support.

Psycho-physiological states such as moods, emotions, physical reactions and stress levels can affect our faith in our personal abilities. Negative states (e.g. feeling nervous) might lead us to doubt and, therefore, reduce our self-efficacy. Positive states (e.g. feeling confident), leading to a sense of enthusiasm, will increase our self-efficacy. The way that we interpret and evaluate our emotional states is important in the development of self-efficacy. Some states and emotions can be interpreted as both negative and positive, e.g. arousal can cause nervousness, but it can also trigger feelings of enthusiasm.

Visualising means imagining ourselves succeed before undertaking the task. The brain can be prepared for the actual performance by such visualisation. Just by closing our eyes and having a mental conversation with ourselves guiding us to our goal, we increase the chances of success in our real-life activities.

The visualisation techniques can be used to encourage the adolescents to believe in themselves.

The level of self-efficacy affects cognition, motivation and emotions.

Cognition means conscious thinking. Schools often focus on learning outcome and goal setting. Every goal-setting process is affected by the experiences of the students and their evaluation of their own capabilities and competences, which, in turn, will affect their actual achievements.

Motivation is regulated by the expectations of success. These expectations are essential for people to become courageous and enterprising in their goal setting. They also affect the degree of perseverance and the amount of effort an adolescent is willing to put into a given task, and how easily an adolescent bounces back after setbacks.

Emotions are also affected by the level of self-efficacy. A feeling of being in control and having confidence in our ability to handle stress reduces anxiety and negative thoughts. Such feelings boost self-efficacy. The sensation of losing control raises the levels of stress, anxiety and negative thinking, thus reducing self-efficacy.

How can you support the development of high self-efficacy of the adolescents in your family?

Probably the adolescents in your family experienced at least once failure in school assignments, which stressed them a lot. It is very common for adolescents to be stressed by failures in certain school subjects which are not their strong suit. Try to create opportunities for the adolescents in your family to achieve mastery in areas different from school. Explore their talents, interests, try to give them challenges which are not too easy nor too difficult, so they can feel they succeed because of the effort they put to complete the task. Is your teen into sports? Go together for a whole day cycling trip and praise them, because they managed to ride n-kilometres on their own. Are they into arts? How about enrolling them for extra drawing classes and praising every single small progress they make?



Practice

Food for thought:

- How do you feel when you are about to learn something new or something difficult?
- Do you feel confident? Do you feel doubtful?
- Do you trust your ability to succeed?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill:

- Self-efficacy: <https://youtu.be/z8bNsNXOCks>



Mastery experiences: Star moments

When you look back at one of your mastery experiences – a time when you succeeded doing a task or an activity – it brings you joy and gives you energy and courage to strive for more of such experiences.

Allow each family member a few minutes to think of something you have managed to do at work or at school that made you feel good.

Take turns telling each other the story of your chosen star moment.

Listen to each other's stories.

Reflect upon:

How did it feel to dwell on one of your star moments?

Linder, A. & Ledertoug, M.M. (2014) Livsduelighed og børns karakterstyrker. København: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag

Verbal persuasion: Using quotes as an inspiration

Gather the family around a table.

Read the following quotes aloud. Each family member chooses a quote that he or she likes best. Tell each other what this quote means to you and why you have chosen it.

"A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a deadline" (Harvey Mackay)

"A person is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits" (Richard Nixon)

"A setback is an opportunity to begin again more intelligently" (Henry Ford).

"Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out" (Jack Conant)

"Better to get a stiff neck from aiming too high than a hunch back from aiming too low" (Jacques Chancel).

"Failures are like skinned knees.... painful but superficial. They heal quickly" (Ross Perot)

"Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration" (Thomas Edison)

"He who risks and fails can be forgiven. He who never risks and never fails is a failure in his whole being" (Paul Tillich)

"Losers visualise the penalties of failure. Winners visualise the rewards of success" (Rob Gilbert)

"Success depends on your backbone, not your wishbone" (Anonymous)

"The best angle from which to approach any problem is the 'try-angle'" (Anonymous)

McGrath, H., & Noble, T. (2011). BOUNCE BACK! A Wellbeing and Resilience Program. Melbourne: Pearson Education.



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Sounds and thoughts

I invite you to imagine that you are in your own bubble, which means you do not pay attention to the people around you; just give yourself and others some space. If you are comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just let them rest on something in front of you.

Now, bring the focus of your attention to your hearing. Open up to the sounds, sounds outside this room, sounds inside it, sounds close to your body. See if you can notice the sounds just as they are, you might even imagine that you are a recorder and just really feel the raw sensation of sounds, the pitch, loudness and rhythm. Just as if you were hearing for the first time, be interested in what you notice.

Maybe you notice how easily the distractions come, how easily the sounds can create a story. If you notice this, try to step out of it again and just hear them as they come and go. Some sounds are easily hidden by other more prominent sounds; notice if there are silent spaces between sounds.

Be aware how sounds just come, stay for a while and then go.

Now let the sounds fade into the background and bring your awareness to your mind. What is happening there? Do you notice any thoughts? Maybe thoughts about what you are doing now or what you are going to do. Try not to judge specific thoughts as good or bad. Just notice them as they are, maybe they are joyful thoughts, disturbing or neutral. Just notice them and let go of them. As if you were standing and watching them come and go.

There is no need to try to control or change your thoughts. Just let them come and go on their own, just as you did with sounds. See if you can approach them like the sounds, just notice when they come and go like clouds passing across the sky: your mind is like the sky, your thoughts are like the clouds, sometimes large, sometimes small, sometimes dark, sometimes light. But the sky remains.

Maybe you can imagine that your thoughts are written in the clouds as they pass by or maybe not. Some go by fast, others go slowly and then disperse.

Maybe you will find your attention jumping into the cloud and being carried away with the thoughts. Even making stories of them. If you notice that happen, you simply see where your attention is, step out of it and see if you can just watch the thoughts come and go again.

Remember that it is always possible to come back to your breathing and the sense of your body, as an anchor to stabilise your awareness in the present moment, before returning, if you choose, and just watching the thoughts come and go.

Now see if you can let go of the thoughts and turn your attention to your breathing. Just notice your breathing now. Stay with it for a while; you can even count your inhalations and exhalations for a few moments.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- The Karate Kid (2010):
Sony Pictures Entertainment. (2010, January 4). Watch the Official THE KARATE KID Trailer in HD [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SmmxvHLsKk>



b. Growth Mindset

Learning to believe in effort

"Strive for progress,
not perfection"

(Anonymous)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

- "When you are doing sports, or music and you need to achieve higher goals."
- "When you fail an exam, but you need to keep trying."
- "When you start thinking of giving up on a task because it is hard for you".



What are the expected results?

Training growth mindset is useful to support and develop growth-mindset of the adolescents. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of growth-mindset and the way it affects our actions.
- To develop different strategies to improve growth-mindset.

What is growth mindset?

In a fixed mindset, people believe that their basic abilities, their intelligence and their talents are just fixed, inborn traits. This conviction makes them set their goals only with these innate, often limited, talents in mind. They expect to succeed, never to fail. In a growth mindset, people believe that their talents and abilities can be developed, provided they put in sufficient effort, and they are taught well and remain confident. They do not necessarily think that everyone can achieve the same goals, but they believe that everyone can improve if they work at it

(Dweck, 2012)

Fixed mindset	Characteristics	Growth mindset
The traits that you are born with. Set in stone.	Skills and intelligence.	The traits that can always be improved and developed.
Performance focus: To keep up appearances.	Main concern.	Process focus: To keep learning/improving.
Something you do when you are not good enough.	Effort.	Something you do as an important part of learning.
Give up or resign.	Challenges.	Try harder.
Take it personally.	Feedback.	Use it to learn.
Try to avoid making mistakes.	Mistakes.	Treat them as learning opportunities.

Dweck (2012)

Growth mindset

Having a growth mindset means that you know that your talents and abilities can be developed. This means that you are not afraid of taking on challenges and trying new things. Even though you might not be good at something in the beginning, you know that you can improve if you try. You know that your effort is the essential and only path towards mastery.

People with a growth mindset understand that failures are a part of life and present opportunities to learn and to improve. When frustrated, such individuals do not give up easily; they keep trying, or they find other ways to solve the problem. They like to challenge themselves and stretch their limits, and they are inspired by seeing how the others do it. They regard feedback as useful, as something to learn from and as a way to identify the areas in need of improvement.

People with a growth mindset accept that they cannot get things right every time, they know that they have to learn. Their attitude is "I have not learned it—yet". They are focused on their development and learning, not preoccupied with what other people might think.

Fixed mindset

Having a fixed mindset means that you believe that you are either good at something or you are not. When you fail, you believe that the cause of failure is your lack of ability. When faced with setbacks or frustrations, you are likely to give up because you do not think you can improve or learn. You are easily discouraged and blame either yourself or others instead of accepting that all things are difficult before they become easy.

A fixed mindset is often accompanied by a desire to look good in the eyes of others, to appear successful or smart. This preoccupation often means that you avoid challenges because you are afraid of looking like a failure. You prefer to stick to what you know and what you can do.

A fixed mindset often needs praise to feel valued. You take criticism personally, and you might feel threatened when others succeed.

Both mindsets for everyone

People do not have just a growth mindset or a fixed mindset—we all have both mindsets. However, most of us have a tendency towards either a growth mindset or a fixed mindset (depending on the context). For example, you can have a fixed mindset in photography and a growth mindset when doing sports. You can have a growth mindset in maths and a fixed mindset in English. Most of the time you have a mixture of both, e.g., 2/3 of a growth mindset and 1/3 of a fixed mindset. This ratio changes depending on different factors: Are you under much pressure? How secure, safe and



comfortable do you feel with your colleagues? Do you like your leader? Are you in a good mood? Did you sleep well?

Cultivating primarily a growth mindset in adolescents can be difficult:

- Simply telling the adolescents to acquire a growth mindset can backfire because they might react negatively to being told how to think. Presenting scientific and practical explanation of the workings of intelligence and the evidence that the brain can develop has been demonstrated to be more effective.
- Reiterating the message “just try harder” can be counterproductive. Adolescents need to understand why they should put in the effort and how to deploy it.
- Fostering a culture of a growth mindset in practice is important.

Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know about mindsets?

How much do you agree with these statements?

- “You can learn new things, but you cannot really change your basic intelligence”.
- “Your intelligence is something that you cannot change very much”.

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill:

- Growth mindset: https://youtu.be/m_KbZenTJ-w



From fixed to growth mindset

We can practice going from fixed to growth mindset by following these steps:

1. Detect the fixed voices

Examples of fixed voices can be if you tell yourself things like "I will be a failure if I do not succeed in this", "I probably cannot do this, so I will not try" or if you start criticising yourself: "I am bad at this. I am disappointed with myself. I did not succeed, and the others can see that I am a failure".

2. Acknowledge that you have a choice

You can choose how you respond to fixed voices. You can accept them and say to yourself "Yes - I am really bad at this" OR you can try, practise, ask for help, try other strategies, try something new, etc.

3. Notice and support the growth voice

Acknowledge that things are not easy in the beginning—not for anyone. Other people have also tried when things were not working out for them: "I might not be able to do it YET but, given time, I can learn to do it". It is important to focus on learning rather than performance.

4. Act on growth voice

Become aware of what you gain by using a growth mindset. Acknowledge what you miss by adopting a fixed mindset: You miss opportunities for learning. You feel hindered, inhibited or obstructed because you do not believe that you can succeed. You criticise yourself (and others) when you fail. You lose heart when faced with challenges.

In your family you can choose one or more examples of fixed voices that you all recognise. Reflect on this with the above 4 steps in mind: How can you detect the fixed voice? How can you acknowledge that you have a choice? How do you notice and support your growth voice? – and how do you act on it?

As a family you can also try to be aware of growth and fixed mindset in your daily life in general.

(Tange 2016) Et (Dweck, 2012)

Self-talk

Fixed mindset and fixed voices often appear when you are involved in activities that you find demanding, hard, difficult or tough (this can be work, homework, sports etc.)

When members of your family are engaged in such activity and "hear fixed voices", you can try to answer the questions/statements that you find most relevant:

1. Things to say to yourself while you are engaged in a difficult task:

- I worked hard on that part.
- I have all these skills; I just need to be able to _____
- I have gotten this far; I am not stopping now.
- When I can do _____, I will know that I can do the rest.

2. Things to ask yourself after completing the activity:

- What did I learn by doing this?
- What did I tell myself while completing the activity?
- Which of my mistakes taught me something new?
- How can I apply this learning when doing other challenging tasks?
- Before, I could not _____. Now, I can _____.
- Based on what I learned from this, next time I am going to _____.
- One thing I found about myself was _____.

Whenever you experience a difficult task, you can reflect on the above and share your reflections with your family.

Embracing the "F" word. Retrieved from: <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/embracing-the-f-word>



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Sounds and thoughts

I invite you to imagine that you are in your own bubble, which means you do not pay attention to the people around you; just give yourself and others some space. If you are comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just let them rest on something in front of you.

Now, bring the focus of your attention to your hearing. Open up to the sounds, sounds outside this room, sounds inside it, sounds close to your body. See if you can notice the sounds just as they are, you might even imagine that you are a recorder and just really feel the raw sensation of sounds, the pitch, loudness and rhythm. Just as if you were hearing for the first time, be interested in what you notice.

Maybe you notice how easily the distractions come, how easily the sounds can create a story. If you notice this, try to step out of it again and just hear them as they come and go. Some sounds are easily hidden by other more prominent sounds; notice if there are silent spaces between sounds.

