



MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION IN
THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING HANDBOOK



MHP Hands Team



Mental Health Promotion

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THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING HANDBOOK**

Disclaimer

It is intended that this Mental Health Promotion Handbook will be of benefit to users. It is suitable for use by professionals and trained persons. However, that all persons using the handbook do so at their own risk. The authors cannot accept any responsibility for any harm caused to anyone using this material.

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Preface

The issue of mental health is becoming increasingly important in modern society. Psychological problems and mental illness are becoming more prevalent across much of Europe and there is an emerging realisation that we must, as a society, promote good mental health and wellbeing, as well as improve mental health services.

We now know that good mental health and wellbeing is a function of the settings and environments that we interact with, the way in which we behave and the supports that are available to us. These settings include the schools that we attend, the workplaces we work in and the residences that we live in.

However, many people have difficulty understanding how an environment can promote mental wellbeing. These Mental Health Promotion Handbooks address that gap in knowledge. They provide users in the schools, workplace and older people's settings with a set of validated tools to promote mental health, as well as providing methods by which to implement actions to promote mental wellbeing.

The Handbooks are targeted at people with responsibilities in each of these settings, for example, teachers and educators; managers and health and

safety staff; nurses and carers. No prior knowledge of mental health issues is assumed – you will find that all necessary materials are available through the handbooks and that these are supplemented by mental health promotion tools and training that are available through the European Network for mental Health Promotion Network website .

These Handbooks have been developed with the support of the European Commission's Public Health programme. The work has been done by leading experts from some of Europe's leading mental health promotion institutes. These include teams from the German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, led by Jörg Michel; eWorx in Greece, led by Tilia Boussios; from the Austrian Research Institute of the Red Cross led by Almut Bachinger; from the Estonian-Swedish Institute Mental Health and Suicidology Institute led by Merike Sisask; the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare led by Pia Solin; the Polish NOFER Institute of Occupational Medicine led by Elżbieta Korzeniowska; and by our own team at the Work Research Centre in Ireland, led by Richard Wynne. The project has been evaluated by a team from Romtens in Romania led by Theodor Haratau. My sincerest thanks are due to all of the team.

Richard Wynne, Project Manager, January 2013

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Introduction

The importance of mental health and wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing is increasingly recognised as an important component of health throughout the lifespan. Mental health is centrally concerned with positive mental health characteristics, as opposed to mental illness. The ability to function well at the emotional, cognitive and social levels are prerequisites for good health and wellbeing.

Settings and target groups

The settings in which we work and live play a major role in maintaining and boosting our mental wellbeing and preventing the development of mental health problems. These are the places where we spend our time and the health promoting features/ design of these environments strongly influences our mental health and wellbeing.

Of course, mental wellbeing is not only affected by the external environment, it is also associated with how we act, think and feel. Individuals can actively promote their own mental health and wellbeing.

This handbook deals with young people who are in primary, secondary and tertiary level schools.

Who should use the handbooks?

While students are the ultimate target groups for the handbook, it is not expected that these groups will undertake mental health promoting interventions alone. The direct target group for the handbooks are: teachers, principals and school psychologists.

The content of the manuals

The handbook aims to support changes in individual behaviour that will promote mental health. The user will learn how to implement interventions designed to improve students' wellbeing. The handbooks present examples of suitable interventions for promoting mental health and provide a description of the tools and processes involved.

The handbook consists of four main sections:

- **A short introduction**
- **A description of the basics of mental health promotion**
- **The roles and skills needed for mental health promotion**
- **Topics, methods and tools for mental health promotion**

Within each of these topics the issue is defined and the importance and relevance of the topic is outlined. There is also a description of the implementation process involved. Each of the topic areas include relevant exercises to support the user, as well as some examples and suggestions for further reading.

Much of the supporting material that the user will need can be found on the MHP-Hands website:

<http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=handbook.en.resources>.

More generally, the website contains useful back-up material and links to appropriate resources – this includes the ProMenPol website, which contains more than 400 tools for MHP and the Mind-Health website, which provides an online training course in mental health promotion. This training course should be considered additional to the handbooks. The handbooks focus particularly on interventions targeted at individuals, while the e-learning course targets the structural features of the settings.

Field testing the handbooks

In advancing knowledge and practice in mental health promotion (MHP), monitoring and evaluation of implementation for MHP programme outputs plays a crucial role. The MHP Handbook for the educational setting was tested during the field trials with teachers and other staff from the school setting. The aim of the field trials was: 1) to provide participants with an overview of the content of the MHP Handbook; 2) to enable participants to implement MHP related topics in the educational setting, and; 3) to help participants in practicing MHP using the exercises from the MHP Handbook. The face-to-face training was organised in each participating country with 10 participants who were representatives of the target group. The quality of the implementation was assessed in order to determine how much of the MHP programme was delivered and how well it was conducted.

Acknowledgements

The MHP Handbooks have been produced by a multinational team from Ireland (Work Research Centre Ltd.), Germany (Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Medizin (BAUA), Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health BAUA), Estonia (Estonian-Swedish Mental Health and Suicidology Institute ERSI), Austria (Forschungsinstitut des Roten Kreuzes, Research Institute of the Red Cross FRK), Finland (National Institute for Health and Welfare THL), Poland (NOFER Institute of Occupational Medicine), Romania (Fundatia Romtens) and Greece (EWORX S.A.).

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Basics in Mental Health Promotion

Section 1

1.1 Understanding MHP – Concepts, Benefits, General Principles

Positive Mental Health

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2001) defines positive mental health as a “state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” The concept of positive mental health is more than merely the absence of mental illness; positive mental health can be defined as “...feeling, thinking, and interacting in ways that help you enjoy life and deal more effectively with challenging situations” (MHSchools). An individual with positive mental health fulfils his/her potential, enjoys life, recognises his/her abilities and copes well with challenges (Lehtinen, 2008). Perceived wellbeing has also been shown to reduce absenteeism in both the workplace and in school. Positive mental health may be viewed as a person’s capacity to perceive, comprehend and interpret their surroundings, to adapt and change as necessary and to think and communicate with others. Wellbeing enables us to manage our lives successfully and contributes to the effective functioning of individuals, families, communities and society. An individual with good mental health is more likely to be self-determined and “to think about and act on personal decisions to contribute to emotional and physical growth.” (Deci and Ryan, 2007)

Positive mental health consists of emotions (affect, feeling), cognition (perception, thinking, reasoning), social functioning (relations with others and society) and coherence (sense of meaning and purpose in life) (Friedli, 2009). These individual attributes and skills can be measured using a range of wellbeing scales. Positive mental health and “wellbeing” is also associated with a healthy lifestyle, good physical health, quicker recovery from injury/illness, fewer limitations in daily living, higher educational attainment, greater productivity, better employment and income, stronger relationships, greater social cohesion and improved quality of life. Figure 1.1 below presents key mental health determinants.



Figure 1.1. Mental health determinants (Lehtinen 2008).

These determinants can act as either risk factors or protective factors in terms of influencing mental health (Barry and Jenkins, 2007a). While protective factors enhance positive mental health and reduce the possibility of developing mental disorders, risk factors increase the likelihood of that an individual will experience mental health problems. In addition, risk factors and protective factors operate at different levels, including the individual, family, community and macro levels (society). This is illustrated in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Examples of protective factors and risk factors affecting mental health

	Protective factors	Risk factors
Individual level	Positive self concept	Low self-esteem
	Good coping skills	Poor coping skills
	Attachment to family	Insecure attachment in childhood
	Social skills	Low self-efficacy
	Good physical health	Physical and intellectual disability
Social level	Positive early attachment	Abuse and violence
	Supportive caring parents/family	Separation and loss
	Good communication skills	Peer rejection
	Supportive social relationships	Social isolation
	Sense of social belonging	
	Community participation	
Structural level	Safe and secure living	Neighbourhood violence and crime
	Good environment	Poverty, Homelessness
	Economic security	Insecurity
	Employment	Unemployment
	Positive educational experience	School failure
	Access to support services	Lack of support services
Cultural level*	Acceptance of cultural diversity	Social or cultural discrimination
	Efforts to assimilate representatives of different cultures	Mild integration of representatives of different cultures
	Less stigma in relation to mental illness	Tolerance of deviance and lack of encouragement to seek help

*Added by Chapter editors to the original table due to the increasing importance of the cultural level and influences
 Source: Barry M., Jenkins R. Introduction to Mental Health Promotion. In: Barry M., Jenkins R. (eds). Implementing Mental Health Promotion. Elsevier, 2007

Positive feelings alone are not sufficient for ensuring good mental health since: 1) they do not necessarily lead to personal growth and fulfilment; 2) they may be transitory or achieved by the use of drugs or alcohol, and; 3) there are occasions when positive mental health is affected by negative emotional states (i.e. losses) (Huppert, 2007). Individuals with positive mental health normally possess the following characteristics/abilities (Lehtinen, 2008):

- A sense of wellbeing and satisfaction;

- The ability to enjoy life, to laugh and to have fun;
- The ability to deal with stressful life events and to bounce back from adversity;
- Participation in life to the fullest extent possible, through meaningful activities and positive relationships;
- The capacity to change, grow, and experience a range of feelings, even when life circumstances change;
- A sense of balance in one's own life between solitude and sociability, work and play, sleep and wakefulness, rest and exercise;
- Self-care that attends to the needs of the whole person — mind, body, spirit, creativity;
- Intellectual development, health;
- The ability to care for others; and
- Self-confidence and high levels of self-esteem.

The Concept of MHP

Mental health is an integral part of overall health. It is determined by the interaction between biological, psychological, social and environmental factors. The aim of mental health promotion is to achieve and maintain positive mental health and to improve one's quality of life by focusing on the modifiable determinants which can be changed for the better. The promotion of mental health involves the encouragement of thoughts, feelings and activities that strengthen wellbeing and secure the conditions necessary for positive mental health, at both the community and structural levels. Health promotion may target the whole population and has positive effects across the lifespan. It can be targeted at the individual level or among groups, communities and settings where people live. Since the 1950's, the school has been recognised as an appropriate setting for health promotion and health education. In most countries, school attendance is compulsory. Pupils spend more than six hours per day in school, totalling more than 180 days per year. Therefore, educational settings provide an excellent opportunity for delivering activities and initiatives which promote positive mental health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1998) emphasises the importance of the school as a valuable location for socialisation and health promotion activities. Schools play an important role in: (1) mental health promotion; (2) the prevention of mental health problems, and; (3) supporting distressed pupils. The role of the educational setting and school representatives in relation to mental health promotion is presented in Figure 1.2 (WHO, 1998).

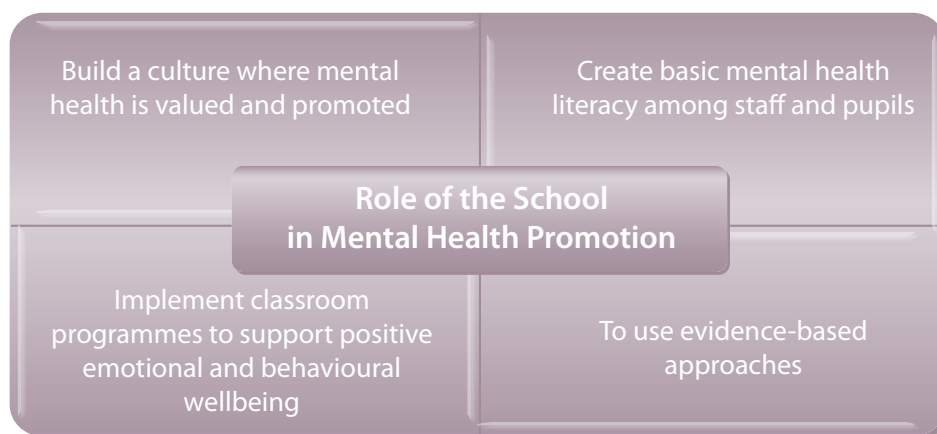


Figure 1.2 The role of the school in mental health promotion

Methods by which to promote mental health in the school setting fall into three main categories (Barry and Jenkins, 2007b):

1. **Classroom-based skills training** – the teaching of life skills and social competencies that promote adjustment; a specific curriculum based in the classroom.
2. **The whole school approach** – concerned with modifying the classroom and changing the social environment and ethos of the school. This approach requires the involvement of parents and the community, in order to improve outcomes and provide a supportive context within the school.
3. **Targeted interventions** – specifically for pupils at a higher risk of developing mental health problems, aimed at strengthening their coping skills and reducing the risk of negative mental health outcomes, including suicide.

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) has initiated the *Health Promotion School Programme* (WHO/EC/Council of Europe) that is based on the **Whole School Approach**. The concept of the “health promoting” school and the “Whole School Approach” is based on the holistic approach. The WHO defines “health promoting schools” as those “in which all members of the school community work together to provide pupils with integrated and positive experiences and structures which promote and protect their health”. The **Whole School Approach** is based on the school ethos and environment, curriculum approaches and the involvement of families and local communities. Weare, K. (2000) described the **Whole School Approach** as “a comprehensive strategy in the school setting, that enhances the mental, emotional and social health of all partners involved (pupils, teachers and parents)”. As reported, important elements of this approach include positive staff-pupil relationships, staff development and education, strong leadership and clear disciplinary policies, teamwork, focus on skills, attitudes and values rather than facts and information, and the active involvement of parents, local community and key local agencies. The key principles involved are shown in Figure 1.3 (Weare, 2000).



Figure 1.3 Key principles of the Whole School Approach

Mental health promotion is the responsibility of all staff working with pupils, as these persons play a significant role in enhancing children’s emotional wellbeing and encouraging social development. Teachers, school psychologists, school nurses, administrators, supportive school staff and community members can be leaders in mental health promotion. Their effectiveness will be determined by how well they work together in groups, share knowledge and power, monitor progress, resolve differences and accommodate changing demands. The teacher acts as a positive adult role model in the pupil’s life and he/she needs to be supportive and aware of a pupil’s difficulties. Although the teacher has the potential to influence a pupil’s mental wellbeing, this requires co-operation at all levels of the education system and good collaboration with healthcare providers. In addition, the teacher can direct pupils to the appropriate resources for help if needed. School professionals are often the first to recognise if a child’s behaviour or level of interaction has changed. A normally social child who withdraws from friends or activities, can be easily identified in school. An effective response may be to consult a professional in the school who has the appropriate knowledge and skills, or who can make a referral for the pupil.

The positive mental health of teachers and other school staff should also be ensured. For these professionals, the school is a workplace environment which may be perceived as rejecting, aggressive or possibly violent. Therefore, they need access to materials and resources that will enhance their understanding of their own mental health, as well as that of their pupils and colleagues. School staff must also have access to support. The school should organise special training courses which aim to improve communication between distressed pupils and teachers. School staff can promote positive mental health by:

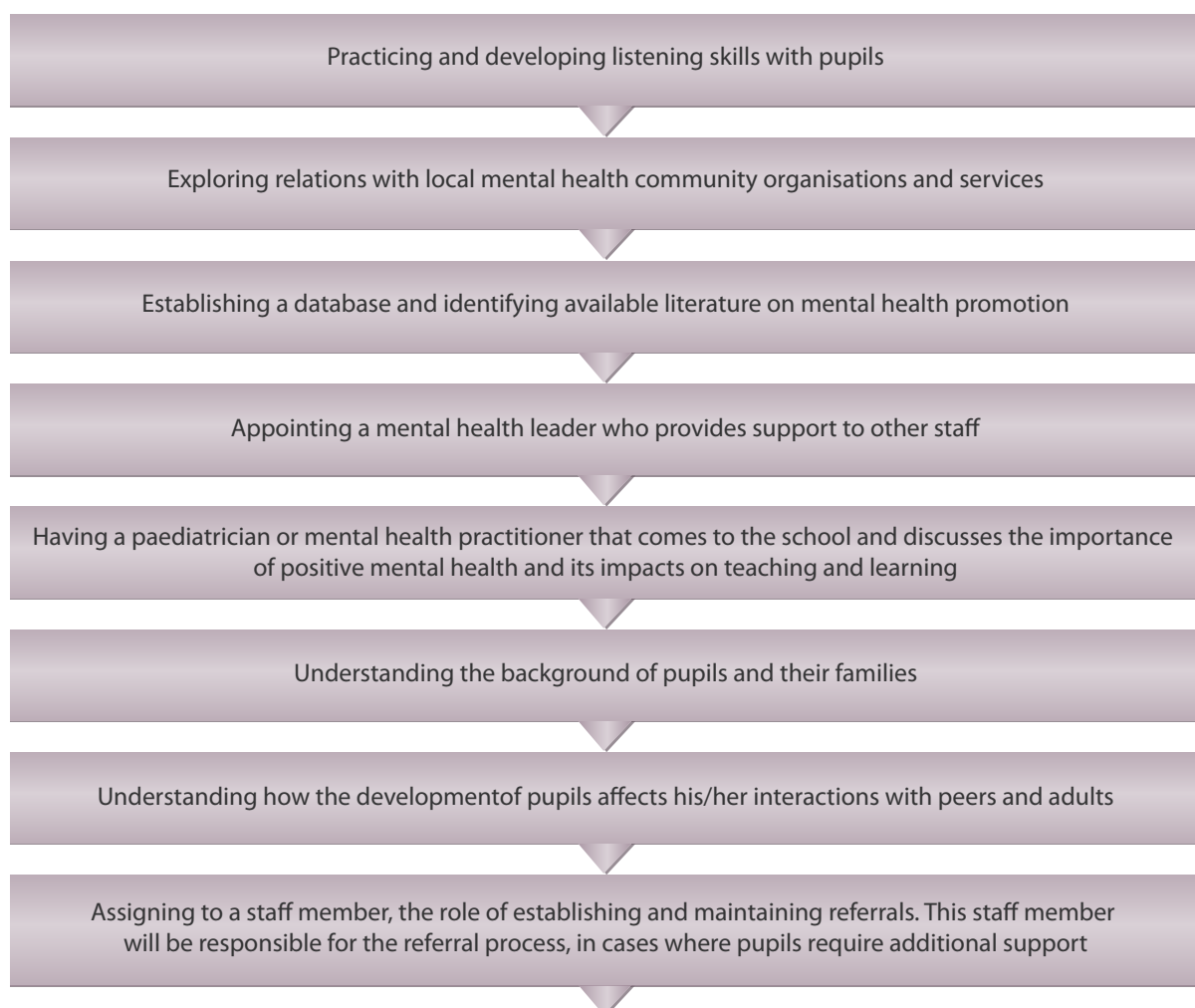


Figure 1.4. Activities for school staff promoting mental health (ProMenPol 2009)

The Benefits of MHP

The early years of life have a major influence on mental health and cognitive functioning. During the first stages of life, development in mental, social, and physical functioning is at its peak. Good mental health during childhood is a prerequisite for optimal psychological development, higher quality social relationships, effective learning, the ability to care for oneself, good physical health and effective economic participation as an adult in the future. Enhancing children's mental and physical health improves their ability to learn, to achieve academically and their capacity to become responsible citizens. Furthermore, a healthy start in life enhances later functioning in school, makes it easier to develop relationships with peers and broadens connections within society. They also need the confidence to use those skills constructively and have opportunities for practice. This process is often referred to as "social and emotional learning". Feelings of wellbeing during childhood provide a firm basis for positive mental health during adolescence. Talking about sensitive issues including bereavement is also important, as this promotes changes in attitude towards death and dying and helps children to deal more effectively with possible tragic losses (ProMenPol, 2009).

During adolescence, the potential for developing mental health problems increases. Throughout these years, there is more emphasis on school performance, developing friendships, relationships with parents and other family members and self-identity. Adolescence is a vulnerable period associated with biological, psychological, social and cognitive changes. These years often involve feelings of confusion, emotional outbursts, sadness or rapid mood changes. Changed sensitivity, new thoughts and feelings, along with new behaviours may result in a threat to mental wellbeing (i.e. conflicts with parents, siblings or other pupils at school; concerns about peers; bullying; self-esteem issues). Adolescents are strongly affected by how peers view them and they often experience emotional and psychological highs and lows. Therefore, they need additional emotional support. Adolescents often engage in risk-taking behaviours in order to attain the approval of other peers and this can result in negative consequences and stress. Approaches during the pre-adolescent and adolescent years (age 13-18 years) should be supportive and knowledge-sharing (ProMenPol, 2009). It is during this stage that adolescents develop attitudes.

School is one of the key settings which can encourage positive youth development and tackle mental health problems. A positive school environment increases wellbeing and happiness, improves one's sense of belonging and strengthens pupils' ability to cope with change, challenges and stress. Furthermore, an encouraging educational experience and a good level of academic achievement enhances a pupil's self-esteem and confidence. A positive psychosocial environment removes the negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying, harassment, injury, truancy and absenteeism. It also diminishes prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression, and loss of motivation. If pupils experience a supportive school environment, this environment will remain a positive place for these pupils in the future.

Mental health promotion should be focused on the competencies and strengths that underlie mental health. These abilities include optimism, coherence, effective communication and the creation of mutually satisfying relationships. It is essential to introduce programmes which emphasise wellbeing and competence, rather than those focusing on illness. This helps to combat stigma and promote the idea of mental health in a more open and productive manner. Pupils need to feel that school is a safe place where people care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship are fulfilled, and where they can get help in order to solve problems. If these needs are met, pupils develop a sense of belonging at school. This form of emotional development is very important for good mental health. The well adjusted child tends to learn more effectively and is more motivated and successful in regards to school assignments. Positive relationships with peers and school staff help pupils develop a sense of belonging at school. If a younger pupil has older "friends" in the school, this can enhance their confidence

and he/she will perceive school as a safe place where help can be obtained if needed. Also, looking after younger pupils encourages caring and helping relationships among older pupils, while reducing conflict and bullying. Important elements which promote a positive psychosocial environment in school are described below (Figure 1.5).



Figure 1.5 Elements of a positive psychosocial environment in school

A positive psychosocial environment in school is largely dependent on the policies and attitudes of staff and the school organisation. The school executives must identify and improve conditions that increase the school's capacity to be supportive and caring towards all pupils and school staff.

Ethical Issues in MHP

The ethical guidelines and data protection rules vary between countries. It is important to become familiar with your country's specific rules and guidelines, relevant to the specific mental health promotion tool being implemented.

Mental health promotion in schools means working with under-aged participants. Therefore, informed consent from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained. This consent permits the disclosure of all relevant information to the parent or legal guardian and pupils. It provides information about the aims, methods, possible benefits, potential limitations and any discomfort the programme might involve for participants. If any problems occur during the implementation phase, all parties involved must be informed as quickly as possible. Pupils have the right to refuse participation, as well as the option to with-

draw from the programme. It is necessary to ensure the competence of the professionals who work with children, and especially those responsible for implementing the mental health promotion programme in the school. Those who seek to promote mental health may require additional training (e.g. how to address possible problems, how to address individual differences in motivation, how to create positive and supportive relationships), or may even require assistance from other services. Staff development should be recorded and updated. In addition, staff should have access to consultation professionals if any ethical questions arise. All collected data has to remain confidential and must be stored safely.