Be aware how sounds just come, stay for a while and then go.

Now let the sounds fade into the background and bring your awareness to your mind. What is happening there? Do you notice any thoughts? Maybe thoughts about what you are doing now or what you are going to do. Try not to judge specific thoughts as good or bad. Just notice them as they are, maybe they are joyful thoughts, disturbing or neutral. Just notice them and let go of them. As if you were standing and watching them come and go.

There is no need to try to control or change your thoughts. Just let them come and go on their own, just as you did with sounds. See if you can approach them like the sounds, just notice when they come and go like clouds passing across the sky: your mind is like the sky, your thoughts are like the clouds, sometimes large, sometimes small, sometimes dark, sometimes light. But the sky remains.

Maybe you can imagine that your thoughts are written in the clouds as they pass by or maybe not. Some go by fast, others go slowly and then disperse.

Maybe you will find your attention jumping into the cloud and being carried away with the thoughts. Even making stories of them. If you notice that happen, you simply see where your attention is, step out of it and see if you can just watch the thoughts come and go again.

Remember that it is always possible to come back to your breathing and the sense of your body, as an anchor to stabilise your awareness in the present moment, before returning, if you choose, and just watching the thoughts come and go.

Now see if you can let go of the thoughts and turn your attention to your breathing. Just notice your breathing now. Stay with it for a while; you can even count your inhalations and exhalations for a few moments.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Forrest Gump (1994):
Paramount Pictures. (2014, July 29). Forrest Gump IMAX Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=921V_LwMd1Q (Available in English)



- Sing (2016):
Universal Studios. (n.d.). ¡Canta! [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.canta-lapelicula.es/videos> (Available in Spanish)



- Brave (2012):
Disney Pixar. (2011, November 16). Brave Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEHWDA_6e3M (Available in English)



- Mindsets Explained:
Sprouts. (2016, April 15). Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTnU (available in all languages)



- Neuroplasticity:
Sentis. (2012, November 6). Neuroplasticity [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCza87g> (available in all languages by automatic translation)



- What Is Growth Mindset:
Khan Academy. (2014, August 19). The Growth Mindset [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh00S4MrN3E> (available in all languages by automatic translation)



- The difference between fixed & growth mindset:
MindsetKit. (n.d.). What is growth mindset? [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.mindsetkit.org/topics/about-growth-mindset/what-is-growth-mindset> (Available only in English. Includes transcription)



- Growing your mind (available in all languages by automatic translation):
Khan Academy. (2014, August 19). Growing your mind [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtKJrB5rOKs>



c. Emotional Resilience

Learning how to bounce back from setbacks

"Life is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you are gonna get"

(*'Forrest Gump'* film)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you move from one school to another, and you have to start anew."

"When you start living with other people, and respect different rules."



What are the expected results?

Training emotional resilience is useful to support and develop the ability to bounce back and cope well in times of adversity. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of emotional resilience.
- To develop an awareness of strategies for coping with setbacks and overcoming difficulties.

What is emotional resilience?

There are many different definitions of resilience, but they all refer to the capacity of the individual to overcome odds and demonstrate the personal strengths needed to cope with some kind of hardship or adversity

(Noble & McGrath, 2013)

We all go through hard times in life. In some cases, we just experience slight difficulties or are faced with disappointments. However, we might also have to deal with vital challenges or crises. Confronting such challenges might help us to grow stronger and gain new skills to cope with adversity. We learn how to bounce back and become more resilient. Children and adolescents with optimal levels of well-being and resilience enjoy good mental and physical health, are more resistant to stress and achieve good academic performance (McGrath & Noble, 2011). We do not know when we will be faced with challenging events, but we do know that there are ways and strategies to help in tackling adversity. Our ratio of positive to negative emotions (A), our hopes and optimism (B) and our explanatory styles (C) are all important factors for bouncing back after setbacks.

A) Positive emotions

In 2009, *Positivity* was published; the book is a synthesis of Fredrickson's ground-breaking research on positive emotions. She has shown that we can create well-being by focusing on positive emotions and use them to overcome negative emotions. We all experience negative events to some extent; when that happens, we are often flooded by negative emotions such as grumpiness, anger, sadness and sorrow. This affects our thoughts, feelings, relationships and judgment. Negative emotions launch a focused, narrow-minded and intolerant mindset, which may be compared to a tunnel vision. The negative emotions are our warning signals that not everything is as it should be; they are vital to us and can even mean the difference between life and death.

Fredrickson's research (2009, 2013) has been focused on the effect of positive emotions on our well-being and health. The Broaden-and-Build Theory developed by Fredrickson states that positive emotions have an invigorating and lasting effect on our personal resources. Such emotions change the way in which our brain works and develop our thought and action repertory by generating a cone vision, expanding our field of vision and attention. The research focuses on 10 positive emotions; joy, interest, gratitude, serenity, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and love (Fredrickson, 2009). The last emotion, love, may be seen as a superior emotion since it can encompass the rest.





In the wake of negative events, positive emotions may reduce the effect of the preceding negative emotions and broaden our perspective to see more options and more solutions. The Theory of the Upward Spiral is an extension of the Broaden-and-Build Theory. When positive emotions prevail, we build up our resources. This is somewhat like depositing positive emotions in the bank to be withdrawn later, and this brings us dividends in the form of still more positive emotions. This creates an upward spiral; positive emotions earn interest, generating more such emotions. Our experiences with positive and negative emotions affect our feelings and thoughts; they may become self-fulfilling prophecies and trigger either a positive upward spiral or a negative downward spiral.

The research on positive and negative emotions has shown that well-being requires a prevalence of positive emotions. This is called the positivity ratio. As humans, we have been equipped with a negativity bias to ensure our survival, and we keep an eye on anything that threatens us. When negative emotions prevail, we develop a tunnel vision, which helps us to face acute and difficult situations. However, experiencing such emotions frequently and for prolonged periods negatively affects our well-being and stops us from thriving. When positive emotions prevail, we thrive, develop and flourish (Holmgren, Ledertoug, Paarup, & Tidmand, 2019).

- Prevalence of negative emotions ==> failure to thrive
- Equal levels of negative and positive emotions ==> failure to thrive
- Prevalence of positive emotions ==> well-being
- Strong predominance of positive emotions ==> development and flourishing

B) Hope and optimism

Our positivity ratio is an important factor in dealing with setbacks and creating resilience. It also affects the way we look at the future, whether we are optimistic and hope for the best or pessimistic and lack hope. A good strategy to raise resilience is to boost the levels of hope and optimism. Snyder (2002) explains hope as a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals).

Lopez (2013) distinguishes between hope and optimism. Optimism is the belief that the future will be better than the present; you wish for it and you dream about it. However, optimism exists more in your mindset than in your actions. Hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present, coupled with the belief that you have the power to make it so.

Hope is created by merging four different elements:

- 1) Willpower: Goals that are valuable but uncertain provide direction and an endpoint for hopeful thinking.
- 2) Waypower: Pathways reflects mental routes that we take to achieve our desired goals and our perceived ability to create these routes.
- 3) Agency thinking refers to the motivation to pursue our goals.
- 4) Barriers prevent the attainment of our goals; when we encounter a barrier, we can either give up or use our pathway thinking to create new routes.

You can be either hopeful or lack hope. Very hopeful persons can change the outcomes, because they stretch their own capabilities to the limit, seemingly achieving impossible results. When faced with a setback, a person with high hopes finds new energy and new means to reach a goal; a person lacking hope needs more time to recover and gain the courage to try again.

How we think of the future and what we hope for affects the way we live our lives (Lopez 2013). Hope is a key characteristic of a successful adolescent; it fuels persistence and perseverance and acts as a buffer against setbacks. It is important to remember that hope can be learned, and that hopeful people can help spread it to others.

As a parent/family member you can support the development of hope by (Lopez 2013; University of Minnesota, 2013):

- Being a role model, i.e. showing high hopes yourself.
- Highlighting hope in stories and actions.
- Helping the adolescent to find other role models to "borrow" hope., f.e. by showing them life stories of people, who achieved success because of their belief in their strength, f.e. story of Malala, Temple Grandin, Mae Jemison (check the books: Penelope Bagieu, Culottes, Malala's Magic Pencil; video: <https://youtu.be/jWKYalbPLRY>) ; you can watch a movie together The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, dir. Chiwetel Ejiofor (2019), Billy Eliot, dir. Stephen Daldry (2000).
- Helping them to understand the correlation between the way they think, hope and their future life.
- Encouraging the adolescents to find different strategies to reach their goals.

C) Explanatory styles

Hope and optimism are strongly affected by our explanatory style—the way we explain success or a failure. The way we talk about ourselves and our experiences of success and failure affect our explanatory style; it is important to understand this to help the adolescents effectively.

Seligman (1998) defines an explanatory style as the manner in which you habitually explain to yourself the reasons for your experiences.

Our explanatory style is based on three different styles:

1. Permanence: Events are perceived as temporary or permanent.
2. Pervasiveness: Events are perceived as global (all-pervasive) or specific (confined to one area of life).
3. Personalisation: Events are caused internally or externally.

All the explanatory styles have an optimistic and a pessimistic side.

1) A permanent explanatory style is associated with the perception of time:

The pessimistic style:

"It is always happening to me" or "I am never lucky".

The optimistic style:

"Sometimes I fail" or "Lately, I have had some trouble".

A permanent pessimistic style can lead to learned helplessness. The people using this style feel that nothing beneficial ever happens to them and all the events in their life are always to their



disadvantage. They need a very long (unlimited) time to get back on track. The permanent optimistic style leads to perseverance; the people employing it will try again or try harder to succeed. A temporary pessimistic and a permanent optimistic explanatory style are necessary to improve resilience.

2) A pervasive explanatory style is associated with the perception of space

The pessimistic style:

"If I cannot solve this math problem, I will probably fail physics as well".

The optimistic style:

"My English teacher does not see my progress".

The explanatory style related to pervasiveness and space assumes that an actual event might spread to other subjects or situations or only affects the specific event. In the latter case, the individual has an opportunity to bounce back from setbacks.

To create resilience, it is important to employ a specific pessimistic style and a more pervasive optimistic explanatory style.

3) A personalised explanatory style relates to the perception of causality:

The pessimistic style:

"I am just too stupid to understand this (internal cause)".

"The teacher is too stupid to teach this subject in an understandable manner (external cause)".

The optimistic style:

"When I try harder, I will manage (internal cause)".

"If I ask the teacher to explain it to me again, I will probably understand it (external cause)".

A pessimistic personalised explanatory style with internal cause leads to low self-esteem and a feeling of lack of control, while an optimistic personalised explanatory style boosts self-esteem and increases a feeling of control.

As a parent/family member, you can encourage the adolescents in your family to use the optimistic explanatory style by (Manger, 2009):

- Helping them to set realistic goals. Split difficult tasks into smaller undertakings, setting achievable milestones.
- Training in good problem-solving strategies.
- Highlighting the correlation between good strategies and finding good solutions.
- Praising and appreciating their effort. Emphasise the progress achieved by taking responsibility.
- Providing feedback to help the adolescents to navigate.

Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know about emotional resilience?
- What is your reaction to setbacks?
- How do you normally deal with difficult situations?
- How easy is it for you to pick yourself up again?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill:

- Emotional resilience: https://youtu.be/e_bHmEYnktU



Positivity ratio exercise

How to practise positivity in everyday life? Focus on yourself and other members of your family. Consider your own positivity ratio.

- Do you have more positive than negative emotions during the day?
- Do you experience the same number of positive emotions as negative emotions?
- Do you have more negative than positive emotions?

No matter how many positive emotions you experience, you can always raise your level of such emotions.

One way to do so is to create a positive portfolio for one of the emotions that are most important to you. Choose one of the positive emotions from the picture below and create a portfolio, either on your tablet/computer using photos or pictures from the internet or using paper, coloured pens and cuttings from magazines.

Use pictures, drawings, photos, sentences, etc. that improve your mood when you look at them or think about them. Return to your portfolio as often as you need.



You can also choose to create positive emotions with your family. You can either let each family member create their own positive portfolio on a positive emotion important to them – or you can create a family positive portfolio together:

How do we create positive emotions as a family?

What activities boost our positive emotions?

You can also stick the pictures on the walls, doors or other visible places all around your living space.

Fredrickson, B. (2009) Positivity. Top-notch research reveals the 3 to 1 ratio that will change your life. New York: Three Rivers Press

Using hope to reach my goal

In order to help the adolescents in your family to reach an important goal try this exercise out for yourself.

In the model below, you start by stating a goal and write it in the right column.

Then, you think of possible pathways to reach your goal (at least three pathways). Write them in the left column.

In the column for barriers, you write all the things that could possibly prevent you from succeeding.

For each barrier, give a strategy to overcome it in the next column. Example:

My pathways	My barriers	My strategies to overcome barriers	My goal
- Go out into the garden more often - Call my friends more - Spend less time playing computer games	- There is often bad weather - I have limited funds on my phone account - I recently bought a new game	- I can invite my friends home - I will buy a package of free minutes to selected numbers - I make a plan when I can play the game	- Spending more time with friends

Lopez, S.J. (2013). Making hope happen. Create the future you want for yourself and others. New York: Atria Paperback



Explanatory styles

The way we explain our successes and our failures affects our emotional resilience.

By focusing on your own explanatory style you might be able to help the adolescents in your family become more aware of their explanatory styles.

Julia made a presentation in class. It went awful and she was very upset about it.

She kept thinking about how to explain the experience to her parents.

For each of her attempt to explain the experiences, she uses different explanatory styles. She came up with the six different explanations below.

Look at her different explanations and try to figure out if the explanation is **pessimistic or optimistic?**

Also, consider if the explanation is **permanent** (always/never or sometimes), **pervasive** (everything/something) and **personal** (internal/external).

You can make this exercise on your own or discuss it in family.

1) I am a terrible presenter. I do not know the right way to make a speech.

Explanatory style: _____

2) Well, these things just happen sometimes. No big deal. I will try to make a better presentation next time.

Explanatory style: _____

3) The computer broke down in the middle of everything and I could not show my presentation.

Explanatory style: _____

4) This presentation went awful. I just know I will never be able to do presentations in maths either.

Explanatory style: _____

5) I always know exactly what to say before the presentation and then I forget everything.

Explanatory style: _____

6) I will never let it happen to me again. Next time I will prepare even better.

Explanatory style: _____

Which explanatory style would you use?

Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

The anchor

Stop for a moment. I invite you to imagine that you are all in your own bubbles. This means that you do not pay attention to the people around you; just give yourself and others some space. You can close your eyes or you can just look at something in front of you.

Now bring your attention to your breathing. Just observe your breathing as it is right now, with kindness and curiosity. You do not need to change it in any way. Just let the breath in and out.

If you like, you can put your hand on your stomach and note the sensations of each breath going in and out. Maybe you will notice a mild movement with every breath. If you are comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just lower your gaze.

There is no right or wrong way to feel it, just breathe in and out; there is no need to control it in any way.

You can try to close one nostril with a finger and breathe through the other. Note your feelings. After a few breaths, change the nostril through which you are breathing. Just observe the sensation of breathing. Maybe you will notice warmth or cold, tingling or dryness.

Return to breathing through both nostrils; just breathe in and breathe out. If you notice that your mind wanders, do not worry; this is just what minds do. Observe where your mind wanders, what thoughts you are experiencing and then, bring your attention back to your breathing. Your breathing is your anchor to the present.

If your mind wanders more than once, bring it back every time. Repeat it as many times as you need. Practise this in silence. Remember that your breathing is always there when you want to step out of the autopilot mode and calm down. Just be.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Cast Away (2000):20th Century Fox. (2015, March 5). Cast Away | #TBT Trailer | 20th Century FOX [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tVklCz2jcl> (Available only in English)



- Axa PPP Healthcare. (2017, February 2). What is resilience? [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcbTmw1Y48I> (Available only in English)



- Black Dog Institute. (2016, May 2). Building personal resilience [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pS5H7VfkuPk> (Available in all languages via automatic subtitles)



d. Social Resilience

Learning to be strong as a group

"Use pain as a stepping-stone,
not a campground"

(Alan Cohen)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you participate in a group sport and you need to collaborate all together."

"When the group has a problem and you are asked to help."



What are the expected results?

Training social resilience is useful to function in various social settings and cope with adversity as a group. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of social resilience. Social resilience is the crucial aspect of human relations under adverse circumstances.
- To examine the capacity of the adolescents to engage in different social settings and their role in initiating positive social interactions.
- To develop an awareness of their abilities and formulate practical plans and tips for self-empowerment and helping others.
- To instigate flexible and accurate responses to setbacks and teach them to overcome difficulties as a group.

What is social resilience?

Social resilience is the capacity to engage with others, strengthening the existing and developing new social relationships. This approach can transform adversity into a collective growth experience

(Cacioppo, Reis, & Zautra, 2011).

Individual resilience exploits the capacity of an individual. Social resilience employs the capacity of individuals and groups to work with others to achieve the desired goals.

Social resilience is multilevel and relies on:

- Characteristic personal ways of relating to others (e.g., agreeableness, trustworthiness, fairness; compassion, humility, generosity, openness).
- Interpersonal resources and abilities (e.g., sharing, attentive listening, perceiving others accurately and empathically, communicating care and respect for others, responsiveness to the needs of others, compassion and forgiveness).
- Collective resources and capacities (e.g., group identity, centrality, cohesiveness, tolerance, openness, rules of governance).

Social resilience relies on the capacity and motivation to perceive others accurately and empathically. The ability to see others through the same lens as we view ourselves and to respond to them in a supportive manner is a cornerstone of social relations. To be socially resilient, you need to understand how other people perceive the diverse experiences and situations in life. Successful coordination of activities requires shared perspectives and common goals. A strong awareness of and concern for the needs of other people promotes positive interpersonal bonds (Cacioppo et al., 2011).

Personal resources that advance social resilience include:

- Capacity and motivation to perceive others accurately and empathically.
- Feeling connected to other individuals and collectives.
- Communicating care and respect for others.
- Values that promote the welfare of self and others.
- Ability to respond appropriately and contingently to social problems.
- Expressing social emotions appropriately and effectively.
- Trust.
- Tolerance and openness.

(Cacioppo et al., 2011)

Please note that you will not be teaching the adolescents in your family to internalise all these resources; the goal is to understand and identify such resources and practise their use. You support the adolescents in your family to develop these resources, by being a role model, being tolerant, open and compassionate to others, by spreading your values, by listening to their needs.



Practice

Food for thought:

- Do you know something about social resilience? What do you think it means?
- How can social resilience skills be applied in everyday lives?
- What can advance social resilience?
- Could you describe a specific difficult situation in which social resilience might be helpful?

Illustration of the skill

Link to videos showing and explaining the skills

- Social resilience: <https://youtu.be/-XxbVRkbARE>



Maria's story

Maria was eleven when she moved to the United States with her mother and three older brothers to escape the political unrest and economic hardship of the Dominican Republic. They left behind Maria's primary caregiver, her grandmother, and a large extended family. The family crowded into a one-bedroom apartment in a neighbourhood heavily populated by Dominicans in the northern section of New York City until Maria's mother found an old friend who helped them move into a decent apartment.

Maria, who knew very little English, was enrolled in English in a second language class, and soon gained sufficient mastery of the language when she made new friends. Maria would show a lot of respect and acceptance to other students who came from different places with diverse cultural backgrounds who were also learning to speak English just like Maria. At the end of group work presentations, Maria would be full of gratitude to her group, showing a lot of trust and belief in the group members and would promise future group cooperation on group tasks. Maria and her friends improved tremendously in speaking English.

Together as a family, discuss the following questions

1. The adversity Maria faced is/are

Think about this:

Resilience is the ability to withstand, deal with and recover from difficult situations. Describe the adversity or difficult situations faced by Maria in the story.

2. What helped Maria to do well despite the difficult situation?

Think about this:

For each person there may be choices they make, resources they turn to, strengths they draw upon or insights they apply. Becoming interested in the steps people take that help them to deal with adversity we learn more about how resilience is done?

Berger, R. (2008). Fostering post-traumatic growth in adolescent immigrants. In L. Liebenberg & M. Ungar (Eds.), Resilience in action: Working with youth across cultures and contexts (pp. 87-110). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Together as a family

- Describe any adversity or difficult situation you have faced together
- What is it that helped you overcome the difficult situation you faced?

Think about this, for each person there may be choices they make, resources they turn to, strengths they draw upon or insights they apply.

Describe as many resources as you can,

About yourself

About your family relationships (i.e. together as a family) that helped you to overcome the difficult situation you faced.



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below

Body scan

In this exercise, you will sit in your chair but at home, you can choose to lie down. You are going to pay close attention to your body. You could try to imagine that your attention is like a torch, which you point at your body to scan it firmly but with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. In this practice, we are not trying to get anywhere or strive to achieve anything special. The intention is simply to give some time to each region of your body to see what is already here.

I invite you to imagine that you are in your own bubble; you don't pay attention to the people around you, just give yourself and others some space. You can close your eyes or you can just let them rest on something in front of you.

Sit comfortably, with your feet on the floor, hands in your lap or on the table, your head balanced and your back straight but not too tense. Make your body rest like a majestic mountain. Start by bringing your attention to the sensations of your breathing. Feel your breathing right now; you don't need to change it, just sense it as it is. Follow a few breaths as best you can. Just breathe in and breathe out.

Now bring your awareness to your body and move the torchlight of attention to your feet, both left and right. Are there any sensations that you notice there? Can you feel the soles of your feet? Can you feel your toes? Your heels? Do you sense the touch of the socks? Do you notice any other sensations? Warmth, coolness, tingling or tightness? If do not notice anything, that is also fine; you are not making anything up, just sensing things as they are.

Now, move your torchlight of attention to your ankles, to your legs, calves, shins and knees. Do not think about your knees but sense what is there if you can (if anything at all). Then, move your attention to your thighs and all the way up to the hips. Can you feel how your chair is supporting you while you are resting there like a majestic mountain?

Can you sense your back, starting with the lower back and all the way up to your shoulders? Just notice how your back feels. Now, move your torchlight to your belly; can you notice how your belly moves with your breathing? Can you hold your attention there for a moment? If you notice that your mind wanders away, don't worry, that is just how minds work. The only thing that you need to do is to move your attention kindly back where you want it to be, i.e. your belly, for the time being.

Now bring your awareness to your shoulders. How are your shoulders? Then move it from the shoulders to your fingers, wrists, arms and back to the shoulders again. Up to your neck and to your face. Then, to your chin, cheeks, eyes, your forehead and your ears. Broaden your awareness to your head as a whole, as it rests there.

On the next inhalation, see if you can imagine that your breath flows all the way down to the toes and back, as if your whole body were breathing. Bring your torchlight of attention to your breathing as best you can.

And now, just allow yourself to sit there, let yourself be just as you are. Complete and whole.

Resting in your awareness, moment by moment.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

Unbroken (2014): Unbroken: Path to redemption. (2018, June 28).

Unbroken: Path To Redemption Official Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=66a0pcEchZk



Coach Carter (2005): Peliculas de Youtube. (2012, May 12). Coach Carter – Trailer [Video file].

Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znyAnWUYf2g>



Miracle (2004): Peliculas de Youtube. (2012, February 9). Miracle [Video file].

Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v64ofT1rGOw>



Remember the Titans (2000): Peliculas de Youtube. (2012, January 13).Remember the Titans

[Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThTD7u5z9hw>



e . Leadership

Learning to influence others and to take responsibility

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way"

(John C. Maxwell)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you are named the class/school president."

"When you are taking care of younger siblings at home."

"When you're doing a group's project and see that it is going bad; you decide to take the lead and make it go well and fix it."



What are the expected results?

Training leadership is useful to practice how to take charge, influence other people and carry the responsibility. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of leadership, the ways of practising this skill and helping others to do it.
- To understand the role of the adolescents in initiating positive changes, however small, in their school communities, employing their sense of belongingness.
- To develop their self-awareness and awareness of their abilities, formulate practical plans and tips for self-empowerment and helping others.

What is leadership?

Leadership involves integrated constellation of cognitive and temperament attributes that foster an orientation toward influencing and helping others, directing and motivating their actions toward collective achievements

(Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Individuals with such a predisposition manage their own activities and the activities of others. The quality of leadership depends on the separate and joint effects of leader attributes, follower attributes and contextual or situational constraints. Leadership as a personal quality reflects the motivation and capacity to seek out, attain and successfully carry out leadership roles. However, the practice of leadership can be distinguished from leadership as a personal quality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The practice of leadership includes teaching the skills needed to improve the character strength. This is the type of leadership considered in this chapter (for the UPRIGHT programme).

Leadership as a practice includes:

- a. Defining, establishing, identifying or translating a direction for a collective action to be executed by peers or followers.
- b. Facilitating or enabling the collective processes that lead to achieving these purposes (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001).

Leadership as a practice does not just involve personal qualities but a whole set of behavioural activities and skills. This changes the traditional view of leadership and leader effectiveness as a personal quality or individual disposition (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Thus, anyone can improve their learnt leadership skills because they involve behavioural activities, skills that can be taught and not just innate attributes.

Who is a leader?

A leader is a member of a group who motivates and encourages the group to get things done. A good leader maintains positive relationships within the group, mainly by organising group activities and following them through (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In simple terms, a leader is anyone who directs group activities and sets the course by inspiring group members to work towards a collective success.

A leader should:

- Convince the group members to do what they should do.
- Help and influence others positively by directing and motivating their actions.
- Create and preserve good relationships and morale in the group.



Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know about leadership skills?
- How can leadership skills be applied to everyday lives?
- Could you describe the characteristics or qualities of a good leader?
- Could you describe a situation in which you acted as a leader?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill:

- Leadership: <https://youtu.be/CthgexS000s>



3



A story for discussion

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.

John is a twelve-year-old boy who arrived in a new city with his parents. John was enrolled in the only community school in the city. The community school had dwindled to a small number of students; many children stayed out of the school because it did not have good facilities. The school building was very old, in need of repair and modernisation, and the seats in the classrooms were broken. John made friends with Anna, George and Sarah who were all in the same grade as John. John was fond of browsing the Internet and read about a “GoFundMe” campaign that raised funds to support the victims of a tsunami. He shared the idea of raising funds with his friends and they set up a website to collect money to renovate their classroom. Soon, the friends formed a group called “YouthUp” to popularise their fundraising on social media networks. In a few months, they raised so much money that they not only renovated their classroom, but also several other classrooms and buildings in the community school. This changed the look of the school and demonstrated a new sense of school community and inclusion. The YouthUp group became famous all over the city and organised extra-curricular activities with other students, with support from the teachers and staff. The community school improved all its indicators, the attendance increased, student performance improved and the number of students increased. The school acquired a new morale and climate. New students enrolled on the word of their friends who were already in the school. YouthUp soon signed on many students who helped to promote youth empowerment and achievement in the school and throughout the community. Perhaps the most important leadership quality of John was that he insisted that the new spirit and climate at his school was not to be attributed solely to his efforts but to the contribution, spirit and vitality of the YouthUp group and everyone else in the school. John is an example of leadership as a positive human quality.