Although the aim and intention of mental health promotion programmes is to promote a positive environment, school staff should consistently abide by regulations, contractual obligations and ethical principles. Ethical codes and standards of practice provide quality guidance on professional conduct. There are seven key principles which apply, as emphasised in the ethical guidelines of the ProMenPol project (ProMenPol, 2009).



Figure 1.6 The key ethical principles in mental health promotion

1.2 Enhancing school culture

Schools which are successful in mental health promotion encourage an enhanced sense of belonging, connectedness and self-worth among pupils. It is important to promote positive peer relations and good relationships between pupils and school staff. It is necessary to encourage a sense of community, identity and belonging at school. In addition, schools should develop a culture where it is safe to discuss mental health issues and where pupils do not feel stigmatised. In order to create a positive school culture, the following elements should be included:

- Build caring relationships (offer support and compassion, develop trust).
- Set high and achievable expectations (offer respect, guidance, affirmation and acknowledgement; build on the strengths of each person).
- Provide opportunities for participation and contribution (responsibilities, real decision-making power, build ownership).

A safe and supportive learning environment is an integral part of school that promotes mental health. Every staff member is a possible teacher of mental health promotion and he/she can act as a role-model or guardian. A supportive classroom climate is vital for positively enhancing the overall school culture.

Needs of the Population

A mental health needs analysis identifies activities and programmes that already exist, which may be implemented in the school setting. This evaluation also highlights programmes which could potentially enhance pupils' wellbeing, but have not yet been developed. The needs analysis provides a clear understanding of why certain interventions are necessary and ensures the collection of data relating to specific mental health promotion needs in the school. The goal of the needs analysis is to collect information which will help identify possible further actions, programmes or projects for promoting mental health in the school. The method used for data collection will vary according to the target group (younger children, adolescents, parents, or teachers). **The needs analysis might involve one or more of the following methods:**

- Face-to-face interviews with pupils, parents and staff members
- Phone surveys carried out by members of the Mental Health Promotion Team
- Older pupils interviewing younger pupils
- Pupils interviewing parents/caregivers as a part of a homework exercise
- Feedback from questionnaires printed in school newsletters

The advantage of face-to-face interviews is that they facilitate relationship building and establish trust among mental health advocates, school staff, pupils and administrators. The needs analysis has to be practical and reflect real data (for example, the number of fights which occurred during the school year). It is helpful to obtain data annually so that trends can be compared over time. The following steps are recommended during the needs analysis phase (MindMatters, 2010):

- Review the strengths and weaknesses of the school;
- Involve key stakeholders (e.g. teachers, parents and students) to identify the scope of the

- problem, respective needs, and to make decisions;
- Involve the entire core team for mental health in the development of the needs analysis instruments (questionnaire, interview, focus group instrument);
- Field test the instrument for acceptability and practicality;
- Provide a training questionnaire if necessary;
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality; and
- Analyse the data, summarise and communicate the results to all relevant parties;

Actions which aim to promote the mental health of staff and pupils require active involvement by the school executive or leadership team. Participation of the Mental Health Promotion Team, clear endorsement of its work, the provision of adequate resources, and/or a commitment to take action, are all important aspects for consideration. If the school's executive and team for MHP decide to take the **Whole School Approach**, then the following areas presented in Figure 1.7 should be considered (MindMatters, 2010).

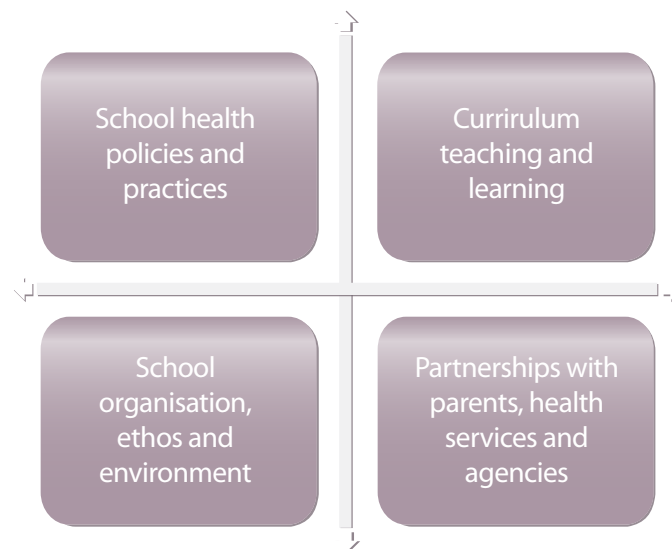


Figure 1.7 Whole school approach and areas to consider for the needs analysis

Factors for Success: Evidence-based Practice and Practice-based Evidence

Developing a successful plan for a mental health promotion programme or project requires setting achievable and measurable goals, based on the results of the needs analysis. A detailed project plan will help to ensure that the project is run professionally. It also ensures that all relevant parties have a common understanding of what will happen, and their responsibilities, roles, and insights regarding available resources. A good plan for the implementation of a mental health promotion programme should include the following elements:

- All relevant details of the project plan (aims, goals, activities, responsibilities, budget, schedule, expected outcomes, training needs, available and required resources, monitoring procedures) have to be agreed upon with the school executives
- The key elements of the project plan should be communicated to all relevant parties
- Activities to be planned according to ethical principles and guidelines

The mental health promotion planning phase can be divided into four steps as described in Figure 1.8 (ProMenPol, 2009)

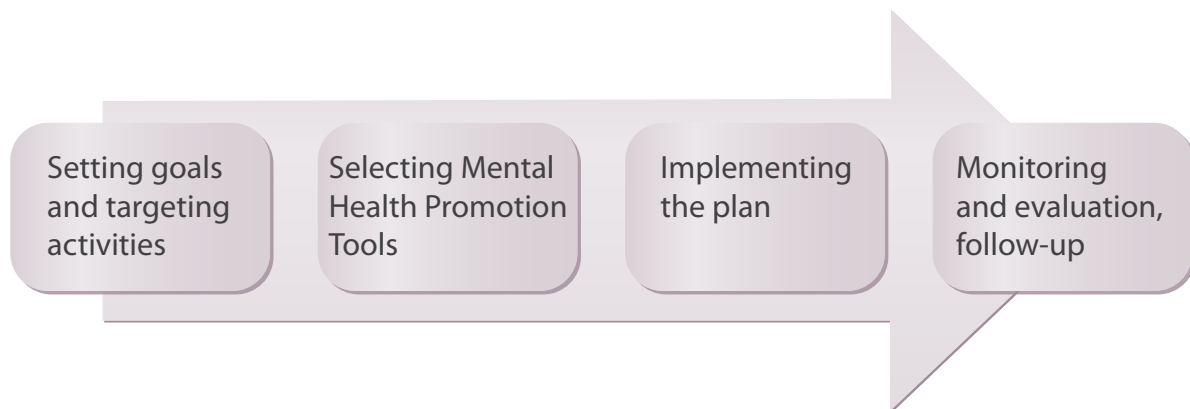


Figure 1.8 Steps in the MHP planning phase

Setting goals

Goals must be measurable, achievable and comprehensible. It is possible to split larger long-term goals into several short-term goals with clearly defined aims for each activity. The roles and responsibilities of those involved are specified clearly. The time-frame needs to be determined in advance in order to identify when certain goals must be achieved. This process includes the following actions:

- Determine the target group(s)
- Specify the duration of the intervention and the expected benefits
- Organise the plan referring to short-term and long-term goals and set timeframes
- Specify expected and measurable outcomes
- Set indicators of achievement/success, or process indicators
- Communicate the results to all relevant parties (stakeholders)

Good project management will assist the development of a precise action and activity plan. Although a general project plan has already been developed, there is also a need for a specific plan for each element of the implementation. This also includes resources and responsibilities for the implementation of activities. It is necessary to:

- Assign resources, personnel and a schedule for each activity
- Make use of existing resources where possible – it keeps costs down and helps to integrate the programme into the school environment
- Ensure reporting on the activities takes place

Targeting activities

This step relates to setting goals for each of the planned activities. It should comprise of the following elements:

- Set easily measurable targets for each of the activities

- Explore ways in which to involve parents in activities
- Incorporate learning activities for pupils and families
- Consider using multiple methods to reach the target group and use the communication channels that are common to the target group
- Consider any special barriers that may exist for target group members

Selecting MHP tools

The selection of appropriate Mental Health Promotion (MHP) tools is essential for the success of the project. MHP tools can support any activity during the process of implementation, i.e. project management, needs analysis instruments, problem-solving guidelines, etc.

- Ensure that high standard tools are selected and that the expertise needed to operate the tools is available. Organise training if necessary
- Seek advice from professionals who have previously used the tool(s)

Implementing the plan

Before implementing the activities of the mental health promotion programme, it is important to ensure that all facilities are available and ready for use. The following steps are recommended when implementing the plan:

- Ensure that resources are available in sufficient quantities and are ready for use
- Conduct a meeting in order to ensure that everything is organised and that everyone is clear of their own responsibilities
- Ensure adequate communication regarding planned activities
- Provide sustained support
- Create a positive atmosphere at school

Follow-up and evaluation

The procedures for monitoring the progress of the MHP project need to be agreed upon in accordance with the project plan. Feedback from the monitoring process should be available during the programme and used to change programme activities if necessary. The following elements should be included:

- Qualitative and quantitative indicators
- Schedule of monitoring activities
- Feedback mechanisms and schedules
- Review and monitoring of progress

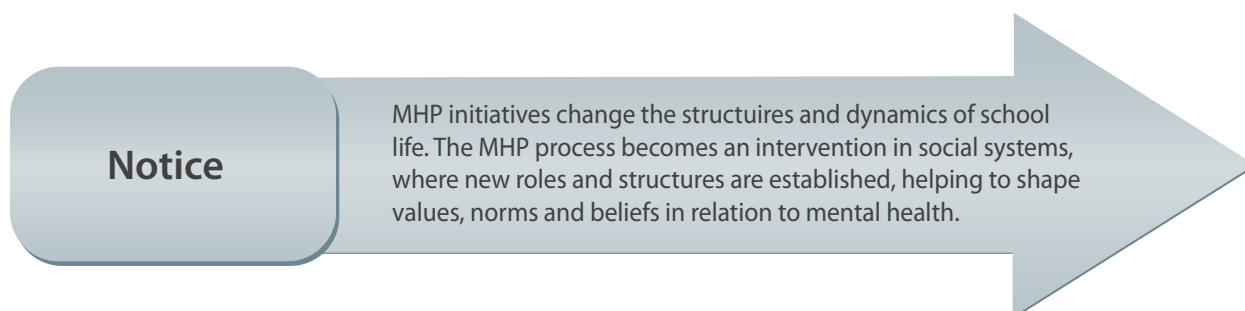
Evaluation comprises of analysing the data from the monitoring process and using the results to address questions such as “Has the process worked? Was the process efficient? Has the programme improved the health of the target group(s)?”

MHP programmes in schools are most successful if they involve the whole school, change school culture, include personal skills development, involve parents and the wider community, and if the programmes last for one year or longer. A school which aims to promote mental health should focus on developing programmes that support pupils and staff. Education should encompass the development of knowledge and skills and the programme should consider the social and physical environment, while developing links with the community.

1.3 Implementing MHP Initiatives

MHP: Individual Skills and Organisational Influences

MHP can be understood as an innovative process, where individuals are encouraged to make healthy choices and where the school setting is organised in such a way as to support and promote mental health. This process goes beyond shaping healthy beliefs and broadening student's knowledge of mental health issues.



MHP will usually require changes in school management systems (this may entail the development of new organisational structures) to incorporate the promotion of mental health into school policies, as well as into principles and procedures involved in decision making (Commins, Elias, 1991; Grossmann, Scalla, 1993). These developments mean changes in relationships between students, school staff, and parents, as well as between these three groups, e.g. teachers–student relations or teachers–parent relations.

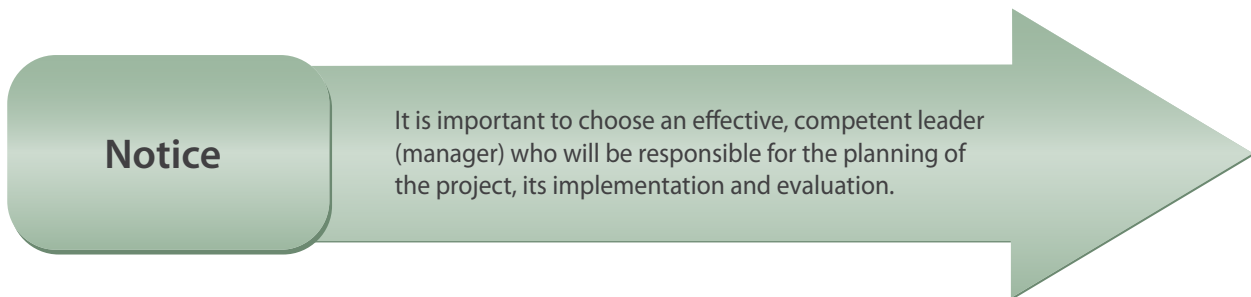
This means that the quality of the MHP programme is highly dependent on factors at the organisational level, as well as the individual skills of the professionals who implement activities. Actually, both factors are vital for the successful implementation of MHP in school. It would be easy to assume that MHP would be successful if the staff were well trained in the area of MHP. However, even the efforts of the most dedicated staff will fail if the organisation does not support, or actively challenges, the MHP activities. On the other hand, the school may have supportive structures in place for MHP, but the individuals involved do not possess the skills needed for effective implementation of these activities.

MHP programmes in the school setting involve three stages of innovation:

- Adoption – when the school organisation learns about the innovation
- Implementation – when the MHP process is tried and tested
- Institutionalisation – when MHP becomes standardised or routine practice in a school (Commins, Elias, 1991)

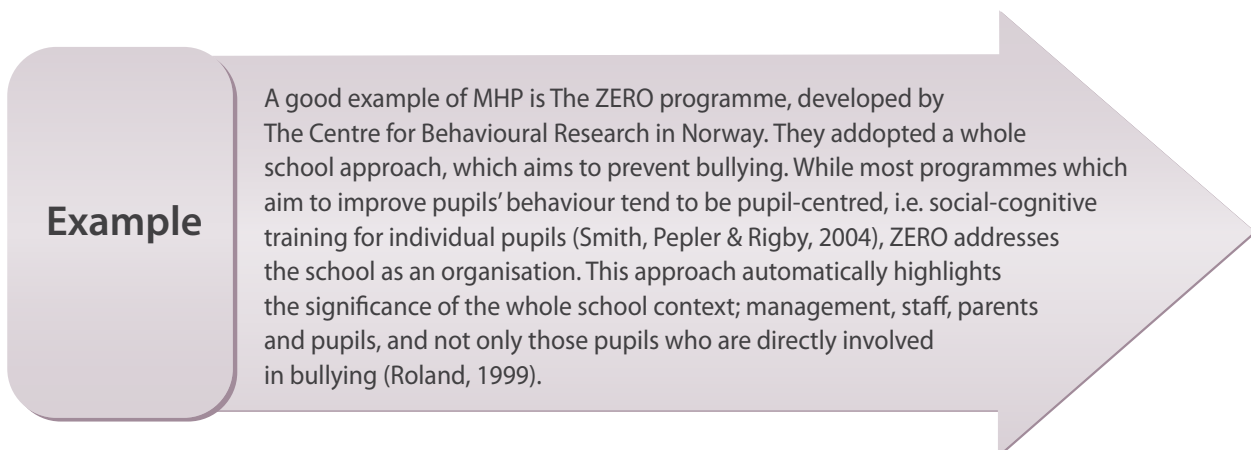
All three phases highlight the importance of organisational influences that affect the quality and pace of the MHP process at all stages.

A key issue here concerns the distribution of competencies and responsibilities among members of an already existing unit. The members of the project team should be selected on the basis that these professionals are passionate about MHP and have the ability to achieve the project goals.



Mechanical or informal integration of Mental Health Promotion into existing school structures can have a negative impact, with MHP activities becoming marginalised or neglected. It is not advisable to adopt such an approach unless there is no alternative.

In summary, individual skills and institutional support are both necessary for successful MHP. It is important to take this fact into account when planning, implementing and evaluating a MHP programme.



Identifying Needs for MHP

In order to identify adolescents' needs, the MHP process may utilise current research methods, i.e. conduct surveys with students, parents or teachers. It is also worth remembering that a holistic approach to MHP in schools not only requires an analysis of the needs of the students, but also an assessment of

the needs of teachers and parents/ guardians. The latter groups also have an influence on the mental health of the students and these role models modify the effects of MHP programmes. It is worthwhile undertaking a needs analysis as “Epidemiological studies suggest that 12 percent of all children are likely to suffer some form of mental health problem and 20–30 percent of children are likely to have behaviour problems, of which, roughly half of that group are likely to display symptoms of a conduct disorder” (Finney, 2006: p.22). It is also worth remembering that many studies have shown that there is a gap between young people’s mental health needs and available services (Paternite and Johnston, 2005).

It is important that the project team utilises many different methods when identifying needs; they should not rely solely on the results of one evaluation method, e.g. self-completion questionnaire. Those responsible for identifying needs should bear in mind that all the methods and tools used to identify needs have particular advantages and disadvantages. Being aware of this will help you to correctly identify beneficiary needs and successfully implement the MHP programme.

It is also worth emphasising that the needs analysis does not only have to be restricted to the topic or the content of the programme. You can analyse needs associated with the way in which the programme is implemented, e.g. preferences in terms of the educational methods used.

Neglecting the needs analysis stage may lead to the implementers taking up activities which they perceive as useful for MHP with the particular target group. This is not necessarily in line with the real needs of the target group and it is not cost effective.

Getting Support for MHP

Mental health promotion activities sometimes require specific skills and training, particularly in relation to certain types of intervention. For example, expertise may be required when the content of the programme is targeted at specific problems like anorexia, school violence, etc. In light of this, it is sometimes worthwhile seeking external support for MHP activities from other institutions. Parents and carers should be encouraged to provide support; the success of the MHP programme is highly dependent on support from parents in particular so they should be made aware of the MHP goals and structures which are being introduced in the school.

Support may also be obtained from academic institutions which will provide specific knowledge and help during implementation (Pyżalski&Roland, 2011). A good example is the Zero programme introduced by the University of Stavanger in Norway. In this programme, schools that aim to address problems relating to bullying and poor peer relations apply for training and are provided with a systematic series of workshops. Following training, staff members implement a comprehensive MHP programme on prevention and intervention in relation to this issue. This programme involves continuous evaluation and cooperation with teachers and parents. The goal of the support provided during this programme was offered to empower and guide internal school staff. Following this, the staff are equipped with the skills needed to conduct activities alone and they can consult external sources when difficulties are encountered. Sometimes support can be provided by public or private agencies working in the field of public health or mental health promotion. In some situations, these services are free to schools and beneficiaries.

There may be a lack of knowledge within a school about certain issues (e.g. the prevention of cyberbullying), or about the methodology used when implementing a programme (e.g. evaluation). When this is the case, programme implementers should identify institutions that could potentially support the MHP programme in the school. A lot of institutions are officially charged with supporting schools as

part of their overall remit and have been provided with the resources to do so. Other institutions may provide this support on a commercial basis. It is always important to ensure that all members of the project team understand why external support is being provided and how their own tasks are complementary to those of the supporting organisation. On the other hand, those providing support should be informed about both the programme and the specific organisational factors within a school that can affect implementation of the MHP programme. The institutions that can support MHP programmes in schools include health promotion centres or NGOs, public health institutions, medical institutions, advisory educational centres and legal institutions. In some cases, support may be provided by particular individuals who represent the same fields as those of the supporting institutions.

Communicating and Promoting the Idea of MHP

When talking about the communication and promotion of mental health, we normally refer to a few different contexts based on the group we want to encourage and involve. This process is vital since even the most necessary programme will not be successful if it is not understood and accepted by the implementers (usually school staff), beneficiaries (students) and other important groups (e.g. parents).

- It is vital to gain acceptance for the project from the students and their parents. To secure student engagement and acceptance for the project, it is important to remember that the issues associated with mental health are usually sensitive. Therefore, in order to communicate those issues well and to market the idea of MHP among young people, it is vital to build an atmosphere of trust.
- Young people, especially adolescents want to be “heard”. Therefore, communication with young people should involve two way interaction as opposed to informative instruction. It is important to adjust your language to suit that of the message receiver. In the case of MHP, this means avoiding professional jargon and using the language that young people are more familiar with.
- It is vital to get the message across to young people that becoming involved in a MHP programme has many benefits. The benefits should be related to the developmental phase that the students are currently at. As many young people communicate using modern media channels (i.e. the Internet) it is important to also use this channel for communication. Moreover, a lot of new media instruments allow for bi-directional and network communication, which as stated above fits in with young peoples’ needs.
- On the other hand, you should remember that different messages should be targeted at adults (teachers and parents). The way to promote the idea of mental health is to highlight the strong associations between mental health and academic success, as emotional and behavioural health problems are significant barriers to learning (Paternite and Johnston, 2004). Given that the academic success of students is important for both teachers and parents, this aspect should be emphasised when communicating and promoting MHP with them. A professional MHP programme will help you to fulfill your professional role and build positive relationships with the students.

In summary, it is always important to plan and tailor communication to the needs and capabilities of those receiving the messages.

Personal and Social Skills

The literature highlights the importance of treating all the members of a MHP team as valued colleagues (Paternite and Johnston, 2004). This is unfortunately quite difficult for many mental health professionals, where their “professional training heritage often has advocated a hierarchical expert-consultee model” (Paternite and Johnston, 2004: p.43). This is a particular problem for effective collaboration between external professionals supporting the MHP programme and teachers from a particular school. The issue relates to differences in attitudes among the specialists working together on the MHP programme. Therefore, appropriate personal and social skills are vital to the effective communication and collaboration of these groups.

In addition, good interpersonal and social skills are essential for conducting effective mental health promotion with adolescent students. According to Bowlby’s attachment theory, which is often used as a theoretical framework for MHP in schools, “anxiety and depressive symptoms were most likely to arise at times when social and interpersonal bonds were threatened, or in individuals where patterns of interpersonal attachment were poorly developed or insecure (Patton et al., 1999: p. 2). This means that the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with the students should be treated as a prerequisite for conducting any MHP programme because without this, all the other activities may be ineffective or could actually make the situation worse. On one hand, you may see “problematic relationships” as one of the factors that negatively influences the mental health of young people. On the other hand, when you adopt a positive, resilient approach to mental health, positive relationships may support the mental health of a person, even without a special MHP programme.

To improve the social environment in a way that is healthy for young people, you have to take care of your own mental health. Someone who is overwhelmed by occupational stress cannot effectively support the mental health of others and can sometimes even negatively influence their mental health status. The latest research conducted on a representative sample of Polish teachers (1214 participants), has shown that teachers who suffered from occupational burnout were also more prone to use more directive and less supportive communication with their students, and they also experienced emotional and behavioural problems (Pyżalski and Merecz, 2010). It seems that the ability to cope with occupational stress is one of the important personal skills that those implementing MHP in schools should possess.

Notice

The personal and social skills important for MHP are roughly the same as those that make a good teacher. Actually, for a teacher to effectively communicate and support their students generally, they should possess all the personal and social skills for implementing MHP.

Everything that has been described here is particularly relevant for the programme leader, as this person plays the most crucial role. The programme leader requires two kinds of abilities: firstly, he/she must possess knowledge about MHP and have the ability to specify the objectives of a MHP programme, to build its structure, and to use proper methods of evaluation and implementation; secondly, the programme leader should have the social and organisational competence necessary to advertise the benefits of a MHP programme, encourage interest and support, manage collaboration among team members, show appreciation for students’ achievements, solve conflicts and adhere to a fixed budget and work schedule. In other words, the programme leader should be an effective manager.

Training for MHP

It is commonly assumed that many mainstream teachers lack the skills required to fulfill the role of mental health educator (Finney, 2006: p. 22). The aim of training is to support employees within universal children's services to develop competence in the following areas:

- Extending knowledge of child development
- Communicating with children and young people
- Recognising and responding to problems
- Responding to difficult children
- Building children's self esteem
- Reducing risks and increasing resilience (Finney, 2006)

Notice

An essential stage in the creation of a MHP team is the preparation of team members for the implementation of a programme. That is why you have to remember that training should be prepared in such a way as to give team members an opportunity to learn about the concept, rules and model phases of MHP programme implementation, as well as the possible fields of interventions and assessments of its effects.

It is advisable to enable all members of a team to take part together in one course. In this way, they simultaneously improve their knowledge and develop as a team. If possible, the training should be jointly organised with the diagnostic phase and building of the programme plan. The first version of a health promotion programme can then be developed (which will be an additional outcome of the training) (Korzeniowska, 1999). Depending on the scope of the programme, other courses that improve the knowledge and abilities of the MHP team should also be attended.

Notice

The best way to provide suitable training is to develop an overview of staff competencies and based on this, some skills may be taught through peer training. It is advisable that some team members possess an in-depth knowledge of MHP activities.

Teachers may even attend more intensive courses, i.e. postgraduate studies in the field of health promotion or public health. To ensure the quality of the training, it is always important to ask the following questions:

- To what extent have the objectives of the training been fulfilled?
- To what extent have the trainees' learning objectives been achieved?

- To what extent is the new knowledge beneficial for the school as a whole and, specifically, for MHP implementation?
- Will the trainees be able to implement this knowledge in the school?

Satisfaction with the training may determine the quality of the overall MHP implementation.

Evaluating Success and Continuous Improvement

A MHP programme is an ongoing activity which can be viewed as a process that is continuously being improved. It is a mistake to implement a programme without incorporating the necessary changes identified during the evaluation.

The first evaluation may be conducted by analysing the observations of the programme implementers and using this feedback to modify the way the MHP programme is implemented. For example, some educators may observe that certain teaching methods have been unsuccessful.

It is important that evaluation is not treated as a once off activity at the end of the programme, but rather as a continuous process of implementation and evaluation stages (Figure 1.9)



Figure 1.9 The process of continuous evaluation and improvement

To prepare such a strategy, it is important to inform team members that the MHP programme is not a static, ready-made product that is implemented under all circumstances, but that it is a kind of framework that can be extended and changed as appropriate to the particular situation.

To achieve this, those responsible for the programme should, from the beginning, encourage and support the critical attitude of all actors involved, particularly the implementers and beneficiaries.

However, it will not be possible to obtain this input if people do not have the opportunity to express their opinions. This means that all staff meetings should have time included on their agendas for reviewing all the pitfalls and problems that occurred during programme implementation. This approach ensures that any potential difficulties will not have the chance to become impossible to rectify. It is also important to discuss any feedback from beneficiaries attending the project team meetings, especially feedback that is critical in relation to the project and its implementation. The implementers should encourage beneficiaries to express opinions about the project. This builds “ownership of the project” and students feel that their opinions are important and valued.

1.4 Roles in MHP initiatives

MHP as a Multidisciplinary Endeavour

Practical experience has shown that the most effective approach is to establish a new structure within the framework of the school organisation. The activities will include forming a group of specified individuals (project team); the team will be given a name and will adhere to fixed rules. The members will have the competence to run the programme, and the school will provide a place for the project to operate. There will be a clear relationship with other units in the school. In Poland, it was found that optimal performance in MHP implementation was achieved when a school's main headmaster acts as the chairperson of the MHP team. This gives a very clear signal to all staff that there is strong support for the implementation of the school's mental health policy and creates the necessary formal (bureaucratic) conditions for implementation as an innovation process. Moreover, such an approach considerably shortens the time from when interventions are planned to when they are implemented. It is also possible to manage smaller MHP projects through appropriate modification of an already existing unit, which has responsibility for mental health. In this situation you have to ensure that any changes to the unit are made in such a way that the new roles and tasks associated with MHP are clear and that there is mutual adjustment between traditional activities and health promotion (for example, taking MHP into account when planning ordinary school activities and budgets). You also have to ensure that the unit's new functions are reflected in its title.

Notice

Ensuring that the right people become members of the MHP team is very important.

This is not an easy task however, as it requires finding the right balance among various criteria. The first of these specifications is connected with the size of the group. It is generally better to have fewer people involved in the MHP team (Doliński, 2004).

Notice

Cooperation is best when the group consists of 4 to 9 people (a three-member team structure is often confrontational, whereas a larger one increases a risk of non-performance)

You do not want a MHP team with members who are not fully committed to the programme's implementation, or could even instill a lack of motivation among the other members. However, in schools which are involved in MHP activities, it is sometimes imposed by the formal requirements associated with a specific professional role.

The second important issue in relation to building a MHP team is to involve representatives of depart-

ments which have health within the scope of their activities in the school. The list of potential members will mostly include; teachers, advisors, psychologists, the school doctor or nurse, a social worker, etc.

Notice

- The optimal situation is when the MHP team is a representative sample of groups that are vital from a health perspective within the school and also when it consists of people who have the personal capacities and competencies to fulfill specific roles.
- Include people who have skills in communications.
- It is very important to include students' representatives.

As far as possible, include those who have standing among the student bodies as they can create a favourable atmosphere for the programme. This may be particularly important with programmes relating to adolescents. It is also important to have people who are good at promoting effective collaboration and dealing with the more difficult tasks associated with the programme (such as creativity, the ability to work in a team, diligence and positive thinking). Additionally, the team should include representatives from a school who have previous experience in undertaking a MHP project. Depending on the type of programme, people from outside the school might be included in the team. Such external members usually fill the role of the expert or the implemeter in particular MHP interventions, but they also may engage in other roles.

Key Roles in MHP

The typical school MHP initiative requires that people fulfill specific roles that are complementary to their skills and that enable the team to cover all the tasks within the MHP programme. Table 1.2 below describes these typical roles.

Table 1.2 Roles in the MHP programme

Roles in MHP Programme development and implementation	
Expert	This refers to the person who has the technical knowledge to implement the MHP initiative. This person plays a role which is aimed at advising, developing solutions and reviewing the programme. The person (or group of people) who undertake this role should have a high level of competence and practical experience in MHP.
Decision maker	This refers to the person who makes decisions about the extent, scope duration and other parameters of the MHP initiative. His/ her presence in a team is aimed at shortening the time from an idea, through to making a decision, until the implementation of the initiative.
Implementer	This refers to the person who implements the activities of the programme or initiative. Typically, they would be someone on the front line - such as a teacher/ educator, etc.
Developer	This refers to the role of developing or planning the MHP initiative. People in this role are often also responsible for setting up a MHP team.
Change manager	This refers to the person responsible for implementing any organisational change that is needed as part of the initiative.
Marketer	This refers to the person who is responsible for 'marketing' or persuading people to take part in, or to support the initiative. His/ her basic task is to be in touch with various players and to convey messages about the project, and about what is required to encourage (motivate) students (and sometimes other beneficiaries such as parents) to take an active part in a programme (and its particular interventions). He/ she should establish systematic cooperation with: the school media, if they exist (i.e. a radio broadcasting system, a school newspaper or a newsletter disseminated via the Intranet), and any internal hobby/interest circles which can support a MHP programme. Being a spokesperson may also require collaboration with mass media at local/ regional level (press, radio, TV) or even at national level. Furthermore, it is sometimes advisable to be in touch with other institutions who work in the fields of health and education (i.e. non-governmental organisations, scientific institutions or regulatory bodies). Sometimes (depending on the type of MHP programme) the spokesperson's responsibilities can be broadened out to seeking relationships with institutions who may be interested in sponsoring selected parts of the programme.
Monitor	This refers to the person who is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and consolidating the initiative. It refers to both final evaluation as well as ongoing evaluation needed for improvement of the programme.

It is hard to be definitive about who should fill the roles outlined above as this can depend on specific national circumstances, the particular features of an individual school, or the needs of a specific MHP programme. However, a general framework may be presented. The role of the decision maker is usually taken by a school headmaster as this person is formally responsible for most of the important decisions in the school. The role of the expert is often fulfilled by someone who is a public health specialist/ health promoter/ health educator – but not necessarily someone with a medical background. The expert could be, for example, a professional who deals with sexual behaviour, a psychiatrist, a specialist in psycho-education, a professional from the police department, or external trainers (e.g. academic staff, medical staff, or a person who specialises in relevant issues). Depending on the specific content of the programme, this role can be also taken on by a school advisor or a school psychologist who possesses the necessary skills. All of the other roles may be fulfilled by the teachers, providing they are specifically trained for conducting particular tasks within the programme.

It is worth emphasizing that experienced practitioners from different countries noted the need to change the names of the proposed roles or to join some of the roles together into one role, eg. the role of the developer and the decision maker may be merged into a leaders role.

At the same time, teachers in some countries suggested that certain roles are unnecessary. For example, several Polish teachers noted during MHP focus meetings that the role of Change manager is not usual in Poland, but that his/her tasks are conducted by people fulfilling various other roles.

Some MHP focus group respondents in Poland highlighted the importance of team work in which all the roles are overlapping and often one person within the programme fulfils different tasks at different stages. These respondents also noted that if the focus on roles is too narrow in the team, this could have a negative impact on the co-operation and implementation of the MHP programme.

Role Specific Knowledge and Skills

The tasks conducted by the people on the MHP team are complementary and therefore so too are the knowledge and skills of these professionals. However, some basic knowledge should be shared by all team members, regardless of their position.

Irrespective of the role they have, all MHP team members should at least have basic knowledge and skills in relation to:

- The Concept of Mental Health Promotion
- The Benefits of Mental Health Promotion
- Positive mental health
- The Nature of mental health and mental illness
- Implementing Mental Health Promotion programmes
- Legal and ethical issues in Mental Health Promotion.

These six issues appear to be the most relevant and it is impossible to conduct a good quality MHP programme without having at least basic knowledge and skills in these areas. Understanding the concept of mental health and mental health promotion seems to be vital for all team members regardless of their role. Other specific competencies will be described below as they are usually connected to the specific content of a MHP programme.

Topics, Methods and Tools for MHP

Section 2

2.1 Introduction: Key Areas/Topics for MHP Interventions in the Setting

Key Areas for MHP Interventions

Mental health promotion can be implemented at three levels: (1) individual, (2) community and (3) structural. At each level, interventions can focus on strengthening the factors that protect mental health (e.g. social support), or on reducing factors that increase the risk of mental health problems (e.g. violence). Interventions in mental health promotion should strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors at an individual, community and structural or policy level.

Table 2.1 Protective factors potentially influencing the development of mental health problems and mental disorders in individuals (particularly children)

Individual Factors	Family factors	School context	Life events and situations	Community and cultural factors
Easy temperament	Supportive caring parent	Sense of belonging	Involvements with significant other person (partner/mentor)	Sense of connectedness
Adequate nutrition	Family harmony	Positive school climate	Availability of opportunities at critical turning points or major life transitions	Attachment to and networks within the community
Attachment to family	Secure and stable family	Prosocial peer group	Economic security	Participation in church or other community group
Above average intelligence	Small family size	Required responsibility and helpfulness	Good physical health	Strong cultural identity
School achievement	More than two years between siblings	Opportunities for some success and recognition		Access to support services community/cultural norms against violence
Problem solving skills	Responsibility within the family (for child or adult)	School norms against violence		
Internal locus of control	Supportive relationship with other adult (for a child or adults)			
Social competence	Strong family norms			
Social skills				
Good coping style				
Optimism				
Moral beliefs				
Values				
Positive self-related cognitions				

Source: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 2000, Promotion, Prevention and Early intervention for mental health – A monograph, Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra.

As defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), a health promoting school continuously strengthens its capacity as an optimal setting for living, learning and working (WHO, 1997). This school concept is based on a holistic approach, where the focus of MHP interventions changes from a curriculum based approach to more comprehensive programmes. The aim of these programmes is to promote resourcefulness, generic life skills (coping and competence) and supportive environments, rather than preventing specific behavioural problems (Janè-Llopis et al., 2005; Barry and Jenkins, 2007b). A holistic MHP programme fosters positive youth development and a sense of connectedness with the family, community and broader society (Rowling, 2002; Barry and Jenkins, 2007b).

Life skills enable us to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities and to behave in healthy ways. Effective acquisition of life skills affects how we feel about ourselves and others, and influences how we are perceived by others (WHO, 1997). School-based interventions in mental health promotion have the potential to strengthen a pupil's life skills and his/her ability to cope. The most useful interventions are those which enhance a child's own coping resources and abilities (WHO, 1998). By adopting a holistic approach, interventions in school mental health promotion could focus on the following key areas: (1) individual skills; (2) social skills (interpersonal relationships), and; (3) the environment.

Individual skills

Mental health is highly dependent on an individual's experiences, coping skills and perceptions. We aim to obtain a balance between daily life stressors (challenges) and relaxation (periods of enjoyment). Characteristics associated with good mental health include a positive self-perception and sense of identity, resilience and high self-esteem. Strengthening an individual's mental health involves increasing their emotional resilience through interventions designed to promote self-esteem, life skills and coping strategies. By developing their personal skills, children can achieve this balance in themselves, in their relationships with others, and with their environment.

Social skills and interpersonal relationships

MHP in schools and universities provides an opportunity for building and practicing relationship skills. Strong and healthy interpersonal relationships are one of main constituents of positive mental health. These connections provide the best support in life and positively influence overall health and relations with others. An individual with stronger social connections copes better with difficulties in life. However, all relationships require commitment, a willingness to adapt to change and respectful and clear communication. Disagreements occur in every relationship because we all have different opinions and views. Through relationships, we learn how to take care of ourselves and others. Additionally, in order to take care of ourselves, we have to set personal boundaries and understand our own needs. Relationships can be considered as investments - the more we put in, the more we get back. A successful relationship requires: (1) a clear understanding of the kind of relationship expected by the people involved; (2) empathy and consideration of the significant other, and; (3) the development or sharing of common interests, values and beliefs.

Environment

An essential task of MHP in schools and universities is to create a positive, safe and supportive environment. A healthy environment in a school or university is "one that protects against immediate injury or

disease and promotes prevention activities and attitudes against known risk factors that might lead to future disease or disability". In addition, survival and protection from biological, physical and chemical threats is equally important. The physical environment in school (university) greatly influences an individual's overall physical and mental health. The physical environment encompasses the following: the building and its components (physical structure, infrastructure, and furniture), the presence of chemicals and biological agents, the location of the building, and the surrounding environment (air, water, materials with which pupils may come into contact, nearby land, roadways). Programmes that aim to improve the physical environment of the school or the university, and the indoor air quality, can increase students' ability to learn, improve their test scores and their productivity.

Notice

A positive and healthy psychosocial environment in an educational setting provides support for teachers, pupils (students) and their families. The advantages of such an environment are increased wellbeing, happiness, an improved sense of belonging, and a better quality of life for those in the school or university.

Following this, higher levels of academic performance are often achieved. Pupils and students need to feel that their educational setting is a safe place where others care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship are fulfilled, and where they can get help to solve problems. If all of these needs are met, pupils develop a sense of belonging in the school.

Topics for MHP Interventions

The topics selected in this Handbook provide basic information about positive mental health and inform the reader about implementing mental health promotion in schools. It is extremely important to thoroughly understand these topics prior to implementation of MHP. Practitioners who seek to promote mental health in schools may require additional training, for example, regarding how to address possible problems, how to deal with individual differences in motivation and with different developmental levels, how to create positive and supportive relationships and how to access assistance from external services. The topics in this Handbook can be categorised into three key areas for mental health promotion interventions in schools:



Figure 2.1 Key areas for mental health promotion interventions in schools

These core areas are divided into smaller subsections, each covering a specific topic, with detailed explanations, followed by exercises and tools for practice.

Structure of the Topics and How to Work with Them

For most professionals employed in the educational setting, this handbook will be their first experience with Mental Health Promotion (MHP) interventions. Many educational practitioners will find this experience a great challenge. The Handbook is written for interested professionals working in educational settings who want to be well prepared and who may feel too “overwhelmed” by the complexity of mental health issues to contribute to the positive mental health of pupils and students. It covers every topic relating to mental health promotion and provides thoughtful explanations and examples for practice. All topics covered contain the following components:

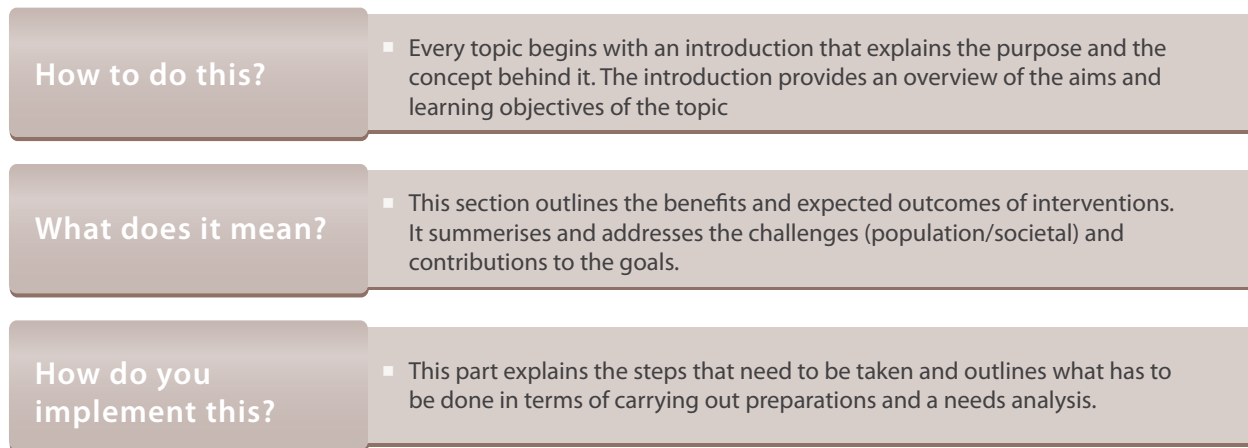


Figure 2.2 Structure of the topics of the Handbook

How to Work with the Topic

To effectively use the tools and facilitate the exercises with students, you should have a thorough knowledge of the topics described in Section 2. You may also wish to read other material to enhance your knowledge about MHP. You can check the further readings/bibliography listed at the end of each topic. Try to obtain as much information about the subject area before putting the exercises into practice. In addition, you will need to consider the students’ strengths and potential challenges. Knowing as much as possible about the pupils and their interests will help you to select the most appropriate exercise or tool for MHP.

It is recommended that enough time is allocated to prepare and perform the exercise. Furthermore, check whether the proposed exercise is designed for a primary school, a secondary school or a university setting, and ensure that the exercise is age appropriate.

SUMMARY:

- Define the relevant roles and skills for the topic.
- Decide whether or not you need additional help (from parents, other school staff, university staff, or the community).

- Read the detailed description of the exercise in Section 3.
- Prepare the exercise (workshop) according to instructions provided in Section 4.

2.2 Enhancing Resilience – INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

How do you enhance resilience in children?

Resilience is a dynamic process, influenced by individual skills, abilities and existing protective factors (Lehtinen, 2008) that contribute to positive mental health. This refers to the ability to deal with a variety of challenges, changes and problems in one's life. An individual with resilience is better equipped to handle stress, maintain and establish social and emotional wellbeing, and recover faster from daily stressors (e.g. academic failure, an illness). When adversity strikes, the resilient individual experiences anger, grief and pain, but is usually able to continue with daily tasks, to maintain adequate functioning and to remain optimistic. Two important factors associated with resilience include the ability to balance emotions and having a strong social support network.

Although an individual's capacity to recognise and express emotions helps to protect them against depression or anxiety, asking for support from others is another very important component. If an individual lacks resilience, he/she may feel victimised, become overwhelmed and is likely to develop unhealthy coping strategies, such as substance abuse. Resilience helps to protect an individual from developing mental health problems and enables them to cope more efficiently with existing chronic stress, traumatic events or mental illness.

PROTECTIVE CONDITIONS AND RISK FACTORS

Protective factors build up resilience and act as "buffers" against risk factors and their negative effects. In addition, protective factors promote the development of individual strengths, assets and coping mechanisms.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Individual protective factors associated with positive mental health include: higher cognitive functioning, psycho-physiological health, an easy temperament, an outgoing personality and positive behaviour, high levels of involvement and good problem solving skills, a sense of purpose and future, and gender (girls are considered to be less "fragile"). Individual barriers to development include; medical problems, low birth weight and neurodevelopment delays, psycho-physiological problems, difficult temperament, and adjustment problems (Bernard, 2008)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

Protective factors relating to the school and peers are: (1) Success at school; (2) A positive relationship with one or more teachers; (3) Positive relationships with peers and appropriate peer models, and; (4) strong bonds with others. In the school setting, the probable barriers for development and learning

are: (1) a poor quality school and poor teaching practices; (2) negative encounters with teachers and/or peers, and; (3) inappropriate peer models.

The school setting should have a nurturing and supportive climate and conditions that foster feelings of competence, self-determination and connectedness (Bernard, 2008).

What are the personal attributes associated with resilience?

RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

Childhood resilience is defined as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances” (Masten et al., 1988). The resilient child is often described as one who “works well, plays well, loves well, and expects well” (Werner and Smith, 1982), and remains competent despite exposure to misfortune or stressful events (Rutter, 1985). Some children are born with high intellectual ability and a cheerful temperament, each of which are associated with resilience. However, resilience is not something that a child has or does not have. Parents and teachers can help children become more resilient. Children who possess this trait/skill possess the characteristics described in Figure 2.3.