The dilemma to be discussed at home

Families as one team are on one side and child(ren) as another team on the other side.

One team is supporting John to take full credit of the success caused by his leadership.

One team is supporting John for sharing credit with everyone in ‘YouthUp’.

Each team now has 3 minutes to create arguments in support of their point of view. When you are ready, you have five minutes to debate; Whether John should have taken credit for the changes brought about in the community school through the fundraising? Or John was right to share the credit with the efforts of everyone in ‘YouthUp’ for contributing to the change?

Together as a family, discuss the following questions

- What do you like about John as a leader?
- What aspects of John as a leader would you appreciate if they were aspects of you (or your family members)?
- How do you think John positively influenced other people and maintained good relationships in the school?

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004).

Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification (Vol. 1): Oxford University Press.



3

Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Body scan

In this exercise, you sit in your chair but at home, you can also choose to lie down. You are going to pay close attention to your body. You could try to imagine that your attention is like a torch, which you point at your body and scan it firmly but with attitude of kindness and curiosity. In this practise, we are not trying to get anywhere or strive to achieve anything special. The intention is simply to give some time to each region of your body to see what is already here.

I invite you to imagine that you all are in your own bubble; you don't pay attention to the people around you, just give yourself and others some space. You can close your eyes or you can just let them rest on something in front of you.

Sit comfortably, with your feet on the floor, hands in your lap or on the table, your head balanced and your back straight but not too tight. Make your body rest like a majestic mountain. Start by bringing your attention to the sensations of your breathing. Feel your breathing right now; you don't need to change it, just sense it as it is. Follow few breaths as best you can. Just breathe in and breathe out.

Now bring your awareness to your body and move the torchlight of attention to your feet, both left and right. Are there any sensations that you notice there? Can you feel the bottoms of your feet? Can you feel your toes? Your heels? Do you sense the touch of the socks? Do you notice any other sensations? Warmth, coolness, tingling or tightness? If do not notice anything, that is also fine, you are not making anything up, just sensing things as they are.

Now move your torchlight of attention to your ankles, to your legs, calves, shins and knees. Do not think about your knees but sense what is there if you can (if anything at all). Then, move your attention to the thighs and all the way up to the hips. Can you feel how your chair is supporting you, resting there like a majestic mountain?

Can you sense your back, starting with the lower back and all the way up to your shoulders? Just notice how your back feels. Now, move your torchlight to the belly; can you notice how your belly moves with your breathing? Can you hold your attention there for a moment? If you notice that your mind wanders away, don't worry, that is just how minds work. The only thing that you need to do is to move your attention kindly back where you want it to be, i.e. the belly for the time being.

Now bring your awareness to your shoulders. How are your shoulders? Then move from the shoulders to your fingers, wrist, arms and back to the shoulders again. Up to your neck and to your face. Then, to your chin, your cheeks, your eyes, your forehead and to your ears. Broaden your awareness to your head as a whole, as it rests there.

On next inhalation, see if you can imagine that your breath flows all the way down to the toes and back, as if your whole body were breathing. Bring your torchlight of attention to your breathing as best you can.

And now, just allow yourself to sit there, let yourself be just as you are. Complete and whole. Resting in awareness, moment by moment.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Wave (2008):
IFC Films. (2011, October 13). WAVE Official Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9drpWLmtOc>



- Mandela (2013):
Pathé Distribution. (n.d.). Mandela : un long chemin vers la liberté [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.pathefilms.com/film/mandela>



- The Lion King (1994):
Disney Movies. (2017, July 17). The Lion King | Trailer [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zx3LT_G3clA





SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- SELF-AWARENESS
- SELF-MANAGEMENT
- SOCIAL AWARENESS
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

"Educating the mind without education of the heart is no education at all"

(Aristotle)

Introductory questions

- Have you ever heard of social emotional learning before?
- Do you know what social learning means?
- Do you know what emotional learning means?
- What do you think it includes?

Illustration of the Component

- Watch this video about SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING: <https://youtu.be/dn6eV5IHf7c>



Why is important to train Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and Emotional Learning skills helps you improve:

- your own well-being
- your own learning
- relations with other people

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – CASEL, n.d.

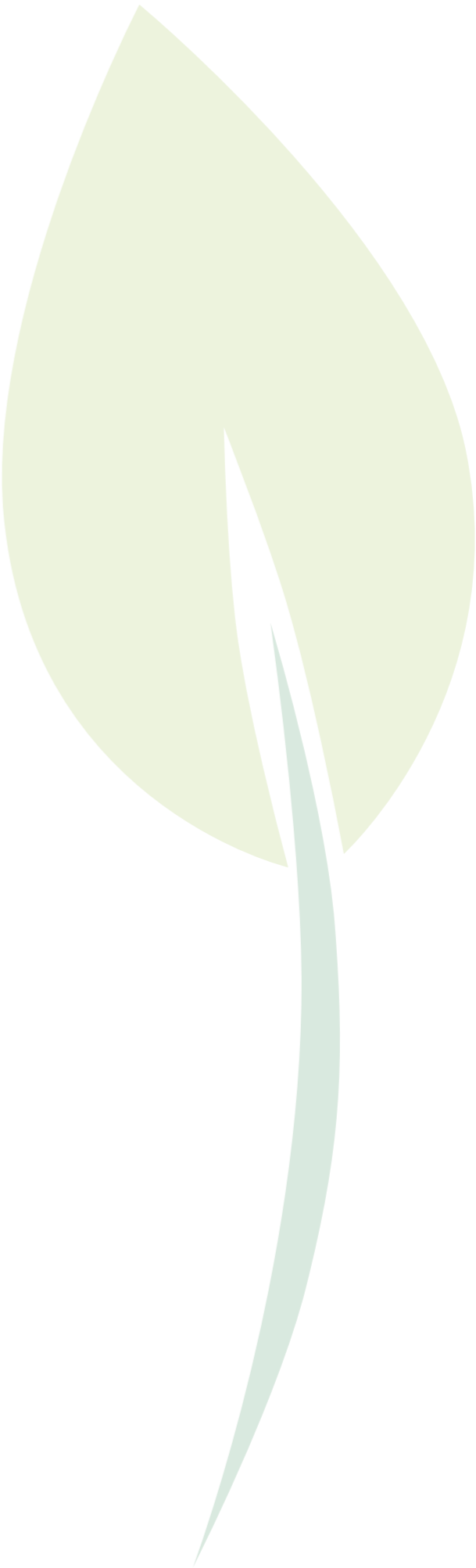
It is the process of acquiring core competencies to handle intrapersonal and interpersonal situations constructively.

Research shows that SEL not only improves the rate of success but also increases prosocial behaviours, e.g. kindness, sharing and empathy, improves student attitude toward school, and reduces depression and stress among adolescents (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

In recent years, the focus on SEL in schools has strengthened. Partly due to reports of positive associations between SEL and academic performance, and partly due to increasing interest in integral education (including academic and psychosocial skills).

SEL skills and strategies to improve these skills are important in all aspects of life; this is not just for adolescents as teachers, students and parents can all benefit.

The SEL skills are shown below.



a. Self-awareness

Learning to recognise your own emotions, thoughts and values

"Each of us has much more hidden inside us than we have had a chance to explore"

(Muhammad Yunus)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you go shopping and you feel emotionally exhausted because you do not know what trouser you want to buy for yourself."



"When somebody asks you, 'Tell me more about yourself, who you are, how are you different from another person?' And you don't know what to say."

What are the expected results of this session?

Training self-awareness is useful to support and develop the awareness of the strengths and resources of the adolescents and to show them how these attributes can be used in their lives. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of self-awareness (knowing yourself).
- To help the adolescents identify and become aware of their own strengths and resources and those of other people.
- To develop a strength-based mindset and tools to improve the use of these strengths.

What is self-awareness?



Self-awareness represents the capacity of becoming the object of one's own attention. In this state one actively identifies, processes, and stores information about the self

(Morin, 2011)

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise your own emotions, thoughts and values and understanding how they affect your behaviour. It is the ability to assess your strengths and limitations accurately.

Knowing your own resources and your strengths and weaknesses can help you to navigate in life. Our emotions and our thoughts affect the way we evaluate ourselves. The more we are aware of our resources, the easier it is to put them to good use.

The following picture shows a model of different human resources.

Knowing yourself



Intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills and was earlier believed to be set in stone. Traditionally, intelligence has been measured using the intelligence quotient (IQ). You could be below normal intelligence (IQ less than 90), have average intelligence (IQ of 90 to 110), above-normal intelligence (with IQ higher than 110) or maybe even show superior intelligence (IQ above 130) (measured according to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) by Wechsler, 1949/2014). However, nowadays, it is accepted that our intelligence is dynamic. An American researcher Carol Dweck (2006) has challenged the common belief that intelligent people are born gifted. Her theory of growth and fixed mindset (see the chapter on mindset) states that we can evolve, depending on the mindset, effort and environmental support. The popular definitions of intelligence emphasise the aspects such as the memory and ability to solve cognitive problems. However, they do not explain the cognitive ability fully. They do not take into account the “interpersonal intelligence” (the ability to understand intentions, motivations and desires of other people) or “intrapersonal intelligence” (the capacity to understand yourself, to appreciate your feelings, fears and motivations).

Talent is a natural ability to be good at something, especially without being taught; talents are the gifts we are handed at birth (Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda, 1998). They are associated with inherited family characteristics; however, if we do not handle them correctly, they can outlive their usefulness or even be wasted.

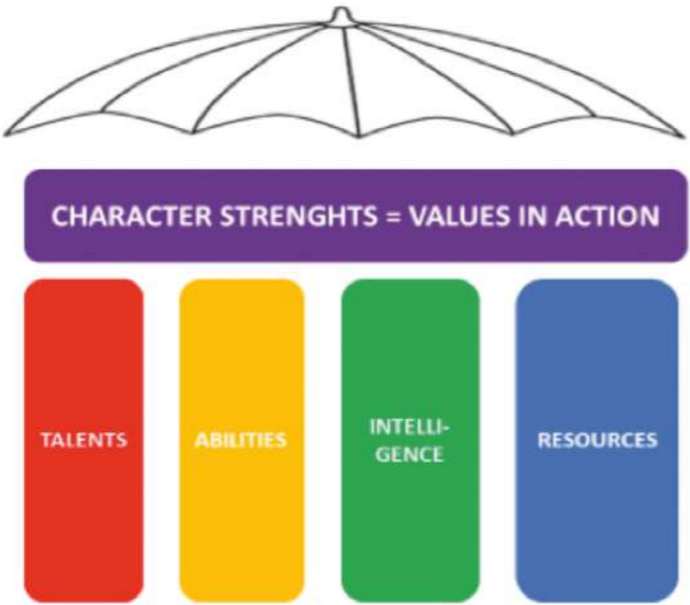
Abilities are the means or skills to do something. Our abilities can be trained at any time in life and are affected by our efforts to improve them.

Values are the degrees of importance we apportion to things or actions. They help us to determine which course of action to follow to find the best way to live. Our values can change, but they are strongly affected by cultural virtues, which are considered relatively stable (Seligman, & Peterson, 2004).

Character strengths are defined as positive traits reflected by thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Character strengths are our values in action. Their degree varies between different individuals; such differences can be measured (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

Weakness is the state or quality of being weak, lack of strength, firmness or vigour or a slight fault or defect (Rust, Diessner, & Reade, 2009).

Apart from using our own resources, we can also obtain outside support (from family, friends, teachers, neighbours, etc.).



It is important to realise that each person possesses all the characteristics (Intelligence, talents, abilities, character-strengths and resources) and that they can all be improved. The way we feel about ourselves and think and talk about ourselves can be changed by becoming more self-aware.

As we have already mentioned, the character strengths are our values in action (Seligman, & Peterson, 2004). They can be seen as an umbrella term; our character strengths run across various domains and affect our talents, abilities, intelligence and resources. For example, if perseverance is one of your top character strengths it will affect your talent for ballet, your abilities for multiplication skills, your success in learning and your resources (as you will show strong willpower and will not give up your relations).

To know yourself well, a good starting point might be focusing on your character strengths.

According to a British researcher Alex Linley (2008), only approximately one-third of people have any meaningful understanding of their strengths. Using our strengths is the smallest thing that we can do to make the biggest difference. Character strengths are relatively stable personality traits and specifically our top 5 character strengths are considered the royal road to optimal thriving (Linley, 2008). It has been shown that using your strengths boosts the levels of joy, satisfaction and engagement, and augments the achievements and success in goal-attainment (Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2015; Fredrickson, 2009; Linley, 2008).

Becoming aware of your own character strengths, to explore them and to apply them at home and in everyday life will positively affect your emotions and thoughts. It will improve your well-being and your learning attainments.

At VIA Institute of Character webpage (<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>) adults and children from the age of 10 can take a free survey to assess their strength profile.



Practice

Food for thought:

- Do you know what self-awareness means?
- How well do you know yourself?
- Are you aware of your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- How many of you can name at least 5 strengths? Talents? Skills?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skill:

- Self awareness: <https://youtu.be/u0MJPkTG5Zg>



A story for discussion

Putting your strength at play – a true story

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.