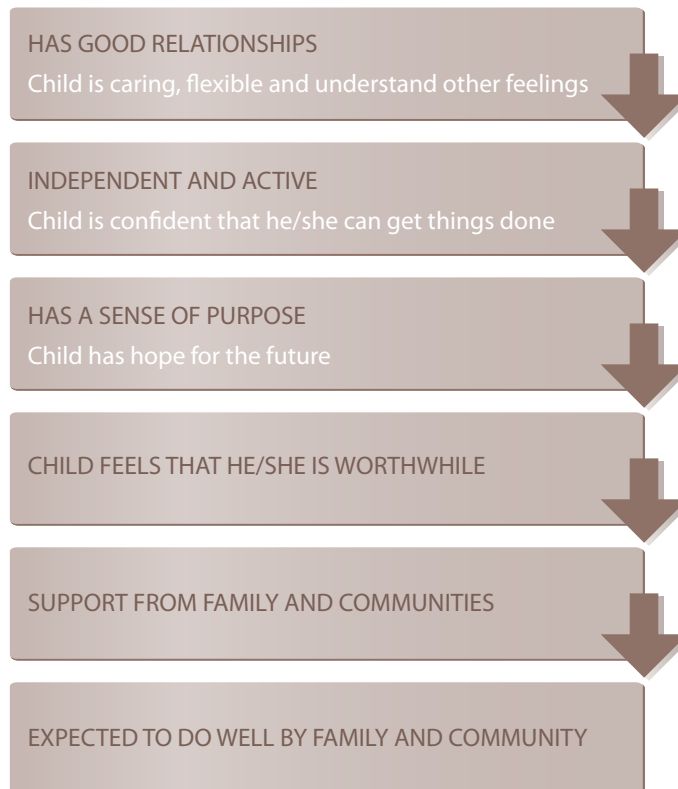


Figure 2.3. Characteristics of a resilient child

Attributes associated with resilience which develop through childhood experiences include: good self-esteem, self-identity and self-efficacy, initiative and ability to take action, faith and morality, trust – believing in or relying on another person, attachment (an affectionate bond between individuals), meaningful roles, autonomy and humour.

Self-esteem is a very important component of resilience. It can be defined as “belief in oneself” and is considered a combination of self-confidence and self-respect. A child with self-esteem is competent to cope with life’s challenges and considers him/herself worthy of happiness. Positive self-esteem in children helps them to face up to problems and is based on the ability to succeed; if a child experiences success, their self-confidence rises. As their self-confidence increases, they feel empowered to tackle new challenges and by confronting these obstacles, children develop the capacity to cope effectively with problems. Self-confidence is important for school aged children as it helps them to cope with challenges, to take risks and to get along with others. It is an ability which allows us to develop positive and realistic views of ourselves and of our situations. A self-confident child trusts in their own abilities, has a general sense of control in life and believes that he/she will be able to do what he/she wishes, plans and expects. However, a child can feel very confident in one area of life (e.g. in school or athletics), but less confident in another (e.g. personal appearance). Grotberg (1995) found that the following attributes are most common among resilient children:

Table 2.4 Aspects of resilience in children

I HAVE	I AM	I CAN
Trusting and loving relationships with others	Lovable (the child possesses, or is helped to develop qualities that appeal to others)	Communicate (express feelings and thoughts, listen to others)
Structure at home	Loving (child is able to express affection towards others)	Solve problems (child can apply themselves to problems, involve others and be persistent)
Role models	Proud of myself	Manage my feelings (child knows and understands emotions and impulsive behaviours, recognises the feelings of others)
Encouragement to be independent	Responsible	Understand my temperament
Access to health, education and social care	Hopeful and trusting	Seek out trusting relationships

Source: Grotberg, 1995

Which other factors play a role in enhancing resilience?

School and Resilience

Research indicates that the school environment can contribute to building children’s protective abilities by promoting their self-esteem and self-efficacy (Rutter, 1987). Schools provide opportunities for success and enable pupils to develop social skills. However, some schools have a less positive climate which influences pupils’ goals, and affects their feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem (Maehr and Nicholls, 1980). Motivational goals can be divided into *task and performance* goals (Ames, 1992; Ames and Archer, 1988). While the *Task goal* approach refers to “learning for learning’s sake”, where success is measured by improvement; the *Performance goal* approach focuses on demonstrating superior ability relative to others, where success is defined in terms of relative standing on some scale, i.e. grades. The *Task goal* approach has proven more beneficial for helping children develop strategies and achieve greater levels of self-efficacy. Additionally, in certain task-focused situations, children report fewer negative feelings in response to failure. They tend to view these events as challenges and their desire to improve increases.

Task-oriented schools also influence other perceptions relating to oneself, including the sense of belonging (Ames, 1992). When an individual feels like he/she belongs to a group, motivation and achievement are greatly enhanced. During the adolescent years, this valuable asset can help protect students from becoming involved in substance use. In the performance-focused situation, failure is more often perceived as a lack of ability. A competition-oriented school where pupils are pitted against one another may dampen a student's ability to "fit in". In addition, when pupils perform poorly in school, they become more vulnerable to negative outcomes.

The role of teachers and schools in building resilience

How a child feels about themselves is strongly influenced by parental and teacher attitudes. If these role models show acceptance, children are more likely to experience good feelings about themselves. Resiliency in children is fostered when adults show that they believe in them and when they allow the child to exercise some control in their own lives, model these skills and provide them with support. The presence of an understanding teacher or the availability of other support systems in the school (e.g. peer tutoring, counselling) aids the development of resilience skills. School activities where students have the opportunity to share ideas, provide help to others and participate in decision-making about personal issues, also play a protective role. Such activities might include peer education programmes or student advisory boards. Exercises which build self-confidence enable pupils to re-examine values and develop their own identities. In the school setting, the following factors are associated with resilience and good mental health in children:

- **Caring and supportive relationships:** the level of caring and support within the school is a powerful predictor of positive outcomes for children (e.g. role of teachers as protective buffers). Teachers are expected to listen to the pupils and to validate their feelings by showing compassion, respect and kindness. It is important to refrain from judging and not to take pupils' behaviour personally.
- **Positive and High expectations:** Teachers' high expectations can structure and guide behaviour and challenge pupils beyond what they believe they can do (Delpit, 1996). Schools which have high expectations for pupils, and teachers that support pupils to achieve success, have higher overall rates of academic success.
- **Opportunities to participate and contribute:** opportunities to participate and become involved; pupils have roles and responsibilities within the school environment.

Below are a number of important issues in relation to strengthening resilience in the **classroom**

- **Teach with consideration of pupils' strengths** – start with pupils' strengths; this enlists their intrinsic motivation and encourages positive attitudes.
- **Teach pupils that they possess resilience** - show pupils that they have the power to construct meaning in everything that happens to them.
- **Provide opportunities for pupils** – encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, consciousness and dialogue.
- **Self-assess** – create an assessment tool with pupils and schools using best practice. Assess the classroom and the school and ask pupils to do the same. Identify strong areas and challenges.

Resilience Guidelines

It is useful to keep in mind the following resilience guidelines that staff in educational settings should transfer to pupils:

1. **Make connections:** Good relationships with family and friends are important. Accepting help and support strengthens resilience
2. **Avoid seeing crises as unavoidable problems:** Everyone experiences stressful events. It is necessary to look to the future and not to focus primarily on current difficulties
3. **Accept that change is a part of living:** Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of certain events. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help the individual focus on what can be changed
4. **Move toward goals:** A child should develop some realistic goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, a child should consider “What can I accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?”
5. **Take decisive actions:** Taking decisive action is recommended, instead of wishing that the problems would disappear
6. **Look for opportunities for self-discovery:** People who have experienced tragedies reported better relationships, an increased sense of self-worth and heightened appreciation for life
7. **Nurture a positive self-image:** Developing confidence in one’s ability to solve problems helps to foster resilience
8. **Keep things in perspective:** Even when facing painful events, the situation should be considered from a long-term perspective
9. **Maintain a hopeful outlook:** An optimistic outlook acknowledges that good things will happen in life. It is important to visualise what is wanted, rather than worry about the future
10. **Self-care:** Pay attention to one’s own needs and feelings and engage in enjoyable and relaxing activities
11. **Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful:** Some people write about their own thoughts and feelings associated with stressful events.

2.3 Building Coping Skills (Stress, Change and Challenge) – INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

How do you develop coping skills?

Coping refers to the successful management of problems encountered in life. Coping skills enable us to handle life’s challenges effectively, maximising the chances of success or survival, and minimising damages or other negative consequences. Those skills help us to manage the current situation, to take action and be flexible and persistent in relation to solving problems. Coping styles differ and some people possess more effective strategies than others. Coping skills in children include several components which are presented in Figure 2.5.

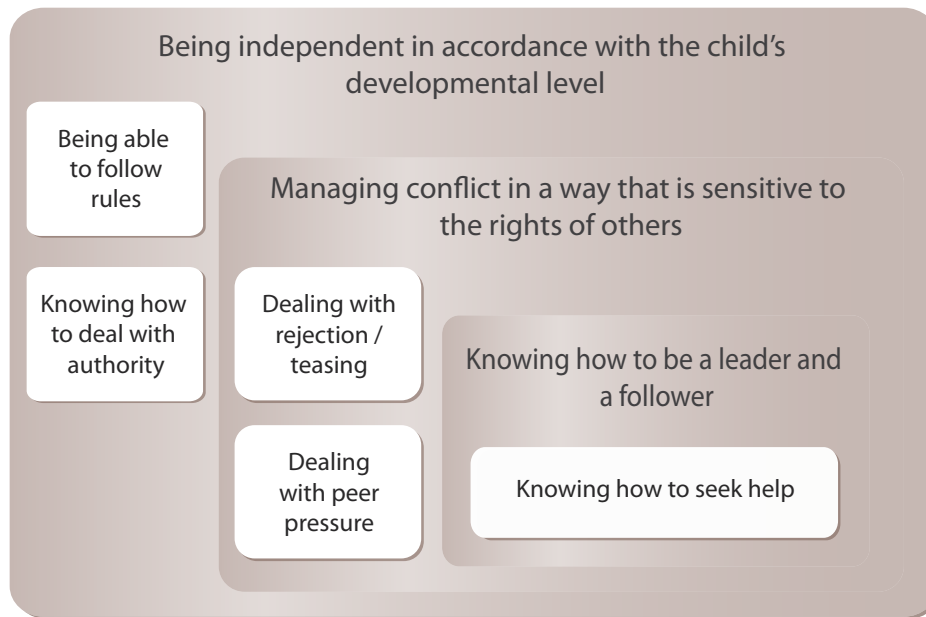


Figure 2.4 Successful coping skills

Coping skills can be either positive or negative. Positive coping skills enable us to deal effectively with problematic situations. For example, hobbies like music or art provide a positive outlet for stress and teach practical skills for coping. Negative coping skills refer to techniques which provide only short-term relief or distraction and ultimately worsen the situation. A common example of a negative coping skill is substance abuse (alcohol or drug abuse) and smoking.

Good coping skills are important for managing stress

Coping Skills In Children

Children are regularly exposed to stress, especially if the child tries to satisfy the expectations of others (or his/her own expectations), i.e. competing to be the best. Daily life events or certain situations might be difficult or painful experiences and children often do not have the resources to cope. An overload of stress can cause physical, psychological and behavioural consequences, or result in the adoption of maladaptive coping strategies (drug and/or alcohol use). Stress affects thinking, reduces concentration and impairs decision-making ability. Although some forms of stress can have a positive influence and produce anticipation or excitement, it can also cause anger and depression. This may lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, an upset stomach and other physical complaints. Adults should understand that children's behaviours are an important form of communication and it is important to consider the context when addressing apparent bad behaviour. If the source of the issue is not addressed, problematic behaviour is likely to continue.

There are numerous sources of stress for children, including:

- School demands and frustration
- Negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- Body changes; Body image (especially in girls)

- Problems with friends and/or peers at school
- Unsafe living environment/neighbourhood
- 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
- Having too high expectations
- Family financial problems

Children are especially sensitive to change, such as moving to a new house, having a new teacher, changing school or the arrival of a new baby in the family. Parents and teachers often delay informing children about forthcoming changes because they believe that this will help reduce potential anxiety. However, a child needs time to process the new information. When teachers or parents are talking to children about change, it should be explained in simple language, giving the child a chance to ask questions. Adults should limit the number of changes being made at the same time.

Coping strategies and skills

Stress management enables us to maintain a level of stimulation that is healthy and enjoyable. Coping with stress means that we are able to recognise the source of stress, how it affects us and what we can do to control our level of stress. Each one of us differs substantially in the way we cope with problems. Coping strategies imply efforts which help the child deal with problems, frustrations and challenging opportunities. It activates both conscious and unconscious resources. Coping styles can either be adaptive and appropriate to the child's environment or, alternatively, they can be maladaptive. Commonly, boys and girls use different coping strategies; while boys are more likely to manage themselves, girls are more likely to ask friends for support. In addition, adolescent girls are more likely to report stressful events than boys, and for girls, stressful events are more often associated with interpersonal and family relationships. Coping responses to stressful situations have been classified in several ways. Responses generally fall into one of three categories, as shown in Figure 2.6 (Ashford, 1988).

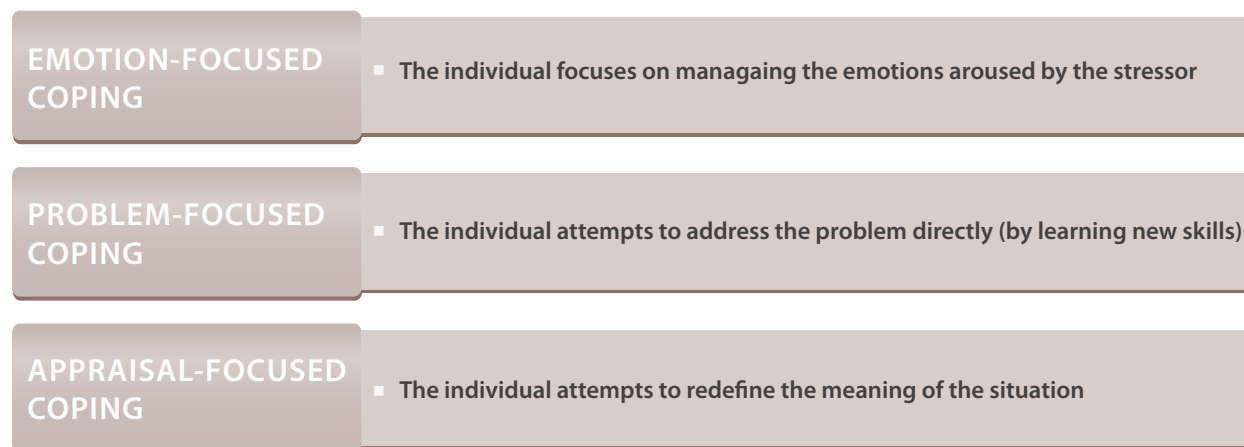


Figure 2.5 Possible coping responses

How do we teach children effective coping skills?

The teacher's role in transferring effective coping skills

Children often need help from adults (parents, teachers) in order to cope effectively with stressful events. Furthermore, adults need to be empathic and respectful of the child's feelings. The ability to cope effectively with challenges and stressful events entails learning practical skills. Learning effective coping strategies directly improves mental health by promoting a sense of mastery and self-esteem. For children, the pre-adolescent age is the best time to start practicing coping skills. These abilities should be developed during the pre-teen years in preparation for adolescence, when stress, anger and sadness are more commonplace emotions. If children are able to learn to use several coping skills – particularly seeking and accepting help from others – these abilities will enable them to deal more effectively with stressful situations later in life.

A teacher's role in relation to building pupils' coping skills consists of:

- **Monitoring** whether stress affects pupils health, behaviour, thoughts or feelings
- **Listening** carefully to pupils and taking care not to overload them with responsibility
- **Teaching** and modelling stress management skills
- **Supporting** pupils' involvement in sports and other pro-social activities.

There are a range of coping strategies that pupils can use to effectively manage stressful situations. Teaching coping skills should focus on feelings, clear communication and problem-solving. Educational theories suggest that learning is most effective if pupils are active participants in their own learning rather than passive recipients of information. Teaching methods which engage pupils in activity based learning could include role-play, reflection, and group discussions. For younger children, repetition is an important part of learning. New lessons should always begin with a brief review of what the children learned in the previous week and key messages should be reinforced.

Useful strategies for teaching coping skills:

- Teach pupils to identify their own feelings (extend their vocabulary in relation to "feelings", i.e. happy, jealous, nervous, angry, annoyed, etc.)
- Encourage pupils to express their feelings using drawings, puppets, role-play, journal writing (as developmentally appropriate)
- Use stories to illustrate difficult/ sensitive issues (in accordance with pupils literary ability)
- Use problem-based scenarios in role plays or puppet play for younger children, involving topics such as adapting to change or loss in life
- Teach pupils to identify the early warning signs of distress and discomfort
- Teach relaxation skills
- Foster co-operative games and incorporate group skills
- Use peer support systems
- Do not permit name calling or teasing and explain why this is not acceptable
- Encourage and improve pupils' communication skills and their ability to express feelings and to listen to others
- Empower pupils to choose positive relationships with others and to cope with rejection and loneliness

- Teach pupils possible ways in which to recognise and resolve conflicts (finding solutions, solving problems, helping others)

The following activities are helpful for reducing stress levels in pupils:

- **Physical exercise** – any form of exercise helps alleviate feelings of stress; walking, jogging, or swimming. The beneficial effects of exercise, including relaxation and enhanced self-esteem help pupils cope better with stress
- **Behavioural self-control:** This refers to self-management. A conscious analysis of the causes and consequence of behaviour helps pupils achieve self-control
- **Increased social support:** Pupils benefit from social and parental support. It is necessary to form close relations with trusted friends and adults who are good listeners and who instill confidence in the child
- **Counselling** - Pupils can be helped through counselling to identify their strengths, weaknesses and response patterns.

2.4 Empowering Decision-Making, Problem Solving and Help-Seeking – INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

The importance of developing skills from an early age

Making decisions, solving problems and asking for help are part of daily life. Children need to develop the ability to think independently and to solve problems. We are not born with these abilities and children require guidance. Effective decision-making, problem-solving and help-seeking abilities enhance independence, responsibility and personal success. Training children in these abilities promotes pupils' overall development, improves academic achievement and helps prevent developmental problems. Teaching should begin during early childhood where younger children are asked to solve simple problems. As children mature, they should be taught how to make decisions which affect them personally. The process involves learning from their own experiences, making mistakes and having the opportunity to make independent choices.

A good decision does not necessarily imply a good outcome and pupils should understand the difference between good processes and good outcomes in regards to decision-making. We make decisions because we are interested in the outcome; our values tell us what we would like to happen, and that is what we try to achieve in making the decision (Gregory and Clemen, 1994). In order to ensure good decision-making, we need to express our values clearly, to create a set of alternatives that address those values, and finally to choose the best option (Keeney, 1992).

Gregory and Clemen (1994) have identified eight factors associated with good decision-making (Figure 2.6).

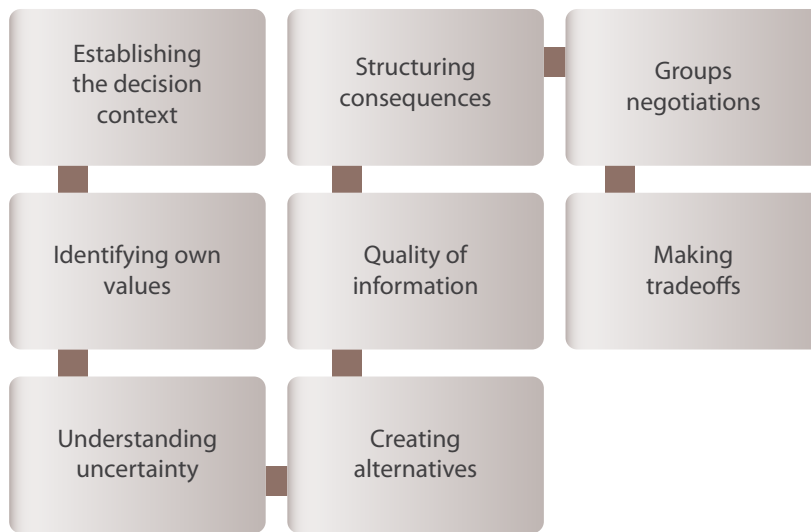


Figure 2.6 Basic elements of good decision-making

Most problems require multi-level thinking, which requires creativity and logic. A child needs to learn how to draw conclusions from existing knowledge (logic) and also how to generate new ideas (creativity) for solving new challenges. As with all skills, time and practice is important for developing problem solving proficiency. Parents and teachers should encourage children to become good problem solvers, providing them with tasks that require independent thinking and experimentation. Teaching problem solving skills enables children to: (1) learn about basic issues, such as “How do I feel”, and; (2) ask a simple question like “What do I want”. Pupils should be able to recognise the options and choices that they have before solving a problem. Enhancing children’s problem-solving skills also teaches them how to:

- remain calm and composed
- cooperate with adults and other children
- communicate better; verbalise and express feelings more effectively

Problem-solving should focus on adapting basic thinking skills and transforming a rigid mind into a flexible one that can identify solutions to different problems. Pupils should be trained to solve problems in the most effective way, in order to attain success in their professional and personal lives. In addition, pupils who are encouraged to identify solutions for themselves gain more confidence and are better able to deal with problems in the future.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

- **Get the facts and identify feelings** – when a pupil is fighting, angry, frustrated and upset, identify the problem. When asking a pupil to discuss the problem, stay calm and remain non-judgemental.
- **Help the child to set the conflict resolution goal** and identify what the pupil wants to happen as a result of a problematic situation. When the pupil has a clear goal, it is easier to develop solutions.

Generate alternatives – help the pupil to stay focused on the problem and ask what he/she can do to reach their goal. When a pupil offers alternatives, repeat their ideas and ask what else can be done. Do not criticise his/her ideas. Prompt pupils for more solutions by asking questions.

- **Help to evaluate the consequences.** Consider what might happen if... (Would it be safe or fair? How would everyone feel?). Adults should encourage a child to evaluate his/her ideas and see if those ideas are acceptable or unacceptable.
- **Ask for a decision.** After children evaluate their ideas, adults should state the problem, summarise the ideas and let the child decide which actions he/she would like to take. If a child chooses an option that will not work, ensure that the child knows what the alternatives are and what they should try next.

Help-seeking behaviours are fundamental for the development of good mental health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, many young people are hindered or discouraged from seeking help. The following process model presents recommended actions which aim to promote help-seeking behaviours among students (Figure 2.7).

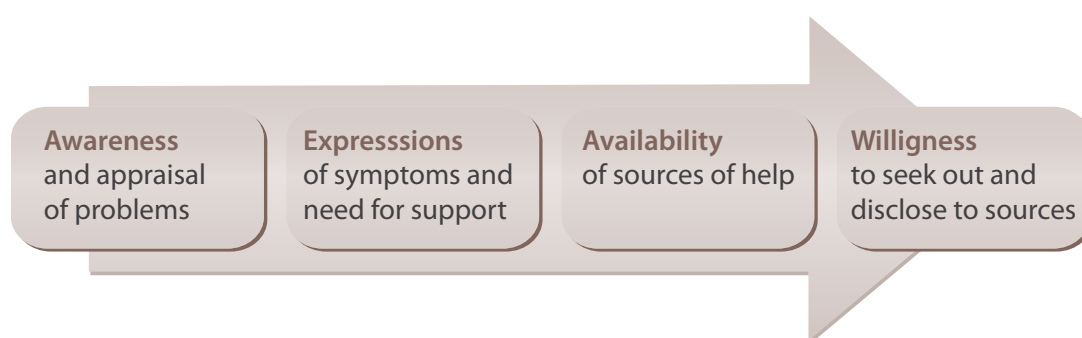


Figure 2.7 Process model for encouraging help-seeking behaviour

The awareness and problem-solving appraisal must be expressed in words that can be understood by others. Help must be available and accessible and the help-seeker must be willing to disclose their needs to that source. It is important to remember that pupils will only open up to people with whom they feel secure, who they are not shy around, who they are not scared of and who they feel will relate to them empathetically.

What are the benefits in acquiring these skills?

The benefits of training in decision-making and problem-solving

Researchers have identified numerous benefits from training children in decision-making, problem-solving and help-seeking. Pupils can practice decision-making skills during classroom activities with peers. By working with others, children learn to recognise the differing attitudes of their classmates and become responsible for their own learning. Pupils also learn to distinguish between what is important to them (internal value structure) and considering alternative options (Gregory and Clemen, 1994).

How do you teach children these skills?

Training in decision-making, problem-solving and help-seeking abilities should be part of the teaching process. Specific actions in the school setting can motivate sustained changes in behaviour, academic learning and the social-emotional lives of the children. Schools may be considered 'toolkits' that enable

pupils to apply a 'clear thinking' strategy when faced with a problem situation. In the school setting, co-operative learning tasks are especially beneficial. By working with peers, pupils are able to recognise diversity among their classmates (which in turn, clarifies the importance of self-expression). There are eight key principles related to training in the school setting, although these may differ depending on the age of participants:

- **Establishing the context;**
Recognising that a decision, opportunity or problem exists, and identifying the key players in the process - is it a decision or problem that the pupil can manage alone? Would peer, parent, or teacher participation be helpful or necessary?
- **Identifying values;**
Determining why a decision matters to the pupil(s); recognition of the primary source of conflict in terms of values
- **Understanding uncertainty;**
Recognising that uncertainty is inevitable but sometimes a distinction can be made between resolvable and unresolvable sources of uncertainty
- **Structuring consequences;**
Recognising different pathways and connections; the distinction between desired and unwanted outcomes
- **Quality of information;**
Understanding the objective or being driven by emotions, fears, etc.
- **Creating alternatives;**
Recognising how choices affect oneself and/ or others; preferred (realistic and acceptable) solutions
- **Making trade-offs and group negotiation;**
Achieving the common interest
- **Evaluate the problem and the solution.**

Pupils should learn how to communicate their personal values and to appreciate the sacrifices that they make. They should recognise what is personally important and identify the consequences of making alternative choices.

Help-seeking behaviour is related to other aspects of social competence, so attitudes in relation to seeking help should be covered by the MHP programme. Encouraging trust, changing attitudes and reducing the stigma associated with accessing assistance are key factors when promoting help-seeking behaviour. In order to make help-seeking easier, the following aspects should be considered:

- Provide mental health education and inform individuals about sources of help and address help-seeking fears (giving explicit information about what a consultation with a mental health professional involves, the benefits, confidentiality, etc.)
- Availability of established and trusted help-seeking pathways; services need to be taken to young people and help needs to be easily accessible
- Ensure that professionals in regular contact with pupils are aware of their potential role in promoting mental health and of the need for early intervention in the development of mental health problems in young people
- Encourage and train professionals to actively build protective relationships with young people
- Enhance the emotional competence of pupils to seek help (pupils need to be aware of their

- personal world and have a language with which to express it to others, i.e. speaking about mental health, feelings)
- Tackle stigma (be careful about labelling; increase tolerance)

2.5 Handling emotions – INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

Understanding different types of emotion

An emotion is a particular feeling, a quality of conscious awareness and a way of responding. Our feelings belong to individual experiences that include mood, sensation, desire, emotion or belief (WHO, 2003b). Individual feelings and emotional responses depend on individual reactions to the circumstances of a given environment. People, objects or situations can cause positive or negative emotions (WHO, 2003b). However, both positive and negative emotions have to be processed in a healthy and wholesome way. It is normal to feel sad or angry, but these emotions should not disturb daily life.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Positive emotions involve a range of “positive feelings” such as happiness, joy, laughter and love. In theory, they can be difficult to define or measure. For example, the emotion of happiness includes the anticipation of a desired event in the future. The satisfaction we feel comes from achieving our goals, aspirations and plans, or from giving and receiving affection (love).

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Negative emotions vary in their intensity and include a range of feelings such as sadness, fear, anger, jealousy or guilt. Some negative emotions are described below:

Anger

Anger is usually a response to “not getting something we wanted” or “not wanting something that we got”. Just like positive emotions, negative emotions also vary in intensity. Anger can vary from “mild irritation to rage” and is accompanied by different psychological and biological changes (Spielberger, C). Anger can also be considered an individual’s response to feeling threatened, allowing them to defend themselves when under attack. Some people believe that the goal of feeling angry is to attack the situation or the person that caused it. Although it is normal to feel angry in some situations, it is also essential to control our anger before a situation erupts. Anger management requires an individual to distract their focus from the cause of their anger. A few guidelines for reducing anger are mentioned below:

- Recognise warning signs and accept the feeling of anger (sweaty palms, shaking hands, impatience, upset stomach, tight muscles, flushed face)
- Analyse why the feeling of anger or frustration occurred
- Find a positive way to view the situation

- Avoid sarcasm or teasing others
- Do something constructive to calm down (e.g. count to 10, take a deep breath, leave the scene, ask for time to calm down, listen to music, exercise, write a letter to the person and then destroy it, explain how angry you are, help someone else, watch a funny movie, spend time doing your favourite hobby).

Fear

Fear is an unpleasant emotion that is caused by awareness or anticipation of danger (WHO, 2003b). When we experience fear, we try to escape from the current situation. Fear is not the same as anxiety. The latter emotion appears as a “result of thoughts concerning an imminent threat, the cause of which the individual is often unaware of” (WHO, 2003b). Hence, the person feels anxious and believes that he/she is not able to cope with the situation. Fear encourages the individual to be cautious and acts as a self-preserving emotion. It is necessary to talk about fear and to discuss what scares us. Adults might help children to rationalise fears and provide them with the security and support that they need.

Jealousy

Jealousy can be explained as “wanting something which someone else has” such as toy, a present, attention or love. Jealousy is one of the most difficult emotions to explain and understand.

The importance of handling emotions

Although it is sometimes difficult to recognise our own emotions, some individuals also have problems identifying their own feelings. If we are unable to recognise our feelings, it is difficult to communicate them to others, and to apply appropriate coping strategies. It is important to learn how to separate feelings from reactions. For example, anger should not lead to violence or other destructive behaviours.

Negative feelings emerge for a variety of reasons. Frustration and disappointment are feelings experienced by all of us at some point in our lives. These feelings should be accepted as normal and children should be taught positive ways to deal with these moods. If emotions from the past remain unresolved, they can act as a destructive power with long-term effects. They can block thinking, decision-making and the creative abilities needed to resolve the threatening situation. Accumulated negative emotions drain energy and narrow thinking. Sometimes, instead of being aware of present emotions, the individual allows these feelings to overwhelm their mind and to take control of his/her thoughts and actions (WHO, 2003b).

While some people can easily explain their feelings about something or someone, others keep their emotions hidden and pretend that everything is in perfect order. An assertive attitude, which includes honesty about our needs and feelings, enables us to meet our own needs and maintain positive relationships with others.

Everybody has to be able to discuss feelings, and to identify what he/she can do to feel better. Finding solutions to feelings helps us feel better and prevents us from harming ourselves or others. Moreover, forgiveness, acceptance and gratitude are the best methods for keeping peace of mind, gaining wisdom, and increasing our “mental” strength. Emotion-focused coping involves the ability to handle emotions and to develop emotional intelligence.

How do you teach children to manage their emotions effectively?

In order to teach pupils how to handle their emotions, they should practice recognising feelings in themselves and in others, i.e. sadness, anger, annoyance, jealousy, or nervousness. Through practice, pupils begin to develop means by which to deal with their negative emotions. It is important to learn how to calm down and practice different ways to relax. Several techniques can be used to identify feelings and appropriate actions. One of which is very simple and entails communication based on questions such as:

- What makes a pupil feel happy or sad?
- What can a pupil do when he/she feels sad (at home, or at school, or with friends)?
- What should a pupil do when he/she feels angry.

The guidelines in Figure 2.8 are useful for building emotional coping skills (WHO, 2003b).

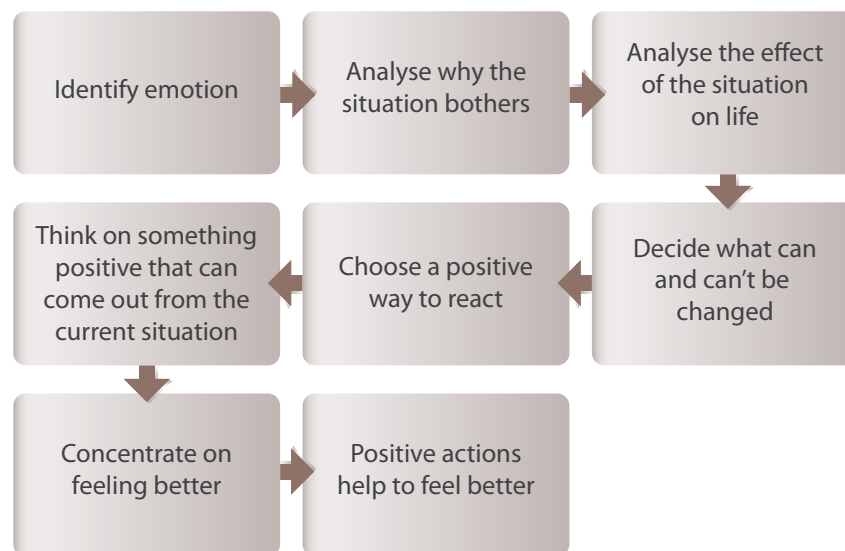


Figure 2.8 Practices involved in building coping skills

2.6 Building skills for conflict resolution – INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

What is a conflict?

A conflict is a situation where “incompatible activities, feelings, or intentions occur together”. It includes “actual confrontation between persons or confrontation through words and deeds” (WHO, 2003a). A conflict can be expressed verbally through accusations or threats, or through physical violence. During our personal development, we are exposed to many internal and external conflicts. While internal conflict is considered a “situation where an individual has a difficult time coming to a decision within him/herself”, an external conflict is described as a “situation where disagreement occurs with somebody else” (WHO, 2003a).

Pupils experience many physical, psychological and environmental (family) changes that can lead to

internal conflict. Due to unexpected changes, pupils' self-confidence can become fragile and their feelings can be easily hurt. In addition, adolescents often experience "mood swings".

It is natural that people have different opinions and attitudes. Consequently, disagreements and misunderstandings can occur in any relationship, and at any stage, which can lead to anger, confusion or hurt. Unresolved conflict results in poor communication, low self-esteem, discouragement and/or withdrawal from activities.

Conflict resolution is a process whereby all parties involved come together to work to resolve the difficulty and to agree upon and accept a resolution. It is based on the idea that it is "better to expose and resolve conflict before it damages relationships or escalates into violence" (WHO, 2003a). Conflict resolution is a process of reaching agreement between conflicting parties through some form of negotiation. The best solution to a conflict satisfies the needs of all parties involved. Conflict resolution skills include; active listening, empathy, expressing feelings without insulting others, and finding a solution that meets the needs of all sides. Careful listening, gestures (i.e. nodding), eye contact and appropriate facial expressions, improve the potential to resolve conflict.

Conflict resolution skills improve pupils' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours so that they can better understand and solve conflicts.

How do conflict resolution skills help children identify solutions to problems?

Strengthening conflict resolution skills in young people might be a crucial investment for a future peaceful society (Cottam, 1996). The differences between pupils' opinions, beliefs, cultural background and styles of communication, stimulates their critical thinking processes. However, these differences can also cause external conflicts which have to be resolved.

Teaching conflict resolution helps maintain a good "moral" climate in the classroom, while controlling discipline and reducing violence in schools. Pupils who do not learn conflict resolution skills tend to have more problems forming friendships with peers and maintaining relationships with others in the future.

External conflicts can be resolved in several ways, including avoidance, diffusion, confrontation or negotiation (WHO, 2003a). It is well known that negotiation facilitates communication and speeds up conflict resolution. Pupils who have had an opportunity to practice their negotiation skills are more likely to be able to perform them in real life conflict situations.

The success of conflict resolution also depends on an individual's behavioural style. Pupils should understand the difference between passive, aggressive or assertive behaviour. If an individual is usually behaving "passively", then he/she rarely expresses needs, feelings and beliefs. A passive individual usually comes across as weak in a conflict situation; he/she gives in easily, is highly agreeable, and puts others' needs before their own. Conversely, individuals exhibiting aggressive behaviour like to make all the decisions and ignore the feelings and needs of others. They are often verbally and physically aggressive. Of the three behavioural styles, an assertive style is usually considered the most advantageous. "Assertive" individuals are honest and straightforward about their needs and feelings. In this way, they show respect for others and themselves (WHO, 2003a). By acting assertively, relationships and interactions with others can improve. It is necessary to remain calm, to express one's own needs without attacking the other person, and to show respect for others. Non-verbal communication is also very important in

conflict situations. People send out a lot of information through body posture, tone of voice and facial expressions (WHO, 2003a). If an individual's feelings do not match his/her words, then the receiver tends to believe the communication from non-verbal signals rather than the words. The following practical guidelines can help you deal with a conflict situation (WHO, 2003a):

- Attack the problem, not the individual
- Stick to the current problem, do not refer back to past issues
- Avoid using words like "always" and "never" when telling the person what you are upset about. The other person will feel under attack, further fuelling the argument
- Take "time out" when both sides get angry, but agree to tackle the problem again later when each party has calmed down
- Use "I" statements in order to express feelings. This will encourage a less hostile atmosphere

Strategies for developing conflict skills in children

Schools should adopt a non-violent approach to conflict resolution, encourage a culture of peace, and develop individual and social skills in pupils. Non-violent behaviour, like violent behaviour, is learned. Individuals can be trained in conflict resolution skills. Teachers play a significant role in strengthening internal and external conflict resolution skills. During a conflict, pupils need to be able to differentiate between instinctive reactions and better responses which have been chosen based on critical thinking. If conflict is constant among pupils in the classroom, then the school staff have to be ready to identify it, take the appropriate action, and to help pupils resolve the problems. The involvement of teachers will help foster conflict resolution and support the values of solidarity, tolerance and equality. It will also promote the critical thinking and creative capacity of pupils, helping them find new solutions to problems. In order to provide appropriate guidelines and analyse conflicts in the classroom, teachers are advised to consider the following questions: (www.cortland.edu):

- What kind of conflict occurs most frequently (threats, name calling, fights, violence)?
- Where do conflicts occur most frequently (classroom, cafeteria, halls, playground)?
- Is there an underlying reason for the conflict at school (cultural, status differences)?
- What is the current conflict resolution procedure?
- What are the desired measurable outcomes from implementing an exercise? And what is needed to measure outcomes?

Teachers have a choice of several strategies for strengthening conflict resolution skills in pupils:

- Develop a planned curriculum that makes pupils think, write and talk about solving various kinds of conflicts (or use the proposed exercise from Section 3)
- Provide training in conflict resolution skills
- Use class meetings to address common conflicts that occur among pupils
- Develop a class rule that conflicts have to be solved fairly and non-violently
- Increase pupils' responsibility for working out their own conflicts without help from a third party

To learn about conflict resolution skills, pupils should practice the guidelines provided in Figure 2.9.

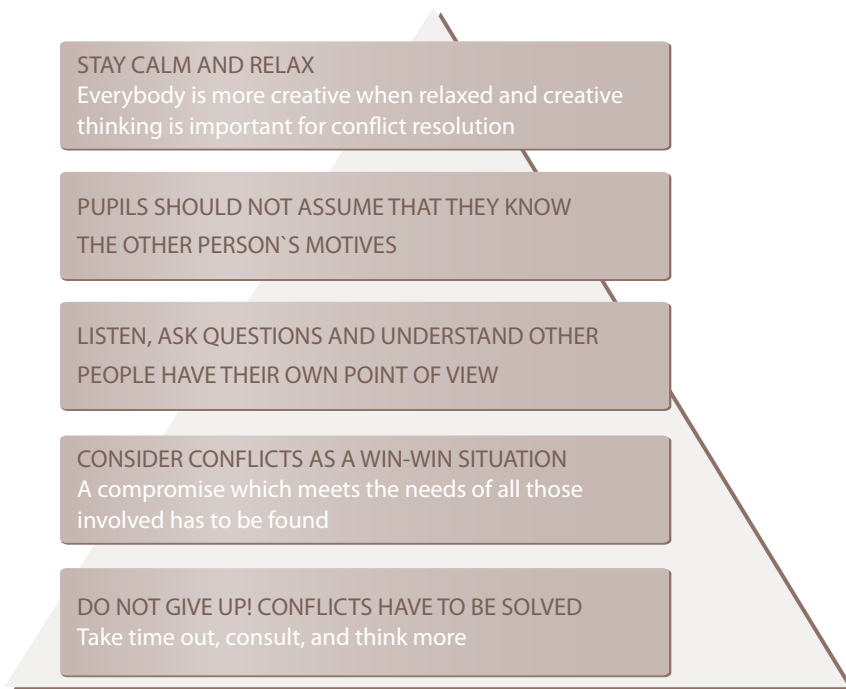


Figure 2.9 Guidelines for successful conflict resolution

2.7 Strengthening relationships – SOCIAL SKILLS

Effective communication relies on good social skills

We are social beings and interpersonal relationships are an essential part of our lives. We all need to feel closeness with other people, to feel included, to be understood and to feel wanted. Significant interpersonal relationships are characterised by intellectual, emotional and physical intimacy (WHO, 2003e). Although our wellbeing depends on our efficiency in terms of communication, often people hide their inner thoughts, deny their feelings and do not allow themselves to communicate adequately. In strong relationships, people communicate effectively and honestly, and although each individual enjoys spending time with the other, he/she also feels complete without them. There are no unrealistic expectations or attempts to control the other. Apart from what others expect from us, what we expect from ourselves is very important. Although self-expectations can be very high, practical and reasonable expectations should be in place. In a relationship, those involved learn how to take care of themselves and others. In addition, every individual is responsible for satisfying his/her own needs. It is our responsibility to set personal boundaries and to satisfy our needs. Successful and good relationships are based on mutual respect, open and clear communication, and they require the following (MHA, 2009):

- A clear definition of the type of relationship wanted
- Empathy that considers the other person's point of view
- Common interests; shared values and beliefs

Maintaining a relationship requires a lot of input and work. From an early age, children need to learn how to communicate with each other and with adults. In addition, they should learn about the importance of friendship and proper communication.

Effective Communication

The aim of effective communication is to establish a mutual understanding and to find solutions that please both sides. In addition, the individuals involved have the opportunity to express their own needs, wishes, and ideas but they also remain respectful of the other person. Misunderstandings occur in every relationship during any stage of communication. Although this can cause anger, confusion and feelings of hurt, problems can be solved. Open and clear communication requires that messages are clearly stated, clearly voiced, and are accurately heard and understood by the receiver (WHO, 2003e).

In order to learn clear communication, people need to practice communication skills from an early age. School is one of the best places where pupils can do this. In addition, communication in school between school staff, pupils and parents should be clear and transparent (clear roles, regular meetings, school policies/ procedures) in order to ensure a safe, secure and positive psychosocial environment for staff and pupils.

Communication can be verbal and non-verbal and both forms are very important. Non-verbal communication provides a lot of information through appearance, body posture, tone of voice, facial expression and gestures. If a person's feelings do not match their words, then others tend to believe the non-verbal signals. The way that a person sits, stands, and walks is an indication of their attitude towards themselves and their relationship with others. Many elements of non-verbal communication are unconscious and occur at an instinctive level (WHO, 2003e). By simply adapting our non-verbal communication signals to provide positive messages to others, can be the first step in modifying the behaviour of people around us.

What does successful communication mean?

Relationships strongly influence our wellbeing. High quality, successful interpersonal relationships provide great support in life and this has beneficial effects on a person's health, mind and connections with others. People with strong social connections cope better with difficult periods in life. However, every meaningful relationship requires commitment, and a willingness to adapt, to change and to learn how to take care of ourselves and others (WHO, 2003e). Everyone has a different point of view and this adds to the value of the relationship. It is important not to be judgmental and critical towards others, but rather to focus on their positive characteristics and virtues. Having "poor" relationships in school is the most frequently cited causes of stress among children and school staff. Children should learn and understand that (WHO, 2003e):

- Everyone has the right to disagree
- Everyone can ask for personal and emotional space
- An issue or problem can be temporarily unresolved
- If we do not like someone's behaviour, we can discuss it with that person

Using the following exercise, children can practice and learn successful communication (WHO, 2003e):

1. **Stay focused:** Do not refer back to past conflicts when dealing with current ones. Instead, stay focused on the current issue and try to identify a solution
2. **Listen and ask questions:** People often think that they are listening, but are actually thinking about what to say when the other person stops talking. Effective communication works both ways

3. **Try to see the situation from a different point of view:** In a conflict, people want to talk only about their point of view. Consequently, there is little focus on the other person's opinion. However, it is necessary to consider their side of the story as well. Do not assume you know the other person's motives.
4. **Respond to criticism with empathy:** When someone criticises us, we become defensive. It is hard to hear criticism, but listen carefully and respond with empathy. It is valuable to obtain the other person's opinion.
5. **Admit mistakes:** Effective communication requires admitting that you make mistakes. If both sides share responsibility in a conflict situation, it is important that each admit their mistakes and show maturity.
6. **Use "I" messages:** Start sentences with "I" and state your own feelings.
7. **Look for a compromise:** Instead of trying to win the argument, find a resolution that satisfies both sides.
8. **Take time out.** Sometimes tempers ruin the discussion and make it difficult to continue without arguing. If somebody is too angry to be constructive, take a break from the discussion.
9. **Do not give up on finding a solution:** Taking a break from the discussion is a good idea, but continue with it at a later time. It is necessary to have a constructive attitude, mutual respect and a willingness to see other points of view.
10. **Think in terms of a win-win situation:** Find a compromise or a solution that meets the needs of both sides.
11. **Body posture has to reflect self-confidence:** It is important to learn how to stand up straight, look people in the eyes, relax, and use a firm but pleasant tone.