“Sometimes your biggest weakness can become your biggest strength”.

Nadia is a 12-year-old girl. She has ADHD and every day she is at school, she has a really tough time trying to fit in and do what the teachers ask her to do. Nadia hates school as it makes her feel worthless and wrong.

The teacher tells her:

“Nadia, please concentrate – use a little perseverance”.

“Nadia, please remain seated in your chair – use a little self-control”

However, perseverance and self-control are not at all among Nadia's' top-strength. Actually, they are among her lesser strength. Everyday Nadia feels like Sisyphus – from the Greek myths – who is forced to roll an immense boulder up a hill only for it to roll down when it nears the top, repeating this action for eternity.

After the Christmas holidays, a new teacher is appointed to Nadia's' class. The teacher observes Nadia for a few weeks and one day after class, she asks Nadia to stay after class.

“I have a special project for you”, the teacher says. We are going to raise some chickens in the yard just outside the classroom. I would like you to be in charge of it”

Surprised Nadia asks the teacher; “Why me? I do not normally do very well in school”

The teacher tells Nadia; “I see so many strength in you. We need to put these strengths much more into play in school. We will use your curiosity to learn more about bringing up chickens. We will use your creativity to build a chicken coop. We will use your kindness and love to handle and take care of the chickens”.

Seeing the strengths in Nadia and not just her weaknesses and giving the top strengths an opportunity to be put at play in school started a transformation. Nadia started to look forward to school in the morning.

Suggestion for debriefing:

Let the adolescent give examples from their own life on how to turn a weakness into a strength..



The strength profile

For each family member from the age of 10 years old it is possible to do a free strength-survey ranking your 24 character-strength. The top 5 strengths are the strengths most important to you.

To access the strength survey: <http://www.viacharacter.org>.

You can also have a look at the picture below and let all family members choose the 5 top-strengths they find most important to them – most like them.

Now have a look at the ranking of the each of the family members' strengths- profile or top 5 chosen strengths.



Some strengths we use too little and some, we use too much. Sometimes we need to moderate some of them depending on the situation and marshal some of the others to use them better. It is like a volume-control: sometimes you need to turn it up, sometimes to turn it down or maybe just tune it in a bit more.

Looking at all of your strength profiles, for which strengths do you need:

- To turn up the volume?
- To turn down the volume?
- To make an adjustment?
- To tune in?

Create a picture of a volume control and add the strengths in the right places and show it to each other.

Ledertoug, M.M. (2016). Styrk Skolen. København: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.

Put a price on yourself

Forget everything about modesty and humility because we are going shopping. Each family member finds a minimum of 10 "quality purchases" (your assets) with a sale description, showing what you most like about yourself. Make the sales-description as a receipt from a shop. Tell each other about your receipt.

Thank you for visiting	
Polite.	3,00
Responsible.	5,95
Independent.	7,50
Cooperative.	12,50
Creative.	9,95
Engaged.	6,50
Diligent.	4,95
Thoughtful.	3,50
Active.	7,50
Concentrated.	10,95

Fisker, H. (2003). Learning by Helle Fisker, Denmark.



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Heartfulness

This is a heartfulness meditation. In this practice, you are cultivating a sense of kindness towards yourself and others. Remember that we all want to be happy and healthy. So take some time to wish yourself well and then extend this kindness to others. Start with just sitting and notice your breathing as it is now. If you feel comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just rest your eyes on something in front of you. You can place your hand on your heart and see how that feels. You can keep your hand there throughout the practice or rest it in your lap.

When you are ready, bring kindness and friendship to yourself by silently saying: May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life. Take your time and repeat these sentences again, silently.
Maybe you think it feels strange to send messages to yourself but don't worry about that, you don't have to feel anything special, just repeat these sentences:
May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life.

Now, send some kind thoughts to others. Is there someone to whom you would like to send good wishes? This might be someone about whom you care, someone in this class or someone whom you hardly know. Send that person kind thoughts: May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be able to handle difficulty, and may you enjoy life as best you can.

Now bring to your mind all the members of this family and send them kind thoughts. As you send them your kind wishes, remember that you are one of them, so you are also receiving these kind wishes: May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.
You can even send out such thoughts to all the humans of this planet: people who live in peace or war, are rich or poor. We all share the wish of happiness and health.
May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.

Now return to your breathing. Just follow your breathing as best you can. Allow yourself to be just as you are. Let others be just as they are.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- The Mighty (1998)
Miramax. (n.d.). The Mighty [Text file]. Retrieved from <https://www.miramax.com/movie/the-mighty/>
- The Pursuit of Happiness (2006)
Sony Pictures Entertainment. (2006). The Pursuit Of Happiness [Text file]. Retrieved from <http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thepursuitofhappyness/>
- Norman (2010)
IMDb.com. (n.d.). Norman [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1247683/videoplayer/vi3884949273?ref_=tt_ov_vi



b. Self-management

Learning to control emotions, thoughts and behaviour

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit"

(Will Durant)

This skill is useful for adolescent, for example, when...

"When you are playing a football match and you are holding back your emotions for too long and, suddenly you feel hot-tempered, and explode with a bad answer that later you regret, and feel unsatisfied with."

"When you are having stomach aches due to feelings."

"When you are supposed to do your homework but you want to do something else like playing with friends or watching Netflix."

What are the expected results?

Training self-management is useful to help the adolescents to learn self-management at school and in their out-of-school life. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of self-management and to find the best ways of managing.
- To learn how to control and motivate yourself.
- To develop different strategies of self-management and stress-management so you can thrive and learn.

What is self-management?

Being able to master or deal with problems rather than relinquish them to others

(Johnston, Rogerson, Macijauskienė, Blaževičienė, Cholewka, 2014)

In the UPRIGHT programme, self-management refers to:

- The ability to control your own emotions, thoughts and behaviour successfully in different situations.
- Effectively managing stress and controlling impulses.
- Motivating yourself.

1) The ability to control your own emotions, thoughts and behaviour successfully in different situations

In the skill chapter "Cognitive behaviour modification. Changing your thinking", you are shown some training methods to control your emotions, thoughts, and behaviour. These aspects will not be included in this chapter.

2) Managing stress and controlling impulses effectively

There are many techniques to control the level of stress, including using some physical and psychological stress relievers.

Physical stress relievers:

- Sufficient amount of sleep.
- Exercise.
- Taking breaks and resting, on your own or with others (friends, family).
- Healthy eating habits.
- Breathing exercises.

Psychological stress relievers:

- Meditation or mindfulness, are included in all the lessons of the UPRIGHT programme.
- Being aware of energy sources. Make sure that you fill up your "tank of energy" for your everyday activities.
- Social support: good relationships and friends.
- Planning how to use your time.

Stress relievers can be fast acting or have a long-term effect.

Breathing exercises, which help to calm down the metabolism of the body after the stress response is triggered, are fast relievers. Becoming aware of your own thoughts also acts as a stress reliever (see the chapter on cognitive behavioural modification).

Developing healthy habits like exercising, sleeping enough, regular meditation, using social support, having fun structuring your day and taking rest breaks are some of the long-term stress relievers.



3) Motivating oneself

Motivation can be defined as “the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained” (Cook, & Artino, 2016).

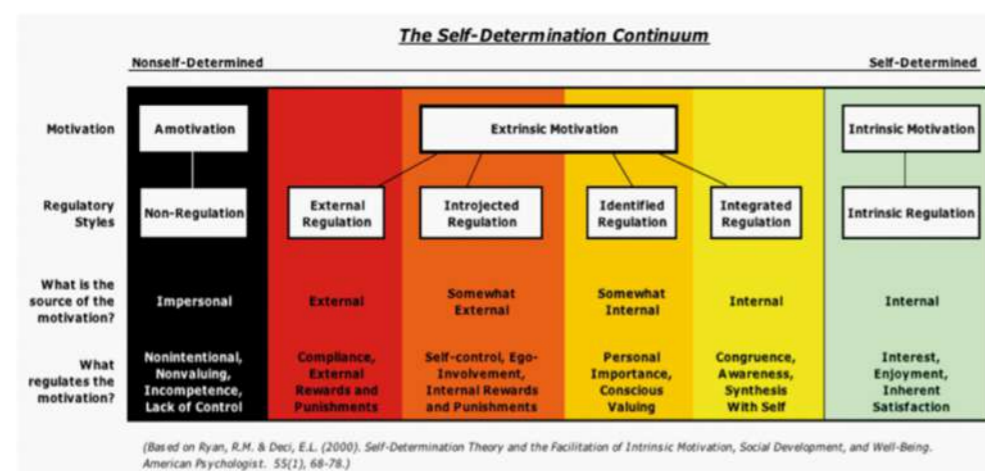
Analysing the motivation means focusing on the reasons for acting in certain ways. There are several different theories explaining motivation. Behaviourists, like B.F. Skinner, argue that people respond to stimuli (Skinner, 1953). The term “carrot and stick” illustrates the fact that people can be motivated by punishment (a stick) or reward (carrot).



Behaviourists have been criticised for looking only at the external re-enforcement and not considering the internal motivation. A humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow has developed a motivation theory, centred on five internal basic human needs known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. A later theory of motivation, which includes both internal and external factors, supported by solid empirical evidence, is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), originally developed by Edward Deci & Richard Ryan (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to SDT, there are two types of motivation:

- 1) controlled/extrinsic and
- 2) autonomous/intrinsic.

Ryan & Deci have described a motivation continuum from the extrinsic to intrinsic motivation



Autonomous /intrinsic motivation is at play when you have a choice and do something because you want to (“wantivation”) rather than because you have to do it (“mustivation”). Here, autonomous does not mean “independent of others”. For example, you normally stop at the red light because you choose to endorse the opinion that it is a good idea to stop when the light is red.

Controlled/extrinsic motivation makes you do something because you feel pressurised, forced or obliged to do it. (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

When people are driven by autonomous motivation, they are likely to feel more engaged and display their pleasure and interest. They also tend to be involved in high-quality relationships, and they are better at adapting, enduring and persevering—while thriving in their life.

When people are compelled by controlled motivation, they do not function and thrive at the same level; they do not learn well, they cut corners and curtail their activities as soon as they can.

The autonomous motivation can be reduced by threats, punishment, pressurising for certain results by giving the expected rewards that appear very important and depend on accomplishing the task.

This type of motivation can be supported by giving a choice, acknowledging the feelings, showing interest, avoiding too much pressure and giving verbal and unexpected rewards.

The autonomous motivation can also be increased by supporting the three needs, which according to SDT are fundamental for all human beings: Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence.

To support autonomy you need to have a choice concerning (Pink, 2011):

- Task; a choice between several possibilities e.g. write an essay on a, b or c.
- Technique; a choice between several methods e.g. make a power point presentation, do a podcast.
- Time; a choice of timeframe e.g. use all math lessons for a week.
- Team; a choice between individual, pair, group work and whom to work with.

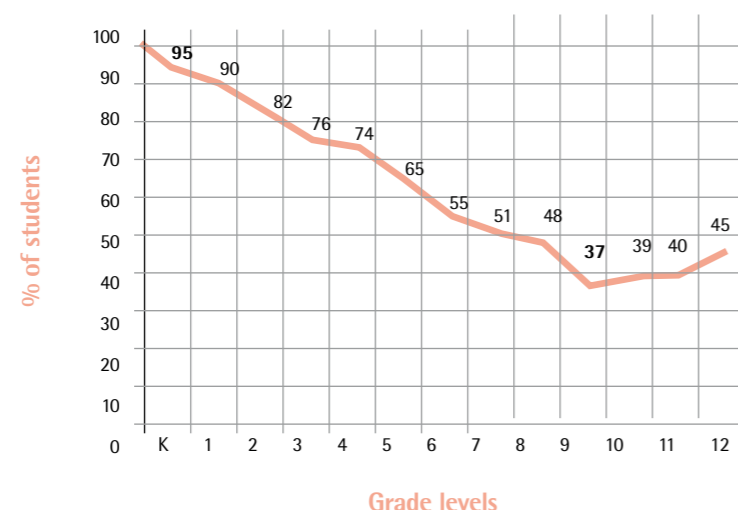
To support competence you need to match the challenge with your competences e.g. if history is difficult for you to understand, your assignment needs to be easier, if you are very good at doing math, you need more difficult assignments.

To support relatedness, you need to feel safe, connected and included by your family and your colleagues at work e.g. make social events in work and outside work to make everyone feel welcome in the group.

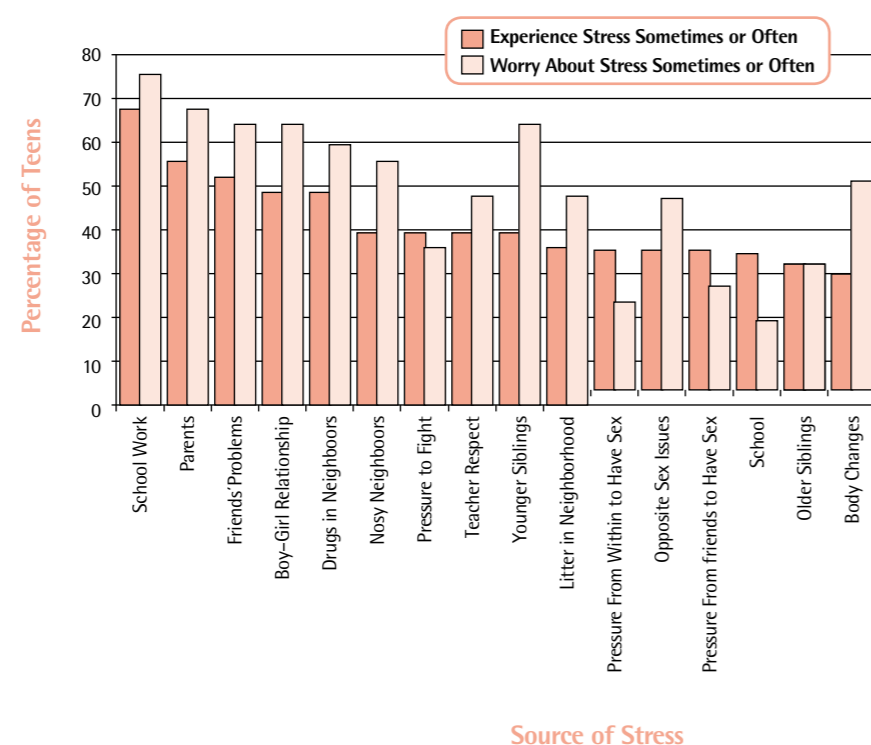
It has been shown that student engagement decreases between the start and the end of the schooling, with an accompanying increase in the levels of boredom. Feeling bored for a few minutes from time to time might be healthy and ignites creativity. Feeling bored often or over prolonged periods affects your well-being, learning ability and might harm your mental health (Holmgren, Ledertoug, Paarup & Tidmand, 2019)

Ryan, & Deci, (2000b)



Student engagement

Many teenagers feel stressed during adolescence, and their well-being and learning ability diminish (Chandra & Batada, 2006)

**Practice****Food for thought:**

- What does self-management mean to you?
- Do you know what to do to reduce stress in your life?
- Do you know what to do to motivate yourself?

Illustration of the skill

Link to videos showing and explaining the skills:

- Self-management: <https://youtu.be/79Vlr48czwl>

**A story for discussion**

A story for discussion: 10 inspirational quotes from Jim Carrey's commencement address to Maharishi University of Management, class of 2014.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. You can also watch the YouTube clip. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.

- All too often, I see people settle for less and give up on their dreams. As I progressed from grade school through high school I lost belief in what most of my teachers said, "you can become anything you want; dreams can come true". I started to believe that it was a bunch of BS and everyone is limited by their situation, politics, people, and other external influences. However, as I've grown older (and perhaps wiser) I have come to fully believe in that statement and that you make your own path. You truly can become anything you want. Dreams can really come true.

Christopher Gardner (Will Smith in "The Pursuit of Happiness") said it best, "You got a dream ... you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves, they wanna tell you, 'you can't do it'. If you want something, go get it. Period". Announce your vision, your request to the universe, work towards it and it will come to life. Never be afraid of aiming high. I'm a firm believer in "ask and you shall receive", combine that with willing it to be and anything is possible. Dreams can come true.

10) "Your job is not to figure out how it's going to happen for you, but to open the door in your head and when the doors open in real life, just walk through it. Don't worry if you miss your cue. There will always be another door opening. They keep opening".

9) "Your need for acceptance can make you invisible in this world. Don't let anything stand in the way of the light that shines through this form. Risk being seen in all of your glory".

8) "Why not take a chance on faith? Not religion, but faith. Not hope, but faith. I don't believe in hope. Hope is a beggar. Hope walks through the fire and faith leaps over it".

7) "You can spend your whole life imagining ghosts and worrying about the pathway to the future but all there will ever be is what's happening here and the decisions we make in this moment".

6) "I learned many great lessons from my father, not the least of which was that you can fail at what you don't want, so you might as well take a chance on doing what you love".

5) "I'm making a conscious choice to see challenges as beneficial so that I can deal with them in the most productive way".

4) "I can tell you from experience, the effect you have on others is the most valuable currency there is".

3) "As far as I can tell, it's just about letting the universe know what you want and working toward it while letting go of how it might come to pass".

2) "You will only ever have two choices: love or fear. Choose love and don't ever let fear turn you against your playful heart".

1) "So many of us choose our path out of fear disguised as practicality. What we really want seems impossibly out of reach and ridiculous to expect, so we never dare to ask the universe for it. I'm saying, I'm the proof that you can ask the universe for it".



Dilemma to be discussed at home

"You should only have to do things you are enthusiastic about".

My motivation

Have a talk about the activities each family member has in their everyday life; the activities you do at school, work, home etc.

Have a look at the table below. Make your own tables and insert the activities of a normal day. Why do you do each activity? Try to find out which column fits the best for this activity.

Now have a talk about how a normal day looks: Are the activities mostly in the left columns ("extrinsic", "introjected") or in the right hand side ("identified", "integrated", "intrinsic")? Talk about if that is the right balance for you.

	Extrinsic	Introjected	Identified	Integrated	Intrinsic
	Carrot and stick. To avoid punishment or to obtain reward.	Someone else would want me to. Keep my conscience good.	I can see that it is good and useful to me.	It has become a part of who I am.	I do it because it is fun and I love to do it.
Sport			30%	40%	20%
Homework		25%	50%	25%	
Cleaning my room	40%	30%	30%		
Hanging out with friends			20%	20%	60%

People tend to thrive when more of their everyday activities are in the three right hand side columns.

We can affect our own motivation by focusing on:

- How can I have a say in the activity? Example: do the activities in a way or at a time that suits me.
- How can I do it together with friends or people I like?
- What can I learn from it? – How can this be helpful to me?
- How can I make it more interesting, fun, exciting and meaningful?
- How can I connect the activity with my strengths / interests / values?
- What value can I create for others when I do the activity?

Think of ways to increase your motivation for doing things that need to be done in your life.

Plan B

You can enhance self-management and avoid stress by making a Plan B. You can have a talk about these two scenarios:

Scenario 1:

You are working on an assignment on the computer, and suddenly the computer breaks down.

- What is your Plan B? – Think of a couple of ideas.
- What would someone else do? Ask the members of your family

Scenario 2:

You are out with friends and you miss the last bus home.

- What is your Plan B? – Think of a couple of ideas.
- What would someone else do? Ask the members of your family.

Discuss in your family:

Find situations where a Plan B would be helpful.

- How can having a Plan B lower the perceived stress?
- How can you get better at making such plans?

Reivich, K., & Shatte, A. (2012). Wellbeing@School. Building Resiliency In Young People. Retrieved from <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Building-Resiliency-in-Young-people-Resource-2013.pdf/>



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Heartfulness

This is a heartfulness meditation. In this practice, you are cultivating a sense of kindness towards yourself and others. Remember that we all want to be happy and healthy. So take some time to wish yourself well and then extend this kindness to others. Start with just sitting and notice your breathing as it is now. If you feel comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just rest your eyes on something in front of you. You can place your hand on your heart and see how that feels. You can keep your hand there throughout the practice or rest it in your lap.

When you are ready, bring kindness and friendship to yourself by silently saying: May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life. Take your time and repeat these sentences again, silently.

Maybe you think it feels strange to send messages to yourself but don't worry about that, you don't have to feel anything special, just repeat these sentences:

May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life.

Now, send some kind thoughts to others. Is there someone to whom you would like to send good wishes? This might be someone about whom you care, someone in this class or someone whom you hardly know. Send that person kind thoughts: May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be able to handle difficulty, and may you enjoy life as best you can.

Now bring to your mind all the members of this family and send them kind thoughts. As you send them your kind wishes, remember that you are one of them, so you are also receiving these kind wishes: May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.

You can even send out such thoughts to all the humans of this planet: people who live in peace or war, are rich or poor. We all share the wish of happiness and health.

May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.

Now return to your breathing. Just follow your breathing as best you can. Allow yourself to be just as you are. Let others be just as they are.

**Suggestions for movies/video clips**

Self Determination Theory; The three needs are explained in these videos:

- Camp Stomping Ground. (2014, October 17). What is Self Determination Theory? [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/youtube-video-yet-another-application-sdt/> (available in English)



- Opposite Direction. (2017, May 17). Self Determination Theory [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUr42fXD6TY>



Movies:

- Dangerous Minds (1995)
IMDb. (n.d.). Dangerous Minds (1995). Mentas peligrosas [Text file]. Retrieved from https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112792/?ref_=ttmi_tt



- Good Will Hunting (1997)
Miramax. (2015, January 14). Good Will Hunting | Official Trailer (HD) Robin Williams, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck | MIRAMAX [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReU1IbL-Q8&list=PLHLYMMYCqjiw97bTRgbQQ1c5pfxEA5mQ>



- Invictus (2009)
Warner Bros. Pictures. (2009, November 17). Invictus [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNsm8uka6B4>



- Pay it forward (2000)
Warner Bros. (2014, July 8). Pay It Forward - Trailer #f2 [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37M4rM3Whh4>



c. Social Awareness

Learning to be aware of others
and to include them

"Do unto others as you would
have them do unto you"

(The Bible, Luke 6:31)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you have to design the rules for a new game and you need to make it also playable for people who are blind, or they use a wheelchair to move around."

"When you need to find your place in a group, and you realize that everyone is different."

"When you need to communicate respectfully with others different to you."



What are the expected results?

Training social awareness is useful to teach the adolescents to pay attention to each other, include each other and create a sense of belonging. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of social awareness, to be appraised of the ways that people pay attention to and include each other.
- To develop different strategies of social awareness to improve relationships and build strong families and school communities.

What is social awareness?



The ability to take the perspective of others and empathise with them, including those from different backgrounds and cultures. Social awareness refers to the ability to understand the social and ethical norms of behaviour and to recognise the family, school, and community support resources. This involves inclusion, i.e. embracing the diversity within each community

(Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2018)

Most important aspects of social awareness are empathy, interpersonal intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Empathy is the capacity to understand and feel the experiences of other people within their frame of reference, i.e., the capacity to place oneself in the position of another (Bellet & Maloney, 1991).

This includes:

- Being observant and curious about others: Watch and wonder—how are they feeling?
- Using active listening: Think about what a person says. Ask follow-up question to understand and acknowledge that person.
- Opening-up: See things through the eyes of others. Discover shared communality. Stop labelling people.

Watch a video on empathy (RSA, 2013).

- The RSA. (2013. Dec. 10). Brené Brown on Empathy. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>



Interpersonal intelligence is sensitivity to the moods, feelings, temperaments and motivations of others (Gardner, 1983).

Emotional intelligence is the capability to recognise your own emotions and those of the others. You should recognise different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide your thinking and behaviour, and adjust your emotions to adapt to different environments or to achieve your goals (Coleman, 2008).

- Interpret non-verbal communication.
- Be interested in other people and their thoughts.
- Be willing to know and understand others.
- Be aware of your own attitude.

Essentials:

- Remember that your emotions and those of other people are different.
- Be aware that the empathy is a skill that can be practised.
- Empathy is different from sympathy.

A strategy to improve your social awareness is active listening (Rogers, 1951). See also the chapter on communication strategies.

- Maintain eye contact with a person while he or she is speaking. This shows that you are paying complete attention to what they have to say. It also prevents you from drifting away into your own thoughts.
- Make the effort of really listening instead of fading in and out of your own dream world.
- Try to repeat to yourself, silently, what the other person has just said to improve your understanding of the conversation.
- Do not interrupt people speaking to you. Not only is it insulting, but you will miss the important information.
- Do not be judgmental while people are talking. Wondering how to respond to their points blocks your attention and diminishes your understanding.
- After the other person stops talking, repeat what they have stated (in your own words) so that they know you have been listening and trying to understand their points. Clarify any doubts by asking questions.
- One effective way to pay attention and understand what the other person is saying is to supply appropriate feedback. This might involve verbal methods (saying 'uh huh' or 'OK') and a positive body language (nodding your head, smiling).

Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know of social awareness?
- What are the important steps you should take to become more emotionally intelligent and more aware of others?
- How socially aware do you consider yourself, on a 1–10 scale?
- Why is social awareness important for mental health and resilience?

Illustration of the skill

Links to videos showing and explaining the skills:

- <https://youtu.be/WgfbHFnpV44>



The dilemma to be discussed at home

Talk to your children about this dilemma:

In your class, there is a new student, coming from another country. You know he has been insulted because of his physical appearance, his culture, language and his religion. He is nice to you, but you also get on well with the students who bully him.

The emotions of other people

You can enhance social awareness by recognising that others can have emotions different from yours, even under the same circumstances.

Talk with your child/ren about the following:

Think of one of your friends. Talk about the emotions your friend would be experiencing if:

- A) (S)he was bullied on social media
- B) (S)he was bullied in the school yard
- C) His/her grandmother passed away
- D) He/she failed a test or an exam

How you could show empathy to your friend. What would it look like, sound like, feel like?

Now have a talk about:

- How do we know if our guesses about the feelings of another person are correct? How can we make sure?
- In which situations is empathy most needed?
- Are there any situations in which empathy is not relevant?
- How can you practise being empathic to people who are not like you? What would you gain from trying?

Reivich, K., & Shatte, A. (2012). Wellbeing@School. Building Resiliency In Young People [Text file]. Retrieved from: <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Building-Resiliency-in-Young-people-Resource-2013.pdf>



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Heartfulness

This is a heartfulness meditation. In this EXERCISE, you are cultivating a sense of kindness towards yourself and others. Remember that we all want to be happy and healthy. So take some time to wish yourself well and then extend this kindness to others. Start with just sitting and notice your breathing as it is now. If you feel comfortable with it, you can close your eyes or you can just rest your eyes on something in front of you. You can place your hand on your heart and see how that feels. You can keep your hand there throughout the EXERCISE or rest it in your lap.