Teaching children good communication and social skills

Communication skills are social skills which can be learned. School is an excellent environment for practicing communication skills. From early childhood, children learn how to communicate, to negotiate sharing toys, or to ask for something from their parents or siblings. Primary school is an especially important setting for developing communication skills. It is a place where children make friends on their own and adopt the rules of social interaction. Children in school explore language and message choices, learn about peer pressure, and build a sense of self. Although pupils can learn and develop communication skills on their own, more formalised instruction is beneficial for children. In addition, practicing communications helps a child to succeed in school and in later life. Teachers and parents play an important role in helping children build communication skills because they influence pupils' behaviour and serve as role models.

Pupils should be trained in basic social skills activities early in life and when starting school. Those basic social skills activities include; greeting others, saying goodbye, or responding to a question. However, if pupils need additional training or revision in relation to basic skills, the simple social skills outlined here are easy to demonstrate and to practice. As children mature, their communication skills need to advance. They should be able to consider another person's point of view (e.g. their feelings) and to provide an appropriate response (to avoid hurting others).

To provide appropriate direction and to develop the social skills of pupils, teachers can use the guidelines presented in Figure 2.10 below.

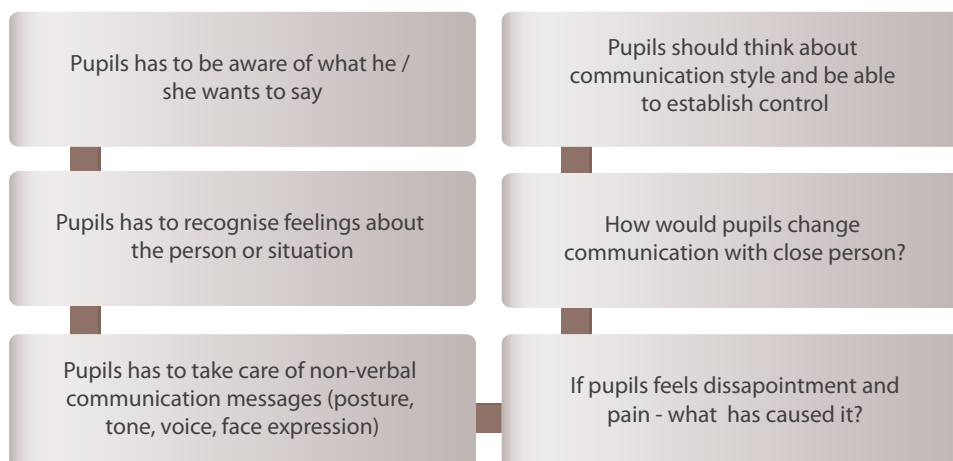


Figure 2.10 Guidelines for developing social skills of pupils

A video showing an example of positive communication behaviours is an excellent way of demonstrating communication skills. Exercises to practice these skills can be conducted separately.

2.8 Handling peer pressure

The development of peer relationships

Relationships with peers and friendships

Peers are individuals who usually belong to the same age group, with whom pupils identify. Although some consider “peer pressure” the cause of “negative behaviour” in pupils, peers are necessary for successful child development (WHO, 2003d). The peer group is also a source of affection, sympathy and understanding. It can be a great support for establishing identity and autonomy, or discovering oneself as independent from parents and others (WHO, 2003d). Although younger children usually satisfy their need for independence within the family, older children and adolescents need peers for establishing autonomy. By definition, friendship can be considered a supportive, emphasising and mutually beneficial relationship (WHO, 2003e). If a pupil has the ability to make and keep friends, then he/she can build successful and positive peer group interactions. During adolescence, pupils often change their minds, rules, expectations and friends, due to frequent alterations in mood. This can result in numerous changes in relationships and friendships.

Sometimes peer pressure can arise among members of the same group. Peer pressure occurs when a pupil or student is persuaded (or forced) to adopt similar values and beliefs, or to participate in the same activities as others in the peer group (WHO, 2003d). Adolescents in particular desire the acceptance of peers. This often results in risky behaviours such as cigarette smoking, truancy, drug use, sexual activity, fighting, theft or thrill seeking activities. Research has shown that the values of a young person’s peer group has a stronger influence on their level of academic success than the values, attitudes and support provided by their family (WHO, 2003d).

Positive and negative peer relationships

Pupils face many challenging decisions in relation to peer pressure. Some decisions will be simple, i.e. deciding whether or not to attend a football game. While other decisions will produce “moral” doubt, i.e. skipping classes, drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, trying cigarettes or lying to parents and teachers. Making a decision is a difficult process, but it can be more troublesome when it is influenced by peers. This influence can be either positive or negative. For example, positive influence is evident in those peers who teach each other new skills, help each other in school assignments, or study the school curriculum together. A negative peer influence may be expressed as routinely skipping classes, theft, drinking alcohol, or bullying others. The main reason for accepting negative behaviour is that pupils want to be liked and to “fit in” to the peer group. Therefore, pupils can be caught in a circle of peer pressure. A pupil’s inner strength and self-confidence can help them walk away and resist doing something that is wrong according to their own feelings and beliefs. Pupils should understand that when parents and teachers advise them to choose friends wisely, it is in an effort to help them avoid peer pressure. It is also great to have friends with similar values who can back up a pupil’s thoughts and beliefs.

In instances where pupils are faced with a dilemma, he/she should be able to discuss the issues involved with significant others. It is necessary to understand that some people will like the pupil for who they are, while other pupils impose conditions on the relationship and will often appear dissatisfied.

How do you implement this?

Handling peer pressure is an important social skill that pupils need to acquire. They should understand the importance of proper decision-making and that it is more important to have this skill than to “have the right image” or to “show-off”. Teachers, school staff and parents have to provide proper guidelines and support to pupils to help them avoid negative behaviour. Pupils need to be taught how to withstand the “pressure” of wanting to be the same as other peer group members. In order to implement tools on “peer pressure” topics, teachers should:

- Have open communication with pupils. It is necessary to show understanding and to be approachable. School staff should not be judgmental but should talk and listen regularly to pupils.
- Have clear expectations. This guideline is important for both school staff and parents. It is very important to have clear expectations for children’s behaviour from an early age.

Teachers can also provide support to parents using the following guidelines:

- **Get to know the friends of the child:** It is important to get to know your child’s friends and their parents. A pupil’s home can be an inviting place for a child to bring friends, and consequently parents can keep eye on them. You might discuss the activities that your child’s friends are involved in and their appropriateness.
- **Be involved:** Parents should show they care about what their child is involved in and attend after school activities and sports events.
- **Talk about the issues:** You should be able to discuss sensitive and important issues including drug use, alcohol, sex, politics, academia and how to make better decisions.
- **Choose battles wisely:** It is not necessary to argue about a child’s taste in clothes or music and can be more beneficial to remain firm on important issues.
- **Encourage teenagers to choose good friends** who support him/her.

Table 2.3 and table 2.4 present examples of reducing “peer pressure” among pupils. Teachers can present the complete table and discuss ways of saying “no” to other pupils and explain the “refusal steps” in detail.

Table 2.3 Ways of saying “No”

METHOD	PERSUADER	DECIDER
Polite refusal	Can I get you a drink	No, thanks
Give reason	How about a beer	I don't like beer
Be firm	Here, smoke this cigarette with me	
	Come on	
	Just try it!	
Walk away	Hey, do you want to buy some brown sugar?	Say no and walk away after you say it...
Cold shoulder	Do you want some brown sugar?	Keep going as if you did not hear the person – not the best to use with friends
Give an alternative	Let's go upstairs to my room	I'd rather stay here and watch TV.
Reverse the pressure	Come on, just come upstairs with me.	What did I just tell you? Were you not listening?
Avoid the situation		If you know of people or a situation where people will pressurize you to do things you do not want to do, stay away from these situations.
Strength in numbers		Hang around with people who support your decision not to drink, use drugs, etc.
Own your feelings		I am not comfortable doing this.
		It makes me unhappy

Source: Adolescent Mental Health Promotion. Trainer's Guide on Handling Peer Pressure. World Health Organisation. Regional Office for South-East Asia, 2003.

Table 2.4. Different situations and steps for refusal

SITUATION	STEPS
An invitation to drink	Pupils should tell a friend what he/she feels and the reason why
An invitation to smoke	Refuse clearly
An invitation to skip class	Pupil should ask his/her friend's opinion on the invitation
An invitation to go out late at night (against your parents wishes)	Talk to a friend about accepting/refusing
	If the friend insists or is insulting, the pupil should try to ignore them.
An invitation to spend a night at a friend's house	Concentrate on refusal: » repeat refusal – say goodbye and walk away » negotiate and invite the person to do another activity » postpone answer in order to change the friend's intention

Source: Adolescent Mental Health Promotion. Trainer's Guide on Handling Peer Pressure. World Health Organisation. Regional Office for South-East Asia, 2003.

2.9 Healthy lifestyle

The benefits of a health lifestyle

Socioeconomic changes and globalisation have resulted in altered dietary patterns and increased dependence on convenience food and eating out. Diets in many European countries have become richer in saturated fat and animal proteins, whereas the consumption of vegetables, protein, complex carbohydrates and unsaturated fat has decreased. Eating habits in the modern lifestyle have become more uniform. In addition, children eat too much sugar and fat and not enough healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables.

A healthy lifestyle helps ensure physical and mental health. Although personal choice greatly influences an individual's health, it also influences overall life expectancy and community health. A nutritious diet, regular physical activity and efficient coping skills promote a healthy lifestyle. These factors also reduce the risk of developing a chronic disease. Public health professionals, general practitioners and the media frequently repeat messages that support a healthy lifestyle and healthy behaviours. However, in order to change an unhealthy lifestyle to a healthier one, several steps are recommended. The Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change in health psychology assesses readiness to act on a new healthier behaviour. It is also known as the "stages of change model" (SCM). The idea behind it is that behavioural change does not happen in one step, but rather as a process or a series of events. The five stages of change are as follows:

1. **Pre-contemplation** (the individual has not yet considered change or consciously intends to maintain their behaviour)
2. **Contemplation** (the individual is considering making a change, but is yet to take any action)
3. **Preparation/Determination** (the individual has made a definite decision to change and is making the necessary preparations, such as buying healthier food)
4. **Action/Willpower** (the individual changes his/ her behaviour)
5. **Maintenance** (Maintaining the behaviour change)
6. **Relapse** (Returning to older behaviours and abandoning the new changes)
7. **Transcendence** (the bad habit is no longer an integral part of the individual's life)

An individual can move through the stages many times before successfully consolidating change. Individuals will not maintain permanent changes to a healthier lifestyle without first changing their attitude. A positive attitude and a belief that the goals can be achieved is essential.

Healthy nutrition

Healthy nutrition requires an appropriate dietary intake of energy in the form of macronutrients and an adequate intake of essential nutrients including vitamins, trace elements, minerals, essential fatty acids and essential amino acids. A good diet provides a balanced supply of nutrients in sufficient amounts to promote optimal growth and development, to prevent nutrient deficiencies and to optimise the prevention of chronic diseases. An individual's requirements for nutrients are related to their energy requirements, age, gender, height and weight. Lifestyle factors, such as regular physical activity also affect nutrient requirements. There is no single food that contains all nutrients in optimal quantities for maintaining health under all conditions. Therefore, healthy nutrition requires that we eat a variety of foods

to maintain a good balance of nutrients. In addition, there are no good or bad foods. Each food plays its part in providing balance, although some foods are better suppliers of nutrients than others.

Physical activity

Physical activity must be integrated in daily life so that fits in with an individual's lifestyle. The beneficial effects of regular physical activity are noticeable in terms of weight management and mental wellbeing. Research has shown that regular aerobic exercise raises self-esteem, relieves the symptoms of depression and improves concentration (Biddle and Ekkekakis, 2007). Physical activity has a positive effect on the brain, encouraging the release of particular chemicals known as neurotransmitters, which affect mood and thinking. An active individual will tend to deal more efficiently with life problems and challenges. The World Health Organisation recommends that everyone should engage in at least 30 minutes of daily moderate physical activity. Moderate-intensity physical activity is defined as that which raises the heartbeat and leaves the individual slightly out of breath. Children and young people should have at least 60 minutes of daily moderate-intensity physical activity. This helps to enhance and maintain muscular strength, flexibility and bone health (Biddle and Ekkekakis, 2007).

The importance of healthy eating

Children need nutritious food and proper dietary habits in order to stay healthy, and to grow and develop. Eating well means that a child is receiving enough foods from all the food groups such as grains (cereals, breads), vegetables and fruits, milk and milk products, and meat and other protein alternatives (fish, nuts, beans). Healthy eating does not mean that children should be forced to eat foods that they do not like. The most important thing is to feed them well and to help them learn to make healthy choices. The factors that greatly influence the dietary habits of pupils include; family, school, peers and the media. All these domains are supposed to be a source of advocacy for healthy nutrition and a healthy lifestyle for children from an early age. Yet there is a trend of reduced fruit and vegetable intake in children and increased consumption of fast food and soft drinks. This phenomenon may be partially explained by a desire to show independence, autonomy and resistance to parents. Nowadays families are more likely to choose fast or convenience foods over cooking family meals. Other children rarely eat cooked meals which consist of a variety of foods. This may be due to the fast pace of daily life and the fact that both parents are usually working full-time. Often school kitchens prepare or hand out refreshments such as sandwiches, snacks, pizza and soda. In addition, this food is mostly eaten by pupils from the lower grades, whereas most of older pupils buy something to eat from local shops. Children are also subject to peer influence and to aggressive media promotion of diverse refreshments, fast food, snacks and other refined high energy foods.

Steps to changing dietary habits

Lifestyle reflects the norms and values of the community to which the individual belongs. Therefore, health promotion should be directed at both the individual and the community. School staff and family members should be aware of the importance of planning meals, and preparing home cooked food. If a child eats well, he/she feels better and has more energy.

At the individual level, it is necessary to start with the education in life-skills that is already in place in schools. Children should practice decision-making and coping with peer pressure as part of healthy lifestyle behaviour (healthy diet, regular physical activity). Another focus of health promotion should

be specifically directed at the immediate community so as to provide an adequate social environment with healthy alternatives (healthy school meals, facilities for physical exercise in school surroundings, no vending machines with soft drinks in schools). The health benefits of healthy nutrition extends to having positive effects on pupils' behaviour. The immediate environments such as the family, the school, the peer-group and the community have to ensure that there is a range of alternative positive choices for pupils and students. Schools and families should start with small changes in daily life (changes in daily menus) and develop achievable goals in changing childrens' dietary patterns. It is a good idea to make a record of the child's bad dietary habits (skipping breakfast or lunch, eating too much refined carbohydrates, or too little fresh fruits and vegetables). When a child has managed to introduce one better habit (eat salad for lunch instead of french fries), he/ she is ready to start with the new positive change. A nutritious diet will promote positive feelings and good mental health, making the new healthier lifestyle easier to adopt. Recommendations for encouraging healthy nutrition among children are:

- **A varied diet**
- **Regular breakfast:** Provides morning energy, kick starts the metabolism, stabilises energy for the day and improves the ability to focus and concentrate at work or in school. Examples of good breakfasts include foods high in fibre and protein such as whole grain breads, cereals (oatmeal, muffins), yogurt, eggs, vegetables and fruits.
- **Regular meals:** It is advisable not to skip meals. Having regular meals helps prevent overeating at the next sitting. Eat every 3-4 hours (breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner). Recommended snacks include fruit, vegetables, nuts and protein bars. Avoid foods high in sugar, salt and oils.
- **Appropriate liquid and water intake:** Required daily intake of liquid depends on the child's weight, physical activity, the weather and temperature. Water is recommended as the best drink for satisfying liquid needs. In addition, water can also be consumed from different sources such as fruits, vegetables and other beverages.

Programmes on healthy lifestyles should aim to promote the adoption of healthy nutrition habits and regular physical activity (60 min/ daily). For younger age groups, physical activity is promoted through games rather than through basic sports. In adolescence, some structured training programmes should be followed. The daily activities of children and adolescents should include 8-10 hours of sleep and rest and 5-8 hours at school, depending on the school system. Most experts agree that sedentary behaviours should be reduced to less than 2 hours per day (González-Gross et al., 2008).

The habits and needs of the children in the classroom should be analysed and their needs in relation to nutrition and physical activity assessed. It is necessary to increase awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyle promotion at the local community level. Health promotion programmes on nutritional and physical activity should be organised with the local community and parents.

The Healthy Lifestyle Pyramid

Recent data has indicated that children and adolescents do not follow recommendations for a healthy lifestyle (healthy eating, regular physical activity). This indicates that there remains a need for public health initiatives to promote healthier lifestyles. In 2008, the "Healthy lifestyle" pyramid was developed specifically for children and adolescents, as an education tool for promoting healthy lifestyles (González-Gross et al., 2008). The Pyramid consists of 4 faces and a base: 1) daily intake, 2) daily activities, 3) food pyramid, 4) hygiene and health, and the base refers to healthy growth (González-Gross et al., 2008). The food guide pyramid for children and adolescents is presented below.



Figure 2.11 Food guide pyramid for children and adolescents (Face 3 from the pyramid). This is an adaptation of the traditional food guide pyramid, adjusted to children’s energy, nutrient and hydration needs (González-Gross et al., 2008).

2.10 Building partnerships with parents

The importance of involving parents in education

According to Hughes and MacNaughton (1999), parents play three significant roles in relation to their children’s education: parents as teachers; parents as programme collaborators; and parents as decision-makers.

The most common type of parental involvement is that which relates to their children’s education, as expressed in the widely-used term “Parent as Teacher” (PAT). Parents are invited or expected to teach their young children a variety of subjects. PAT/PALT (Parent as Literacy Teacher) programmes are generally home-based, but in some programmes, parents also participated in classroom teaching. Sometimes parents are also expected to become experts in child development to facilitate and assess children’s development.

The second most common type of parental involvement relates to democratic decision-making in the management of schools. This kind of involvement was often linked with the third most common type of engagement, where the parental role involves collaborating with staff to educate and care for their children. There are a number of reasons why it is important that parents and school staff collaborate with regards to children’s education:

- Parents have specific knowledge of their children that is derived from their parental relationship with them;
- Parents have a right to know what happens to their children when they attend school;
- Parents have a right to say what happens to their children;

There are also other terms used when describing teacher-parent relationships (e.g. collaboration, co-operation). Hence, the significant question appears to be: How can the relationship between teachers and parents be defined? Is a cooperative relationship between parents and teachers the most useful? In some cases, particularly when working with parents who have special needs children, or those who do not deal successfully with their children's challenging behaviour, the relationship between teachers and parents could be described as supportive.

The positive effects of parental involvement

Many research studies indicate that parental involvement has a number of positive effects on children's education. Smith and colleagues (2011, pp.72-73) note that in both academic and behavioural research, studies have revealed that parental involvement is related to a host of student achievement indicators, including better grades, attendance, attitudes, expectations, homework completion, and state test results. Additional academic outcomes such as lower dropout rates, fewer detentions and fewer special education placements have also been found (Smith, 2011).

Notice

Studies have revealed that parental involvement is related to a host of student achievement indicators, including better grades, attendance, attitudes, expectations, homework completion, and state test results. Additional academic outcomes such as lower dropout rates, fewer detentions, and fewer special education placements have been found as well" Smith, 2011.

Additionally, parental involvement also appears to have a positive influence on students' behaviour. Smith quotes from research carried out by Brody (1999), who found that "parenting practices contributed to an increase in students' ability to self-regulate behaviour. Higher levels of social skills and improved overall behaviour were also documented, e.g. reduced students' disruptive behaviour in the classroom" (Smith et al, 2011, pp.72-73).

Notice

"Parenting practices contributed to an increase in students' ability to self-regulate behaviour. Higher levels of social skills and improved overall behaviour were also documented e.g. reduced students' disruptive behaviour in the classroom" (Smith et al, 2011).

Parental involvement is associated with higher academic achievement among children and adolescents, as well as improved performance in terms of academic success, including improved school attendance and behaviour, more positive perceptions of the classroom and school climate, stronger self-regulatory skills, better work orientation, and higher educational aspirations.

There are also other important reasons for enhancing the quality of teacher-parent relationships. Par-

ents and teachers are both responsible for educating and socialising children. Sharing this task can be problematic and often leads to communication difficulties. When teachers were asked to cite reasons for job dissatisfaction, many respondents reported problems associated with parents. According to Polish research (e.g. Pyzalski & Plichta 2007), contact with “difficult” parents is one of the most burdening parts of a teacher’s work.

Notice

“Parents who feel excluded from their children's educational experience express a lack of confidence in the school. Children may experience increased behavioral and academic difficulties when their parents and teachers are in conflict” (Vickers & Minke, 1995, pp. 133-150).

Building collaboration with parents and facing the challenges

There are a number of different activities involved in the parent/ teacher relationship. It is important to note that parents should not be restricted to one single form of involvement. For example, parents might only be expected to bring their children to school ensuring they have the appropriate books, stationary, etc., with them, but they are not expected to contribute to decision-making within the school. Epstein’s model (as cited in Smith et al., 2011) can serve as a framework for examining parental involvement in schools, as well as a comparison to investigate whether or not schools develop a variety of strategies for involving parents.

Table 2.5 Epstein’s Model of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Type	Description of Type	Examples
Type 1	Basic obligations of families	Tending to children’s basic needs such as health and safety
Type 2	Basic obligations of schools	Communication between school and family such as memos, phone calls, report cards, and parent–teacher conferences
Type 3	Involvement at school	Volunteering at the school to assist teachers in the classroom or attending school events
Type 4	Involvement in learning activities at home	Helping children with homework
Type 5	Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy	Serving in a parent–teacher association (PTA), on committees, or in other leadership positions
Type 6	Collaboration and exchanges with community organisations	Making connections with organisations that share responsibility for children’s education, such as after-school programmes, health services, and other resources

Source: Smith et al, p. 78 The School Community Journal, 2011, Vol. 21, No. 1

Seitsinger and colleagues (2008) found that despite the benefits of parental involvement, parents and teachers have reported barriers to effective involvement, across varied cultures and groups within cultures. These barriers include: differences between parental goals and school goals in relation to children's education, language differences, and varied structural constraints (e.g., school accessibility limited to workday hours). Parents may also experience barriers due to intervening family commitments (e.g. infant or elder care), or practical and personal issues (e.g. reduced access to transportation, low levels of education). Teachers may also have to contend with pragmatic, psychological and cultural barriers in relation to parental involvement.

Powell (as cited in Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006: 187) proposes that teacher beliefs about parents and families are strongly influenced by current and past contextual and cultural factors. There are two paradigms which refer to the type of relationship which exists between parents and the teacher: the first is the **teacher-dominant family involvement paradigm**, in which the teacher is always the decision-maker and there is no attempt to create a partnership with parents (Comer, as cited in Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006: 187); the second is the **ecological/empowerment paradigm**. This model "emphasises the existing power of parents and families, and creates empowerment strategies where they can use their skills and talents in diverse and culturally responsive modes".

An additional influencing factor is the way in which **school culture** impacts upon teachers' beliefs. "If the norms of the school signal to parents that their roles are limited and do not involve leadership, then teachers receive distorted messages about how to approach and develop meaningful parent and family involvement. A norm of parent-teacher isolation can easily become the accepted standard. In effect, a self-fulfilling prophecy of very limited roles for parents can become the primary way of functioning... In some cases a self-fulfilling prophecy of negative parent and family involvement happens because teachers have experienced a few negative involvement situations. These negative experiences may create a "stereotype" in some teachers regarding the process of parent and family involvement. Teachers may start out less than enthusiastic about parental partnerships and then have this reticence reinforced by bad situations or those about which they lack understanding" (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006: 187-188). Poor training or a lack of training is also a problem for many teachers (during teacher training, 84% of Polish teachers were not taught how to cooperate with students' families (Melzer, as cited in Śliwerski, 2004)).

According to Seitsinger and colleagues (2008), teachers may avoid involving parents because:

- They do not receive enough practical support for the extra activities of parental involvement programmes
- They may have limited experience or skills would likely give up if their initial efforts do not prove successful
- Past encounters suggest that parental involvement will not lead to positive results;
- They may not possess the skills needed to deal with 'non-traditional' families and may struggle to work productively with families which are perceived as 'different'.

According to Souto-Manning & Swick (2006), there are six key elements involved in implementing an **empowerment paradigm** with parents and families. Unlike the teacher-dominant family involvement paradigm, the activities related to this paradigm should include a focus on:

- The strengths of the child and his/her family
- An inclusive approach where all families are validated and engaged in a partnership
- The recognition and valuing of multiple venues and formats for involvement

- A lifelong learning approach in which the teacher learns alongside children and families
- Trust-building through collaborative schemes and through the recognition of multiple family involvement definitions and paradigms
- Linguistic and cultural appreciation, recognition, and reflective responsiveness

Below are a few remarks relating to implementation issues (Plichta, 2009):

- The steps taken should concern particular teachers (individual level), as well as the whole institution (organisational level);
- Once the school sets out to improve relations with parents, it is advisable to consider the parents' perspective (apprehensions, fears, concerns for their children, e.g. how my child will perform his or her duties?)
- Some parents (especially those who had negative educational experiences) may take the view that school experiences are generally negative
- Parents of poor students generally receive more negative information from teachers
- According to Polish research (Melzer, cited in Śliwerski, 2004), 77.3% of parents reported feeling inferior to teachers
- Parents' expectations are not restricted to receiving current information on their child's progress or about potential problems. First of all, some parents need help answering particular questions from their children; they want to know how they can help their children. They need the support and understanding of teachers and their feelings should be respected. Parents do not want to be blamed if their children are experiencing problems.

Why parents might view contact with school staff negatively

- The teacher might have poor communication skills (e.g. he/she may have compared one child with another; they may have been too authoritative during a conversation with a parent; or the teacher may only remark on the negative aspects of the child's behaviour rather than the positive ones)
- Teachers' assumptions and perceived stereotypes about parents (e.g. the "demanding parent" stereotype)
- Autocratic (Patronising) teacher attitude
- Reluctance of the teacher to admit being wrong or having made a mistake. Sometimes teachers tend to deny that they lack knowledge or competence in regards to certain educational or school related issues
- Teachers' perception of parents - Teachers may see parents in a less positive light (Babiuch, 2003)
- Teachers may feel like they are being evaluated by parents (Babiuch, 2003);
- Approximately 30% of teachers rate parental support as insufficient (Pyżalski, 2007);
- Teachers report a lack or low level of parental interest in school-related issues that involve their children. Some parents only take an interest when their children have serious educational and behavioural problems

The relationship between teachers and parents may cause conflict or misunderstandings. It is important to consider three kinds of satisfaction in conflict resolution (E.&Z. Czwartosz, 2003):

- Substantial (material) satisfaction
- Procedural satisfaction
- Psychological satisfaction

Kielin (2002) suggests that teachers develop a list of goals in relation to working with parents. As a result of teachers engaging with them, parents should:

- Be familiar with what teachers try to teach children, e.g. to know how to carry out a particular exercise with a child (**practical goal**);
- Understand what the purpose of the acquired skills is (**cognitive goal**);
- Believe what children learn is important (**emotional goal**);

When working with parents, teachers should try to meet all of these goals.

2.11 Classroom management

Discipline management

Along with dealing with students' misbehavior, one of the most important skills for successful teaching is the ability to provide a structured educational process utilising proper teaching methods. Jacek Pyżalski (2005, p. 197) notes, "It is impossible to begin and proceed with any teaching process without a certain amount of order and discipline. However, the quantity and quality of strategies and methods undertaken by teachers to provide discipline are varied and based on different (and competing) educational paradigms".

Notice

"Of all of the activities that comprise the role of a teacher, classroom discipline is one of the most significant. In selecting an approach to classroom discipline, some teachers experience, and have to deal with, tensions arising from their desire to use educationally justifiable modes while still quickly gaining and maintaining order in the classroom....Discipline can be distinguished from the broader area of classroom management in that the latter emphasises the provision of quality instruction as a means of minimising disruption in classrooms, whereas discipline is generally represented as what teachers do in response to students' misbehavior (e.g. answering back and chatting between friends etc.)". Ramon Lewis (1999, p. 155-157).

It should be stressed that students' misbehaviors are more like a continuum than a "fixed", coherent set of actions. These range from behaviours that are relatively trivial, such as talking during class, or disrupting the class by arriving late, making noise or using a mobile phone, to more serious behaviours such as, ignoring or refusing to comply with the teacher's instructions, making verbal threats towards classmates,

leaving the classroom without the teacher's permission, destroying school property, throwing things in the classroom, behaving as if he/or she is on drugs or alcohol and making verbal threats towards the teacher¹.

Notice

"Despite an understanding that classroom management is a complex set of skills that includes much more than being able to influence and control student behaviour, there remains an overall impression that classroom management is primarily about discipline.... Disciplines most typical current meaning seems to be most associated with the notion of bringing children into line; how teachers accomplish that is often determined by their assumptions about how children learn, grow, and develop. Texts on classroom management and discipline often suggest strategies that are organized into models that reflect philosophical approaches that are commensurate with these assumptions. On the behavioristic end of the continuum is the position that humans are by nature bad and greatly in need of control, and on the humanistic end of the continuum is the position that humans are basically good and need to be guided. Teacher beliefs and assumptions about children fall somewhere along this continuum, and ultimately these philosophical assumptions are likely to influence the discipline model or management practices that a teacher chooses to employ. On the humanistic end of the continuum are democratic models that see misbehavior as an opportunity to learn. On the behavioristic end of the continuum are strategies that make use of punishment, coercion, and rewards. Thus, how a teacher manages student behaviour is impacted by his or her assumptions about children, the models he or she adopts, and the strategies that are commensurate with these models" (Allen, K. P., 2010, pp. 2-3).

Therefore, the method of classroom management (discipline) is always based on the accepted theory of education, and philosophical or psychological assumptions about human nature.

Discipline is needed for optimal classroom learning

Lewis and colleagues (2005) found that the issue of discipline in the classroom is of continuing interest and concern to the community. In 2002, the annual Phi Delta Kappa Polls gathered public attitudes about discipline in public school. The results indicated that students' lack of discipline ranked within the top two most serious problems confronting schools. Lewis (1999, pp. 155-156) states that the importance of classroom discipline is two-fold and that:

- "Without the order provided by effective classroom discipline there is very little opportunity for teachers to instruct students in language skills, number skills, art, music, or whatever"
- "The area of classroom discipline is integrally related to the issue of inculcating a sense of responsibility in students".

In Lewis' (1999, p.157) opinion, classroom discipline is vital and not simply because it is a means by which to influence students' behaviour and learning.

¹The examples of students' misbehaviours are taken from Jacek Pyzalski's Lodz Questionnaire of Classroom Discipline

Notice

“The ability of teachers to effectively discipline students is...integrally related to teachers’ sense of professional adequacy. Classroom discipline is a well-documented source of teacher stress and discipline issues rate consistently among the strongest of teacher stressors”. Lewis, 1999.

There may be a discrepancy between the discipline procedures adopted by a teacher and his or her idea of best practice (Lewis, 1999, p.156). Lewis emphasises that this gap can be perceived as very stressful by some teachers and quotes Pines’ opinion that “the likelihood of this would appear greater for teachers who are more idealistic, with high expectations which they attempt to achieve, as these teachers, more than others, have been reported as generally more prone to stress and burnout” (1999, p.157).

The issue of stress seems to be crucial in terms of dealing with discipline problems. According to Psunar (2009, p. 249), teachers react more seriously to bad behaviour during stressful situations and in whatever way that facilitates control of the class. Studies have also shown that “effective teachers are more consistent and proactive in classroom management as compared to less effective teachers, who are more permissive and inconsistent”, and that an effective teacher maintains clear rules and procedures and establishes credibility through fair and consistent implementation of discipline. In Psunar’s (2009, p. 249) opinion, “indulgent discipline can be just as problematic as high authority discipline, while inconsistency in enforcing the arranged rules also has a negative influence on student behaviour”. The author also cites studies which reveal that effective teachers are more consistent and proactive in classroom management as compared to less effective teachers, who are more permissive and inconsistent.

Lewis (2005, p.156) also proposes that particular disciplinary strategies (harsh and punitive disciplinary practices) can have a negative impact, creating a climate that contributes to school violence.

What is the best approach to classroom management?

When improving the management/discipline skills of teachers, the following challenges should be addressed:

- Some teachers prefer “tough”, authoritative methods when dealing with students’ disruptive behaviours. Such an approach is based on the fact that the teacher has the “formal authority”;
- Many teachers admit that they utilise, while working with students, not professional but “common”, everyday knowledge (e.g. they do not resolve conflicts according to scientific or evidence-based findings, but they undertake actions which are used by other teachers or they follow traditional practices);
- Most teachers are better prepared for the “technical” aspects of teaching (knowledge and skills related to the subject they teach), as opposed to the “soft” aspects, which are essential to the delivery of good education (e.g. communication skills, conflict resolution skills, etc.). Aforementioned issues are rooted in the quality of teachers’ education;
- Teachers who are not competent in dealing with disruptive behaviour tend to adopt very strict disciplinary methods in reaction to less serious misbehaviour;

- Teachers may overuse verbal discipline and underestimate the power of non-verbal disciplinary interventions.

According to Lewis (1999, p.156), teachers are often reluctant to implement their preferred approaches to discipline. There are a number of reasons for this, for example:

1. What a teacher sees as best practice may be inconsistent with, or in opposition to, the way they were treated during childhood;
2. Perceived institutional pressure;
3. Parents' beliefs (and students' beliefs) about the way they want students to be treated. With increasing attention being paid to the rights of children and parents in regards to schooling, the impact of their views is becoming increasingly significant;

Below are a few recommendations concerning classroom management/ disciplinary skills (see the "Roles and Skills" section for further details):

- The core element involved in implementing actions to improve and develop classroom management skills is "creating professional work environments where teachers feel supported by other professionals and school leaders in relation to their own needs for competence, autonomy, and quality relationships is essential" (Roeser et al., 2000, p. 466);
- Another important issue is the significance of cultural factors. There are countries and environments where teachers are held in very high esteem. Possibly, this is one of the factors responsible for differences in the ways students regard their teachers and express respect for them;
- The teachers should be equipped with preventative skills (in terms of students' misbehaviour) and intervention skills where necessary;
- Activities in this area should rather be an element of the bigger teachers' training curriculum rather than a separate programme on dealing with discipline problems;
- Minimise the usage of aggressive disciplinary strategies while increasing the frequency with which they recognise responsible behaviour, however rare it may be (Lewis et al, 2005);
- Give students the opportunity to voice their own point of view (Lewis et al, 2005);
- Do not use the "blame" approach and promote a "safe atmosphere"
- Among teachers, promote the "gradual approach" when dealing with the discipline problems of students (from "gentle" to "tough" techniques).

As an example of good practice, Jacek's Pyżalski's "Four Cog-Wheel Model" describes four elements which are essential for effective classroom management:

1. The personality of the teacher
2. The particular discipline technique
3. The personality of the student
4. The context of the situation.

Notice

"The discipline problems experienced by teachers in various educational settings tended to lead to publishing a great number of practical handbooks for teachers. Those publications provide many hints concerning communication (verbal and nonverbal), teaching style and teaching methods, negotiations and other ways of keeping discipline in the classroom. However, though useful for practice, they only rarely give any ethical or theoretical background. They focus mostly on effectiveness of the methods, which may cause the danger of manipulation within teacher-student relations". Pyzalski (2005, p. 199-200)

There is no universal method for dealing with misbehaviour; teachers will use whatever methods work best for them. They may use the strategies which have worked for them in the past, or they might consult more experienced teachers for guidance.

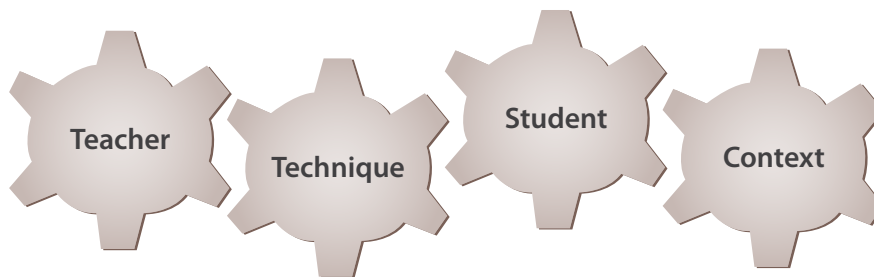


Figure 2.12 Jacek Pyzalski "The Four Cog-Wheel Model"

The main idea behind the model is that the teacher should use a disciplinary technique which is consistent with his or her personality and the personality of student. The choice of method will be influenced by the particular situation or context.

2.12 Guidelines For Handling (cyber) bullying and harassment

Internet bullying is a serious problem

School is an environment where students may experience bullying and harassment. Nowadays, the internet and mobile phones make it difficult to escape bullying. The main aim of this topic is to present bullying in general however most of this chapter is focused on cyberbullying in particular, as this has become an increasingly prevalent problem. The chapter presents definitions and descriptions of this phenomenon and, most importantly, presents possible solutions for preventing cyberbullying, i.e. international law, national legislation, online rules and regulations, education, social campaigns, technical solutions, etc. (Knol, Pyzalski, 2011; Pyzalski 2010). Bullying became a recognised problem in schools during the 1970's. Problems associated with bullying include lowered self-esteem, reduced school at-

tendance and poor academic performance (Kochenderfer, Ladd, 1996; Rigby, 1996, Smith et al., 2004). These negative impacts show that it is vital to improve students' mental wellbeing, targeting serious problems like bullying in school. As we develop more advanced information and communications technologies (ICT), new problems have emerged, including cyberbullying. The impact of cyberbullying can be as detrimental, if not more harmful, to mental health. Internet bullies have unlimited possibilities to hurt someone, i.e. via chat, an internet forum, or a social networking site. In terms of cyberbullying, people use electronic aggression, which is defined as very aggressive behaviour in which the perpetrator uses online harassment (Pyżalski, 2009) – in an intentionally aggressive manner (Pyżalski, 2009).

There are five types of electronic aggression (Pyżalski, 2011) depending on the type of victim:

- **Towards the vulnerable** – people who cannot easily defend themselves like a disabled person or an alcoholic. These people are more often exposed to acts of aggression. More information about this type of electronic aggression can be found in Plichta (2011);
- **Towards celebrities** – this type of electronic aggression mainly concerns actors, politicians, singers, etc., people who are on TV programmes or the Internet. Usually the victim and perpetrator have never met face-to-face or online, and the aggressive behaviour is not directly addressed. The perpetrator might for example put his/her comments on tabloid websites, etc.;
- **Bias bullying** – in this type of aggression, the perpetrator does not attack a person but a whole group of people who belong to a particular group, e.g. homosexuals, immigrants, feminists, etc.;
- **Random** – in this case perpetrator has never met the victim neither online nor offline. This type of bullying is very common because talking with strangers is one of the features of online communication;
- **Cyberbullying** – victim and perpetrator belong to the same social group. The origin of cyberbullying is traditional bullying which tends to be defined as the systematic and intentional abuse of power, or repeated aggression against someone who cannot easily defend himself or herself because of an imbalance of power (Olweus, 2007). There are three types of bullying: physical (hitting, kicking, pushing), verbal (insulting, gossiping, ridiculing, discrediting) and relational (excluding, ignoring) (Stassen Berger, 2007; Monks et al., 2009).

Cyberbullying, generally speaking, can be defined as an electronic version of bullying. However, researchers and practitioners investigating the area of cyberbullying are attempting to determine whether the phenomenon is accompanied by circumstances and mechanisms which do not occur in other forms of bullying (Dooley, Pyżalski & Cross, 2009). There are few differences between bullying and cyberbullying which have been revealed from content downloaded on the internet. These features were described by Boyd (2007):

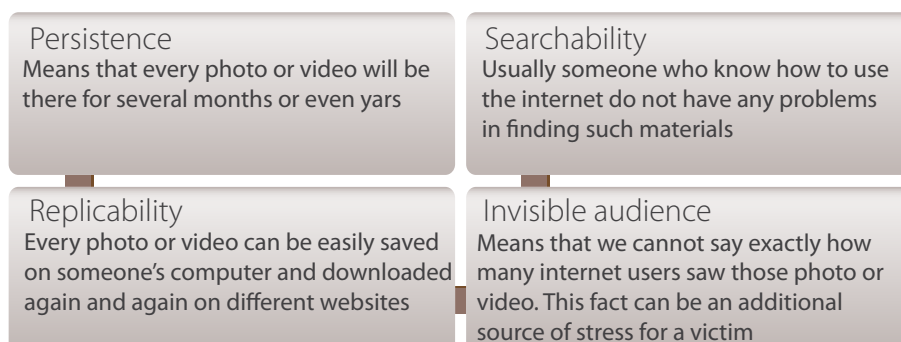


Figure 2.13 Features of content downloaded on the internet

Pyżalski (2010) proposed several methods to help reduce the spread of cyberbullying and decrease its negative results:

1. **Measures promoting the positive use of communication technologies in schools**
Introduce school projects where ICT usage is required, e.g. taking photos, making videos, setting up websites, or using the internet to contact other students (e.g. in online class forums); this may also include activities where students inform and educate teachers about ICT usage;
2. **Programmes/lessons focused on the specificity of new media as well as safe use**
Introduce educational programmes concerning the use of new media. There are two types of approach possible: 1. A programme which focuses on the negative aspects and demonstrates the potential dangers (it is not useful to present examples of electronic aggression as this may appear to be a lesson in how to perpetrate others); 2) A programme promoting responsible usage of new media. It is crucial to remember that these programmes must be tailored to suit the students' age group and their educational needs (Plichta, 2009);
3. **Co-operation with parents**
Research data has shown that only a few students tell their parents about their online experiences (Wojtasik, 2009). For that reason, being open to new media usage and professional support for parents are necessary components of any cyberbullying prevention programme and effective intervention. This may also include the education of parents in relation to new media;
4. **Technical solutions**
Cyberbullying is conducted through ICT channels so it is necessary to look for technical solutions to prevention, among others.
5. **Tackling the issue of electronic aggression through internal school regulations and procedures, as well as gaining expertise about relevant legal regulations**
Official school documents such as school rules and regulations should be reviewed with regard to cyberbullying issues.

Electronic aggression and the negative effects on victims

Students who have experienced cyberbullying tend to feel anxious and lonely. They usually have lower self-esteem and are more likely to be absent from school and perform more poorly than their peers. Students report that being a victim of cyberbullying affects their social and school life and also interferes with their mental health (Sabicka, Knol, Matuszewska, 2010). It is important to improve knowledge and increase awareness about the consequences of cyberbullying in schools. Apart from the negative outcomes mentioned above, bullying has also resulted in more serious results, namely depression and suicide. That is why it is important to provide education about this topic, especially for teachers and parents who have the opportunity to prevent bullying and intervene when they suspect that something is wrong. In order to highlight the seriousness of cyberbullying and the need for inclusion of the issue in MHP programmes, the following table presents the survey results from research on cyberbullying carried out in several schools in Poland.