When you are ready, bring kindness and friendship to yourself by silently saying: May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life. Take your time and repeat these sentences again, silently.

Maybe you think it feels strange to send messages to yourself but don't worry about that, you don't have to feel anything special, just repeat these sentences:

May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be able to handle difficulty, may I enjoy life. Now, send some kind thoughts to others. Is there someone to whom you would like to send good wishes? This might be someone about whom you care, someone in this class or someone whom you hardly know. Send that person kind thoughts: May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be able to handle difficulty and may you enjoy life as best you can. Now bring to your mind all the students in this class and send them kind thoughts. As you send them your kind wishes, remember that you are one of them, so you are also receiving these kind wishes: May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.

You can even send out such thoughts to all the humans of this planet: people who live in peace or war, are rich or poor. We all share the wish of happiness and health.

May we all be happy, healthy and enjoy life as best we can.

Now return to your breathing. Just follow your breathing as best you can. Allow yourself to be just as you are. Let others be just as they are.

**Suggestions for movies/video clips**

- The Blind Side (2009). IMDb. (n.d.). The Blind Side [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.imdb.com/videoplayer/vi2369061401>



- Patch Adams (1998). Universal Studios. (1999). <https://www.patchadams.com/>



- Lifehacker. (2017, February 3). The Importance of Empathy [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPMMSKfKZQ>



- Psych2Go. (2017, August 27). 7 Signs of Emotional Intelligence: Which of these do you possess? [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUdfbJEAY8>



- Edarabia. (2016, November 22). 4 Activities to Develop Children's Social & Emotional Intelligence [Video file].



d. Relationship Skills

Learning to establish and maintain friendships and relationships

"The human mind is social"

(Roy Baumeister)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

"When you are feeling anxious because of a WhatsApp conversation and you need to find the correct way to say things."

"When you need to make friends and keep them."

"When someone's pet dies, and to know how to treat him/her empathically."



What are the expected results?

Training relationship skills is useful to develop the relationships and relationship skills of the adolescents. The objectives are:

- To understand the meaning of relationships and to become aware of the ways people relate to each other.
- To develop relationship skills in order to improve relations with others.

What are relationship skills?

The ability to understand and manage people, to act wisely in human relations

(Thorndike, 1920)

The ability, skills, tools, knowledge and understanding to create, communicate, evolve, grow, trust and maintain a relationship

(Definition.net, 2018)

The human being is naturally inclined to form attachments. Human babies are highly dependent on the care of their parents. They form emotional bonds and interact with the caregivers using smiles, other facial expressions, sounds and body language. From the very beginning of their life, they communicate their feelings and needs. Relationship skills are crucial for engaging in positive interactions. Its development is determined by our experiences with other people. The role of positive relationships in life cannot be overstated; the need of connectedness with other people is a deeply embedded human feature (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

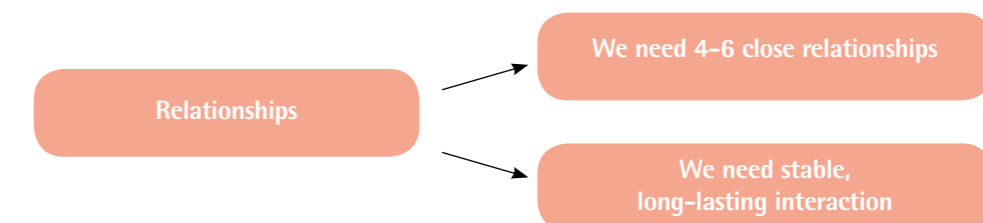
Good relationships and feelings of belonging are associated with being a valuable part of the community. We aspire to be in contact with other people, to care for them and to be cared for ourselves. We strive to build and maintain positive relationships and to create emotional and personal ties between us (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The "belongingness" hypothesis suggests that human beings have an almost universal need to form and maintain relationships; to be an accepted member of a group gives strong survival and reproductive benefits. The hypothesis also states that humans have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum number of lasting, positive and significant interpersonal relationships. Satisfying this drive involves fulfilling two criteria (Baumeister & Leary, 1995):

- First, there is a need for frequent, pleasant interactions with a few other people.
- Second, these interactions must take place in the context of a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare.

When our need for relatedness is met, our well-being, empathy, performance, engagement, persistence and the number of positive emotions are often affected in positive ways (Klinge, 2017; Holmgren, Ledertoug, Paarup, & Tidmand, 2019).

In order to thrive, most people need roughly four to six other people who care about you, to whom you can talk, and the feelings should be reciprocated (Norrish, 2015)



Relationships are dynamic, and it is always possible to change their quality because every interaction has a potential to create new experiences for each other. The important factor is the cumulative effect of such interactions on the quality of the relationship. The quality of our relationship affects:

- Our motivation for taking care of the other.
 - Our interpretation of the actions of the other.
 - Our indulgence and tolerance of the other.
- (Klinge, 2017)

To improve our relationship skills, to establish and maintain good relationships and friendships, we need to focus on integrity, caring and congeniality.

(Degges-White, 2015)

- Traits of integrity include trustworthiness, honesty, being dependable, loyal and trusting.
- Traits of caring include empathy, being non-judgmental, having good listening skills and being supportive.
- Traits of congeniality include self-confidence, the ability to see the humour in life and being fun to be around.

Practice

Food for thought:

- What does relationship skill mean to you?
- Which relationships are most important to you?
- What are the characteristics of a good friend?
- What do you do to be a good friend?

Illustration of the skill

Link to videos showing and explaining the skills

- Relationship Skills: https://youtu.be/6lpKJ_5CrL0



A story for discussion

The Two Friends

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following story. Reflect individually or as a family on its meaning and how its message can be applied in your daily lives.

Two friends were walking across a desert. While they were walking, they got into an ugly argument and became angry; one of them slapped the face of the other. The one who was slapped, although he felt hurt, did not say anything but quietly wrote in the sand: "I feel hurt because today my friend hit me in the face".

They resumed walking and kept walking until they came across an oasis. They decided to take a swim in the lake. While they were swimming, the one who had been slapped started drowning. The other friend came to his rescue and saved him. The boy who was rescued wrote on a stone,

"Today I was saved by my best friend".

The other asked him:

"Why did you write in the sand when I slapped you, but you wrote on the stone when I saved you?"

His friend replied that it is better to write in the sand when your friend hurts you, as it will be gone with the wind, but write on a stone when your friend does something good, so that it will last forever.

Anthony De Mello (1982) The Song of the Bird. Image Books.

What can we do to keep our friends?

Discuss in the family:

- What can you do to take care of your friendships? Name at least three things you can do.
- What should you not do, so you do not lose your friend? Name at least three things you should not do.

Agree upon one important thing necessary to be a good friend. Reflect upon how each of you can do this important during the week?.

Partnership for Children (n.d.) Zippy's Friends Programme.

Retrieved from <http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/programmes/zippy-s-friends.html>

Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Shift gears

Start by standing strong and still like a mountain. I invite you to imagine that you are all in your own bubbles, which means that you do not pay attention to the people around you.

Just give yourself and others some space. Bring your awareness to your breath as it flows naturally in and out of your body. Note how it feels just to stand there, how your feet are touching the ground and how the muscles in your body are working to hold you up and prevent you from losing your balance. As you stand there, you can move the torchlight of your attention from your feet up to your head. Notice your knees, hips, belly, back, arms and head.

Now we are going to walk in slow motion. Start by lifting one foot off the ground and move it forward with full awareness. Maybe you notice how the weight goes over to the other foot and how the weight returns to the first foot as soon as you put it down. Note the feeling of touching the floor. Slowly start to place the other foot in front and keep full attention on your body. Walk slowly, step by step. When you have taken five to ten steps or so, stop and stand still. Notice the feeling of your body and mind now. What is the weather pattern inside you now, how are you? Is it calm or is it stormy or somewhere between? Slowly turn around and walk back in slow motion. Then stop, observe your breathing and the weather within you. Now we are going to play a bit and walk at a different speed. You could imagine that you are shifting gears like while driving a car. Start with the 1st gear, walk a few steps in slow motion. Then shift to the 2nd gear, walk a bit faster but keep full attention to your body.

Then, shift to the 3rd gear and give it a little more speed, with full awareness. Then, go all the way up to the 5th gear; now you are walking very fast, almost running. Keep full attention on your body and notice how it feels now. Then stop and stand still like a mountain. How is your body? How is your mind? What kind of weather is within you, still or stormy or somewhere between? Stand there for a few moments, with full awareness.

Now slowly walk back to your seat, keeping full attention on your body all the way, and sit down as slowly as you can. Pay full attention to how your body feels right now. When you are in your seat, direct your torchlight of attention to your breathing. As best you can, follow your breathing and count five inhalations and five exhalations. Just sit still and breathe for a moment.

Remember that your breathing is always there when you want to step out of the autopilot and calm down. Just be.



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001). Warner Bros. (2014, July 8). Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG37G--drDs> (Available in English)



e. Responsible Decision-Making

Learning to make good constructive choices

"I make all my own decisions, and I take full responsibility"

(Kanye West)

This skill is useful for adolescents, for example, when...

- "When someone is bullied, and you need to know what to do."
- "When you have not done your homework, or your own room or chores at home."
- "When you have to choose whether you will join a football team despite it means you won't be seeing your friends that often."

What are the expected results?

Training responsible decision-making is useful to develop the ability to make good constructive choices and take full responsibility for these choices. The objectives are:

- To be able to identify responsible decisions.
- To be able to identify the barriers to good decision-making.
- To be able to rate the quality of the decisions.
- To develop strategies, including steps to be taken to make good decisions.

What is responsible decision-making?

Decision-making means selecting the most convenient alternative among the available choices, to fulfil a particular need

(Harris, 2012)

The chapter on responsible decision-making deals with the issue of training teenagers to make responsible choices. Like everyone else, the teenagers have to make decisions that affect them personally—personal decisions—or affect other people—social decisions (Güçray, 1996).

Is decision-making the same as problem-solving? In the latter process, we focus on solving the problem successfully. In the former, we focus on reaching decisions, on choosing. The decision made might not resolve the problem, and yet be a good decision. For example, you might decide to prepare yourself for a test and to study all week because you would like to do well. Eventually, you do not succeed to the extent you would have liked; even so, the decisions were good.

The human brain continues to mature well into the early twenties. During this period, the decision-making part of the brain is still developing, and the adolescent is still learning to control his or her impulses. Teenagers, especially younger teenagers, might be less capable of understanding the consequences of their behaviour.

While the process of making decisions is similar for males and females, male adolescents tend to perceive more positive outcomes, while females tend to be more risk-averse.

Then, what is a responsible decision?

A responsible choice is a good decision that takes into consideration:

- Ethics
- Safety concerns
- Social norms and laws
- The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions
- The well-being of yourself and others

Keelin, Schoemaker & Spetzler (2009)



Ethics: This term refers to well-founded standards of right (e.g. being honest, compassionate and loyal) and wrong (e.g. rape, stealing, murder, assault, slander and fraud) behaviour that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness or specific virtues.

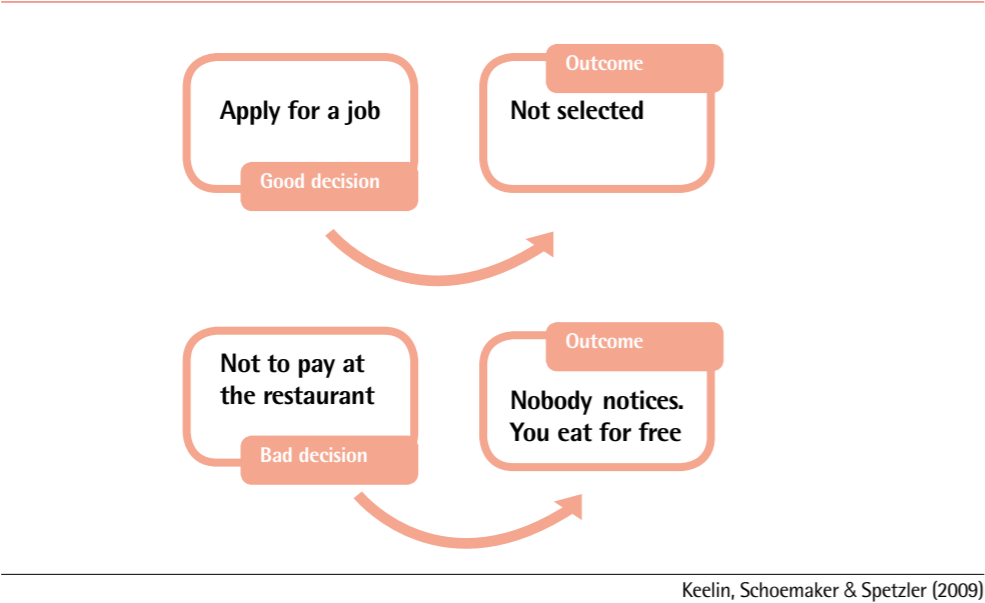
Safety concerns: Decisions that protect from or are unlikely to cause danger, risk or injury to oneself, others or the environment. Teenagers do not always think about long-term consequences, and they sometimes want to do things that put their safety and well-being at risk.

Social norms and laws: A responsible choice is a decision that is in accordance with the social norms and is legal. Social norms are the rules of acceptable conduct in a given group or society. Any behaviour that is outside these norms is considered abnormal. It should be noted that these rules are not laws; they are social obligations, which can vary between different countries. For example, although handshakes between men and women are common in most Western countries, in certain parts of the world such a gesture would be considered an inappropriate contact between the sexes.

A realistic evaluation of the consequences of various actions: Adolescents should learn that there are boundaries that they should not cross, and if they do, they are likely to hurt themselves and others. They need to develop the understanding of the consequences of their actions—consequences of decisions—such as success, struggle, failure, lessons learnt or weaknesses.

The well-being of yourself and others: Decision-making has to protect your own positive emotional and health status and that of the others.

The quality of a decision depends on how we make it and not on its outcome. You may make a good decision and not get the expected outcome, and vice versa



Good decisions do not guarantee good outcomes, but—on average—consistently better decisions lead to consistently better outcomes.

Taking decisions

Types of decisions:

Making decisions is part of our life. We have to make decisions constantly. In the example below, the basic steps necessary for making a good decision are shown.

- 1. Thinking of possible options.
- 2. Evaluating the options.
- 3. Choosing a strategy for making the decision, trying it and reviewing how it works.

Example: Steps to decide what to have for breakfast:

Decision steps	Steps	Options
1. Identify decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What to have for breakfast	Choice may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">What do i feel like?What looks good?What's healthy?
2. Think of options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cereal – sweetened, processed or natural, unsweetenedToast – with jam or vegemiteFruit – fresh or cooked in syrupMilk – plain or flavoured	Options may be limited by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">What's availableWhat am I used toWhat am I are willing to tryChoice parent/carer allows
3. Evaluate options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sweetened cereal tastes better but is not so healthyPlain milk is healthier but child doesn't like the taste	Consider the relevance of things like: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pleasure (taste)What's quick and easyWhat's healthiest
4. Choose a strategy, try it and check how it works	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Try and compare tasteChoose what's quickest... orCompare listed ingredients for nutritional value	How good was your decision? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Did you enjoy breakfast?Did you achieve goals (eg for being quick, for healthy eating)?How will you decide next time

Commonwealth of Australia (n.d.)

When you work in a group, how do you make a responsible decision?

- Follow norms established for the discussion
- Actively participate in group decision-making process
- Generate alternative ideas and solutions
- Demonstrate the "good of the group", going beyond your self-interest for the good of the group
- Ask "why" and "what if" questions

Good decisions

To measure the quality of a decision, rate on a scale from 0 (lowest quality) to 100 (high quality) the 6 aspects of any decision (shown below). Each aspect should be considered from both intellectual (head) and emotional (heart) perspectives; the decision should make sense and feel right.



Keelin, Schoemaker & Spetzler (2009)

A) Helpful frame: zoom in on the decision

To frame the decision, respond to these three questions:

1. Purpose—what do you want to accomplish by this decision?
2. Scope—what should you include in and exclude from the decision?
3. Perspective—what is your point of view? Are there other ways to approach it? How might the others approach it?

B) Clear values: what we really care about

Values are what we care about—our wants, needs, likes and dislikes.

Frequently, we find decisions difficult to make because none of the options can satisfy all our values. Such decisions involve trade-offs; we need to define which values are most important in the particular case.

There are several traps to avoid:

- Over-emphasising the short-term benefit (e.g., buy it now because it is cheap) and playing down the long-term effect (e.g., too much credit-card debt).
- Not taking into account the effect of our decision on others.
- Not knowing what we truly want.

C) Creative alternatives: there is usually a better way

An alternative is one of the possible courses of action available. Without alternatives, we cannot make a decision.

Good alternatives are (1) under our control, (2) significantly different from each other, (3) potentially attractive and (4) achievable.

The quality of a decision is limited by the alternatives we consider—we cannot choose an alternative we have not thought of. Many people assume that they have few or no alternatives. Yet, there usually are many more alternatives than appear at first glance. Sometimes, we do not like the immediately apparent alternatives. We need to talk to and brainstorm with friends whose experience and judgment we respect. We can also make wish lists or do anything else to stimulate our creativity so we can envision alternative ways to address the problem.

D) Useful Information: possible outcomes and their probabilities

Useful information is anything we know, would like to know or should know that might influence our decision-making but is not under our control. This includes:

- Factual information from the past.
- Judgments about current or future situations.

Obtaining such information could help us to anticipate the consequences of our choice. Too many decisions are based on wrong or incomplete information. Consciously considering the need for information and gathering useful and credible information before we act is essential to good decision-making.

The traps to avoid are:

- Laziness or reluctance to find out.
- "The things I know that are not so". (Yogi Berra).
- Wishful thinking: "Because I want it, it will happen".
- Assuming that the future will be just like the past.
- Avoiding uncertainty.
- Ignoring things that I do not understand.
- Getting swamped with too much information.



E) Sound reasoning: does it make sense? Can I explain the rationale?

Reasoning is the process of combining alternatives, information and values to arrive at a decision. It completes the sentence: "I am choosing this alternative because..."

Choosing an alternative just because it feels right is not sufficient for making an important decision. Sound reasoning requires an explanation or rationale. To give a rationale, you can use a list of pros and cons for each alternative, decision and probability trees, influence diagrams, computer/spreadsheet models or simulation. For example, we can say that we are choosing an alternative because it involves less risk and is better for the people we care about than the other alternatives available. To back up this choice, we can describe the considered alternatives, information taken into account (including risks), values and trade-offs and the method for combining all these aspects to arrive at the final choice.

Poor reasoning leads to poor decisions.

Traps to avoid:

- Ignoring other possibilities, "It will not happen to me".
- Assuming no uncertainty in potential outcomes.
- Misinterpretation of facts and information.
- Ignoring information, alternatives, or values.
- Relying on irrelevant information (e.g. sunk costs, regrets).
- Wishful thinking, "Because I want it, it will happen".
- Doing what I know how to do and ignoring something difficult but important.
- Making logical errors.
- Paralysis by analysis". This is typical for the people who cannot make a decision because they become immersed in never-ending over-analysing. When you aspire to something perfect, you do not achieve anything tangible.

F) Commitment to follow-through: executing decisions makes them real

The commitment to follow the decision through means that we are determined to execute our decision and can do so purposefully. If we are half-hearted about our commitment, our engagement is diminished, and we might not achieve the best results.

Traps to avoid:

- Making a "mental commitment" but separately deciding not to put in the necessary effort to follow it through.
- Not dealing with obstacles that get in the way.
- Procrastination.
- Half-hearted commitment.

G) Sound reasoning: does it make sense? Can I explain the rationale?

Enemies of good, conscious decision-making are:

Bias: The tendency to seek information that confirms our own beliefs, and to disregard the information to the contrary.

Peer pressure: People tend to follow their peers. They change their own attitudes, values or behavior to conform to those of the peer group or an individual.

Not recognising the opportunities for decision-making.

Going with the flow: letting others take control of your life.

Strong feelings can cloud clear thinking. When an adolescent is frightened, angry or overwhelmed by negative feelings, the chances of making a good decision are reduced. In these cases, it is better to postpone making a decision until the person in question calms down.

Keelin, Schoemaker & Spetzler (2009)

Practice

Food for thought:

- What do you know about responsible decision-making?
- What do you think of the expression, "Adolescents are like incomplete cars: all petrol, no brakes?"
- What do you think of the expression, "If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice?"
- What do you think of the expression, "The heart has its reasons of which the reason knows nothing. We know the truth, not only by the reason but also by the heart?"

Illustration of the skill

Link to videos showing and explaining the skills

- Responsible Decision Making: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YygfneJ133s>



The dilemma to be discussed at home

At the entrance to a concert, you see a sign that says, "We have the right to refuse admission". You see the doorman refuse access to a person of a different ethnicity. You know that it is illegal to use the right of admission to justify racist, xenophobic attitudes or any kind of discrimination on ideological, religious or other grounds.

- What would you do?
- Face the doorman or not intervene because you are not personally affected?

As guidance: Even small acts of racism may have an impact on the person who receives it.

Further suggestions

Reflect on your own or discuss with a family member: What are the economic, political, moral and psychological implications of racism for the rejected population?

Dilemas morales y éticos. Inmigración y racismo. (2010). Retrieved from <http://gomezramos.blogspot.com/2010/01/dilemas-morales-y-eticos-inmigracion-y.html>.

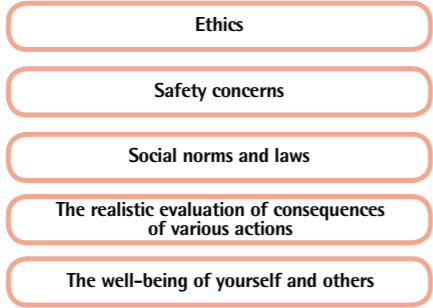


Types of responsible choices

Objective:

A strategy to enhance responsible decision-making is to identify the attributes of a responsible decision.

A responsible choice is a good decision that takes into consideration:



Keelin, Schoemaker & Spetzler (2009)

On your own, or with a family member, reflect/ discuss the following situation:
Jon lives in an apartment, and he chooses to play loud music late at night in his room.
His families have told him not to do it.

- Is Jon's choice responsible? Why/why not?

Write down your reflections on a piece of paper.

Types of responsible choices

As guidance: the decision of Jon has been categorised according to each aspect as follows:

1) Jon's choice is not ethical. To be ethical, a decision has to:

- Produce the most good and do the least harm.
- Respect the rights of all who have a stake in it.
- Treat people equally and fairly.
- Serve the community as a whole, not just some of its members.
- Make you act as the sort of person you would like to be.

Jon's decision is not ethical because it harms others (family and neighbours), does not respect their rights, treats people unequally (he is putting himself first), does not serve the community as a whole and does not make him act as the person that he would like to become.

2) His decision is not safe because playing very loud music might prevent people from attending to an important phone call or even damage their hearing.

3) The decision does not follow social norms. People are expected to maintain silence during the night so others can sleep or rest.

4) Jon's choice contravened his families' rules. As a consequence, his families will reprimand him. The neighbours will dislike Jon because he disturbs them late at night.

5) Jon's choice negatively affects the well-being of others. At night, people do not like to be disturbed by loud noises.

Further suggestions:

To what extent do you agree with this categorisation of Jon's decision-making? Write it in your notebook.

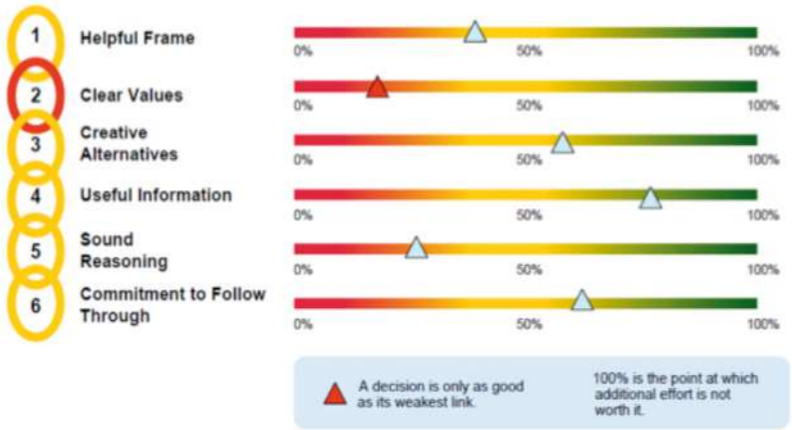
Las Hayas (2018)

The decision quality (DQ) checklist.
How good a decision is?

Objective:

A strategy to enhance responsible decision-making is to rate the quality of decisions.

Before making a decision, we can rate its quality by assigning a score to each of the six aspects, on a scale of 0 to 100%. One hundred percent is not perfection; it is the point where additional improvement is not worth the effort or the cost of delay. The lowest score determines the overall quality of the decision. Going through the process of addressing the current state of each aspect will help to identify where an additional effort will be likely to improve the decision.



Elaborate a decision for one of these scenarios and rate its quality. Write down the score in your notebook.

- 1) Your child asks to have a dog as a pet. What decision would you make?.
- 2) One of your children is getting low grades in a subject, and you think it's Time to do something about it. What decision would you make?.
- 3) Your child asks for permission to attend a birthday party late at night. What decision would you make?.

Further suggestions:

Write down in your notebook:

- What are your scores for your decision?
- Why did you rate them like this?
- Indicate 2 pros and cons of using the decision quality checklist?

Las Hayas & Ledertoug (2018)



Mindfulness exercise

You can find this voice-guided session at the link below.

Hear it all – mindful listening

Each person has one minute for listening and one minute for talking. You have one minute, then you should switch the roles.

Person A starts by talking about what he or she notices when he/she has to take a difficult decision.

Person B listens very carefully and pays full attention to what A is saying. If A has not so much to say they can just be in silent until the bell rings after one minute. Then they switch, and B talks about what he or she notices when he/she has to take a difficult decision. After that, they talk in normal way about their experience, for a minute. Then, the exercise ends.

Further suggestions:

- Was there anything that they noticed during listening time? Did you find this hard or easy? Did you notice desire to talk when you were listening? In what situations can mindful listening be helpful?
- An extension of the exercise consists on asking person B to repeat what s/he heard A say (before B is allowed to talk of his/her impressions). Then, let B talk and A listen and repeat what s/he heard?

Jónsdóttir (2018)



Suggestions for movies/video clips

- Billy Elliot (2000): BBC Films. (n.d.). Billy Elliot [Video Trailer]. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfilms/film/billy_elliott (Available only in English):



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