Table 2.6 Victimization according to different types of electronic aggression (N=719, students of secondary school in Lodz)

Type of electronic aggression	Perpetrator ever during the lifetime
Someone has sent me a short message in order to scare me or offend	14,6
Someone has remarked on my comments on an Internet forum in unpleasant way in order to scare me or offend	12,8
Someone has commented on my profile on a social networking site (i.e. facebook) in an unpleasant way	12,0
Someone has offended me on chat	11,7
Someone has registered a false account for me on social networking site (i.e. Facebook, MySpace) in order to discredit or offend me	11,7
Someone has lied to me via the Internet or mobile phone and after that I was upset	11,5
Someone has sent me a message on Internet messenger (i.e. Skype) in order to offend or discredit me	11,4
Someone has sent me a computer virus	10,0
Someone has insulted me during online games	9,3
Someone has excluded me from his/her online group and after that I was upset	9,2
Someone has sent (without my permission) material with unpleasant content	8,0
Someone has sent (without my permission) from my e-mail inbox, unpleasant information to my mobile phone	6,7
Someone has provoked me into portraying aggressive behaviour, recorded me and put it on the Internet	6,3
Someone has sent information about me to the dating website without my permission	6,0
Someone has revealed my private correspondence/photo without my permission	5,4
Someone has put a disgraceful photo of me on the Internet	5,3
Someone has prepared video/photomontage presenting me in unpleasant way	5,1
Someone has set up a website presenting me in unpleasant way	5,0
Someone has sent me offensive message by e-mail	4,9
Someone has broken into my e-mail box and told people my secrets	4,9

Source: Pyżalski, J. Agresja elektroniczna wśród dzieci i młodzieży GWP, Gdańsk, 2011

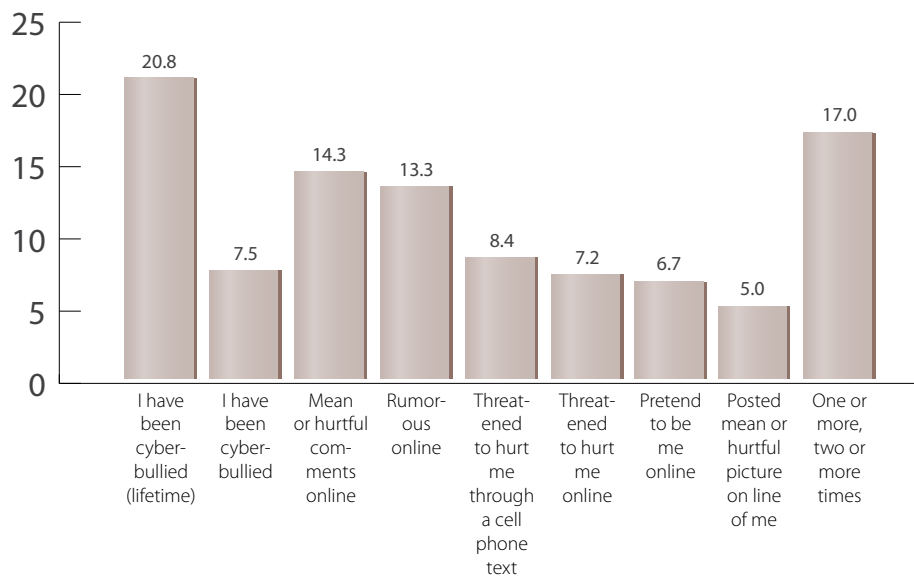


Figure 2.14 Type of cyberbullying victimization amongst students (Patchin, Hinduja, 2010)

According to research conducted by Patchin and Hinduja in 2010, more than one in five respondents aged 10-18 years have been victims of cyberbullying (sample: 4441 students).

Tackling the issue of cyberbullying in school

The implementation process is preceded by a well prepared needs analysis. It would be useful to carry out a survey which reveals the prevalence of cyberbullying among students. The results will help teachers to prepare an appropriate educational prevention programme, tailored to the problems in that particular school. This will help ensure the effectiveness of the implemented programme and produce positive results in the area of cyberbullying and bullying prevention.

In order to provide appropriate direction and to develop appropriate students' skills, teachers can use the following tips:

- Students have to be made aware of the meaning of cyberbullying and bullying;
- Students have to be made aware of specificity of online communication;
- Students have to be made aware of appropriate internet communication and rules for internet use;
- Students have to be made aware of the dangers associated with ICT usage;
- Students have to be made aware that verbal communication can be interpreted incorrectly, particularly when no non-verbal communication cues are available (body posture, tone, voice, facial expression).

Purpose of the exercises

This exercise handbook is supplementary to the Handbook for Mental Health Promotion in the School setting. The exercises presented here are linked to the topics of the handbook and it is strongly recommended that you become acquainted with the topics before you begin implementation.

The purpose of these exercises is to provide teachers and other school staff with interventions that can improve and foster the mental health and wellbeing of their students and themselves. These exercises were selected due to their practical nature, permitting a “hands-on” approach and the opportunity to incorporate these exercises into daily school life. The exercises are presented in a simple step-by-step way, making it easier to implement MHP interventions. The exercises not only describe what teachers could do, but also provide you with ready to use materials including worksheets, checklists, etc.

Structure of the exercises and how to work with them

All exercises have an identical structure which guides you through the process of implementing interventions in just a few steps. The exercises begin with a brief description of the resources and materials required to perform the exercises effectively (i.e. worksheets, checklists, etc.) and finish with references to additional information for those who wish to engage with a specific issue in more depth.

Description: The description provides an introduction to the exercise. The topic(s) relating to this exercise are noted here and the goals and learning objectives are detailed (e.g. expectations of participants, potential benefits of the exercise). There is also a description of the learning objectives and some information for the teacher.

Resources: This section describes the preparation time, didactic or working form (e.g. group work, pair-work, single work), and the recommended target group (e.g. a specification of target group/beneficiaries in the setting).

The procedure: This section provides the steps required for implementing the exercise.

Material: This part lists the material(s) required such as working sheet templates, checklists, presentations, moderation material, etc.

Remarks, Notes: In this section, recommendations are highlighted and potential challenges or stumbling blocks during implementation are also mentioned.

Variations: This section provides suggestions for variation in terms of implementing the exercise (i.e. working form, target group, different materials, less time for implementation).

Evaluation and Reflection: Following implementation, evaluation or reflection is necessary. This section encourages you to reflect on how well the exercise worked, what the outcomes were, what the user learned and how you could improve if you were to conduct the exercises again in the future.

Exercises

1. Enhancing Resilience

1 Exercise

Me and my feelings

Description

Each topic includes a warm-up exercise. Conduct the exercise in pairs or in groups, as individuals or in reflection. The exercises are based on questions and answers, discussion and role-play activities.

The exercises for promoting and strengthening resilience are based on three themes:

- Me and my feelings
- Me and my positive qualities
- Me and my social network

Learning objectives

Children should be able to recognise their own and other people's feelings and emotions. They will have learned how to express their feelings and thoughts, and listen to others. They should discuss what they like and dislike, how they would feel if presented with a difficult situation and also be able to recognise other peoples' feelings.

Information for the teacher

It is essential that children are relaxed before starting the exercises. Children should feel comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with one another. Practice with children, support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and constructive thinking. Support tolerance and be considerate of each other.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

Material	Pictures of different people expressing a variety of emotions (joy, sadness, worry, excitement, anxiety, anger) – presented on a piece of paper for every participant
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable sharing emotions with others, support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.
Variations	The teacher can also choose issues for discussion relevant to daily topics at school (i.e. conflict or a violent incident).
Evaluation, reflection	Were children able to understand and describe their feelings (YES/ NO)? Were children able to understand other people’s feelings (YES/ NO)? Were the suggested solutions win-win solutions (YES/NO)?

1) Warm-up exercise

This is a warm-up exercise that encourages children to express their thoughts, preferences and feelings. The aim of the warm-up exercise is to introduce participants to the topic.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for students of all ages (ages 7-17 years)

- The procedure**
- Ask all the children to stand up and walk around the classroom
 - Ask children to find a partner and to sit in pairs.
 - Ask children to talk to each other (allow 2-3 minutes to answer each question):
 - About the foods they like
 - About the foods they dislike
 - About things they like to do after school
 - About animals they have or what pets they would like to have
 - About their favourite TV-shows

Material	no additional material needed
Remarks, notes	no additional remarks, notes
Variations	The teacher can use other examples appropriate for the age group or daily issues at school (cars, movies, stories that children like, teachers). Children can also describe pleasant (or unpleasant) situations that happened to them the previous day. They may also describe something that they do not particularly like doing, etc.
Evaluations	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their readiness to continue. Questions: Did children talk to each other on the given topic (YES/NO)? Was 2-3 minutes enough for each question (YES/NO)?

2) Group exercise: Other people's feelings (minimum 7 years of age)

This exercise encourages children to recognise and understand other people's feelings.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15 – 20 minutes	group work, discussion	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old). With younger children (7-11 years), additional instruction is required in order to recognise people's feelings and to remember the names of feelings.

The procedure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask children to form groups of three (<i>for example with younger children (7-11 years), ask them to form groups based on the colour of their clothes</i>) Ask children to sit in a group Show them pictures (one by one) of people expressing different emotions (joy, sadness, worry, excitement, anxiety, anger) Ask the groups to describe what they see in the picture and name the possible feelings the person in the picture is displaying Write on the board what the children have described Ask the groups why this person might feel this way Ask the children to listen to each other without commenting or asking questions Support the expression of all ideas Reflection: discuss with children: "Are all these feelings allowed?", "Why is it important to understand different feelings?"

Material no additional material needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

Variations The teacher can also choose pictures of situations where people communicate by expressing different emotions

Evaluation, reflection Did children recognise other people's feelings (YES/ NO)? Did children have ideas of possible reasons for the person's feelings (YES/ NO)? Were children ready to listen to each other (YES/NO)?
If there is at least one "NO" answer, it is essential to conduct this exercise in recognising feelings more frequently. Children should also practice listening to others.

3) Exercise: My little brother (minimum 12 years old)

Children should be able to recognise and understand their own feelings and other people's feelings in different situations

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15-20 minutes	single work, pair work, group discussion	The exercise is suitable for students aged 12 years or older

The procedure

- Ask students to sit at their desks
- Give each student a piece of paper
- Tell the following story: "Imagine that your little brother has just started school and your parents say you have to accompany him on the way to school. Your friends don't want to walk with you and they say that your brother is a "baby". You are unhappy that you can not be with your friends".
- Ask students to answer the following questions, allowing 2-3 minutes per question:
 - How do you feel in this situation?
 - How do your friends feel?
 - How do your parents feel?
 - How does your brother feel?
- Ask children to discuss this situation with their neighbour: "What could the solution to the situation be?"
- Reflection: Discuss solutions to the situation in the classroom.

Material	a piece of paper for every participant
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable sharing emotions with others, support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.
Variations	The teacher can choose alternative issues for discussion relevant to daily topics at school (conflict or a violent incident).
Evaluation, reflection	Were children able to understand and describe their feelings (YES/ NO)? Were children able to understand other people's feelings (YES/ NO)? Were the suggested solutions win-win solutions (YES/NO)?

4) Exercise: Mathematics exam (minimum 15 years of age)

Children should be able to recognise and understand their own feelings and other people's feelings in difficult situations. The exercise should help children by increasing their confidence in overcoming problems in life. In addition, children should learn how to think positively and optimistically.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15 minutes	single work, pair work, discussion	The exercise is suitable for students aged 15 years or older

The procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask pupils to sit at their desks ▪ Give each a piece of paper ▪ Tell the story: <i>"You have obtained results from a maths exam that went very badly and you have to tell your parents."</i> <p>Ask pupils to think about this situation and answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How would your parents feel? ▪ Can you think of ten reasons why your math exam results were not satisfying? ▪ Imagine that your parents are happy about your results? Think of ten reasons why they would be happy? ▪ Is it realistic that you parents would be happy in this situation? ▪ Ask the students to discuss the situation with their neighbour: <i>"Is there anything positive about this situation?"</i> ▪ Reflection: Discuss the situation in the classroom: <i>"What helps you cope with difficult situations?"</i> ▪ Write what children describe on the board
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Material	a piece of paper for every participant; a board to write children's ideas on
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Remarks, notes	no additional remarks, notes
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Variations	The teacher can also choose a situation relevant to daily topics at school.
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Evaluations	Were children able to understand and describe the feelings of others (YES/ NO)? Were the children able to find a solution to the situation (YES/ NO)? Were the suggested solutions win-win solutions (YES/NO)?
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2 Exercise

My positive qualities and me

Learning objectives

The aim of the exercise is to increase children's self-esteem. This topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and reflection. Children should be able to describe their positive attributes and recognise positive attributes in others.

Information for the teacher

It is important to encourage children to find their positive attributes. Children with low self-esteem have difficulty identifying their positive qualities. Teachers should help them to analyse themselves.

RESOURCES



Time

10 minutes

Didactic

single work, pair work

Recommended target group

The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

1) Warm-up exercise

Aim: the warm up exercise encourages children to analyse themselves. After the warm-up, participants are better able to express their personal attributes.

- The procedure**
- Put pictures of animals on the table
 - Ask students to choose one of the pictures. They should consider: "Which animal is most similar to you?"
 - Ask children to find a partner and sit in pairs
 - Ask children to talk to each other, exploring the following questions:
 - Why is this animal similar to you?
 - Why is the animal necessary in nature?
 - Reflection: discuss with children: "Are all animals needed in nature in their own way?"

Material pictures of animals, 2-3 pictures for each child.

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

Variations The teacher can use material appropriate for the age group.

Evaluation The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their readiness to continue. Questions: Did children talk about themselves (YES/NO)? If not, maybe it would be useful to repeat the exercise two or three times, asking different questions.

2) Exercise: What do I do very well? (minimum 7 years of age)

This exercise helps children identify what they are really good at and helps them focus on their strengths. It should help them feel positive about themselves and increase their confidence in relation to overcoming potential problems or life challenges.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10-15 minutes	single work	The exercise is suitable for students of all ages (minimum 7 years)

The procedure

- Ask the children to sit at their desks
- Give each child a piece of paper
- Ask children to answer the following questions, giving 2-3 minutes for each question:
 - What are your best attributes? Please write five attributes.
 - What are you really good at? Please list five examples.
 - What do other people appreciate about you? Please list five examples.
- Ask children to select three positive attributes of what they are specifically proud of.
- Ask children to write them on coloured paper
- Ask children to write their the name on the paper
- Hang these on the wall and look at all the positive attributes together
- Discuss with children: Why are these positive attributes necessary? How can we use them in every day life?

Material piece of paper for each child

Remarks, notes Some children experience difficulty when asked to identify their positive attributes. The teacher can help them. Positive attributes are associated with resilience and develop through the child's life experiences.

Variations The teacher can also choose a question which helps increase a child's self-esteem. Children can also answer questions like: Why does my friend like spending time with me?

Evaluations The teacher should observe the children during the exercise. Questions: Did children identify their positive qualities (YES/NO)? Was it difficult for them (YES/NO)? If it was difficult you should do these kinds of exercises more frequently.

3 Exercise

My social network and me

Description

The topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and reflection. The exercises are based on questions and answers, discussion and role-play activities.

Learning objectives

The aim of the exercises: to encourage children to create meaningful relationships. The children should understand the importance of trust and confidence in the relationships in their lives. A strong social support network can be critical to helping a child through stressful times.

This topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs, a group exercise, an individual exercise and a reflection exercise.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	individual work, pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

1) Warm-up exercise

The aim: to encourage children to think about their friends and family. This is a warm up exercise which helps build a connection between children and teachers.

RESOURCES



Time

10 minutes

Didactic

discussions in pairs

Recommended target group

The exercise is suitable for students of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

The procedure

- Ask everyone to find a partner
- Provide a topic for discussion: *Who is your best friend? Describe his/her best attributes* (Give 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
- Ask everyone to find a partner
- Provide a topic for discussion: *Who is your best friend? Describe his/her best attributes* (Give 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
- Ask children to thank their partner and then to find a new partner for the next discussion topic.
- Provide the second topic for discussion: *What kind of attributes make a good friend? Are you a good friend?* (Allow 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
- Ask children to thank their partner and then to find a new partner for the final discussion topic.
- The final topic is: *“What can we do to have good friends?”*
- Continue with the next exercise.

Material

no additional material needed

Remarks, notes

no additional remarks, notes

Variations

The teacher can use other issues appropriate for the age group or daily topics at school. The topics should be related to social networks.

Evaluations

The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their readiness to continue. Questions: Did children talk to each other about the topic (YES/NO)? Was 2-3 minutes enough time for discussion (YES/NO)?

2) Exercise: “Spaceship” (minimum 7 years old)

The aim of the exercise: to encourage children to create meaningful relationships. The children should understand the meaning of trust and a trusting relationship in their lives.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20 minutes	individual work, discussion	The exercise is suitable for students aged 7 years or older

The procedure	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask the students to sit at their desks ▪ Give each person a piece of paper and a pencil (or use their own pencils) ▪ Ask the pupils to draw a spaceship. The spaceship should be as beautiful as they can imagine. They should draw all details that they need for a secure flight. Allow children some time for drawing (about 15 minutes). ▪ Now tell them the following story: <i>“Your spaceship is beautiful and ready for a secure flight. In two days you will be flying to the other planet. You are unable to manage by yourself and you need a good team for the flight. You have to prepare the best team.</i> ▪ Ask the children: <i>How will you choose the best team members for your flight? Which attributes should the team members have?</i> ▪ Now ask the children to choose 8-10 members for the team (friends and family members). Ask the children to write the names of the team members on the back of the picture. ▪ Ask the children to find a partner ▪ Ask them to show and describe their spaceship and their team. ▪ Discuss with students what the teams have in common.

Material	no additional materials needed
Remarks, notes	The teacher should explain to the children that social networks can play an important role during times of stress and that a social network is something that people can develop (i.e. a simple phone call to your friends, etc).
Variations	The teacher can use other examples appropriate for the age group.
Evaluations	The teacher should observe the children during the exercises. Questions: Did children talk to each other about the given topic (YES/NO)? Do all children have team members (YES/NO)? If they did not, the teacher should help the child to find some friends for his/her team.

2. Building coping skills (stress, change and challenges)

Description

The aim of these exercises is to develop successful skills for coping with stress, change and challenge. Each topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and a reflection discussion. The exercises are based on questions and answers, discussions and role-play activities.

Learning Objectives

Children should be able to manage life challenges and conflict situations effectively and in a way that is considerate of the rights of others. They should learn to follow rules, to deal with peer pressure and be able to cope with teasing. They should be able to find solutions for difficult situations that may arise in life.

Information for the teacher

It is essential that children are relaxed before starting the exercises. Children should feel comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with one another. Support the expression of ideas and behaviours in order to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking. Support tolerance of, and consideration for each other.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	single work, pair work	The exercises are suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

Material	Young people's magazines with colour images.
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable sharing emotions with others, support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.
Variations	The teacher can introduce other issues appropriate for the age group or daily topics at school. The topics should be related to coping skills (dealing with problems, dealing with peer pressure).

Evaluation, reflection Were children able to understand the other person's feelings (YES/ NO)? Were children able to find constructive solutions for this situation (YES/ NO)? Possible outcomes of the exercise are not expected immediately. The teacher can lead the discussion and encourage children to contribute.

1) Warm up exercise

The name of the warm up exercise is *"Meetings with classmates"*. The aim of the exercise is to encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings. A warm-up exercise is important for participants so that they become familiar with the topic.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	discussions in pairs	The exercise is suitable for students of all ages (minimum 7 years of age)

- The procedure**
- Ask all the children to stand up and find a partner
 - Provide the topic for the first discussion: *How was your day (what positive things have happened, what negative things happened?)* (give 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
 - Ask children to thank their partner and then to find another partner.
 - Suggest a topic for the second discussion: *What kind of people do you like to communicate with?* (give 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
 - Ask children to thank their partner and then to find a third partner.
 - Provide the topic for the third discussion: *What kind of people do you find difficult to communicate with? What makes it difficult?* (give 2-3 minutes for the discussion)
 - Ask children to thank their partner and then to find a fourth partner.
 - The following topics are: *"If you need help, the first person whom you would ask for help from is..."*
 - Ask students to form groups of three (for example with younger children (7-11 years) ask them to form groups based on the colour of their clothes).
 - Ask children to sit in a group
 - Continue with the exercise "How to deal with peer pressure?"

Material no additional material needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

Variations The teacher can use other issues appropriate for the age group or daily topics at school. The topics should be related to coping skills (dealing with problems, dealing with peer pressure).

Evaluations	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their readiness to continue. Questions: Did children talk to each other about the topic (YES/NO)? Was 2 minutes enough time for the discussion (YES/NO)?
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2) Exercises: How to deal with peer pressure (minimum 7 years of age)

The aim of the exercise is to encourage children to deal with problems that they encounter in life - peer pressure, teasing, conflict situations.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20 minutes	group work, discussion	This exercise is suitable for children aged 7 years or older

The procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children are sitting in groups ▪ Tell the following story: “Tom’s father has always said that using force to resolve a conflict is wrong. Tom had a disagreement with his classmate, who challenged Tom to fight after school. Tom knows that if he refuses, the classmate will start teasing him and tell everyone that Tom is a coward”. ▪ Ask students to discuss this situation in groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Tom feel in this situation? • What could Tom do? • Who should Tom talk to about this situation? • Propose ways of solving this problem, happily, without fighting. ▪ Reflection: Discuss solutions to the problem in the classroom.
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Material	no additional material needed
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Remarks, notes	Students should feel comfortable sharing thoughts with one another. Support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours, to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.
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Variations	The teacher can also choose stories for the discussion that are relevant to daily topics at school.
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Evaluations	Were children able to understand Tom’s feelings (YES/ NO)? Were children able to find constructive solutions for this situation (YES/ NO)? Possible outcomes of the exercise are not expected immediately. The teacher can lead the discussion and encourage children to contribute.
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3) Exercise: Young people in the year 2012 (minimum 14 years of age)

The aim of this exercise is to encourage children to talk about problems that may arise in their everyday lives. The children are asked to discuss issues which can cause stress in young people lives.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
25-30 minutes	group work, discussion	The exercise is suitable for students aged 14 years or older.

The procedure

- Ask all students to stand up and walk around the classroom
- Ask participants to form groups of four people and sit in their groups
- Give each group six or seven youth magazines (youth magazines with colourful pictures), a scissors, glue, and an A3 sheet of paper
- Ask the groups to design a collage based on the topic "Young people in the year 2012". What are the characteristics of young people? What are their interests, concerns and joys?
- Ask the groups to show and describe their collages.
- Discuss the following: What do the pictures contain? Are there any common interests, concerns and joys?
- Reflection, discuss with participants: What helps young people when they have concerns? Who can help? What may happen when children have too much stress in their lives?

Material different youth magazines with colourful pictures.

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

Variations The children may also draw pictures on the same theme

3. Empowering decision-making, problem solving and help-seeking

Description

The topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and reflection. The exercises are based on questions and answers, discussions and role-play activities.

Learning objectives

Children should be able to think independently and solve problems. In this exercise, they learn to generate ideas for coping with new challenges. Children should be capable of considering all the options available to them before solving the problem.

Information for the teacher

It is essential that children are relaxed before beginning the exercises. Children should feel comfortable sharing thoughts with one another. All responses should be kept confidential within the group. It is important that children are not allowed to comment on or laugh at other student's responses.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20-30 minutes	pair work	The exercises are suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)
Material	No additional material needed	
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable sharing emotions with others, support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.	
Variations	The teacher can use other issues appropriate for the age group or daily topics at school. The topics should be related to coping skills (i.e. dealing with peer pressure).	
Evaluation, reflection	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise. Questions for the evaluation: Did children find a solution to this situation (YES/NO)? Was it too difficult for them (YES/NO)? If the task proved difficult, you should do these kinds of exercises more frequently and you should also talk about agencies/services that can help students in these kinds of situations.	

1) Warm up exercise

The aim: it is a warm-up exercise that encourages children to recognise and express their emotions.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

The procedure

- As students to find a partner and sit in pairs
- Ask them to discuss the following issue: *In which situations might we need other people's support or help?*
- Ask them to think of a situation when they really needed someone's support, help or advice. Ask them to describe this situation in pairs.
- Ask the students whether they received the necessary support in this situation? If they didn't, what was missing?
- How did they feel when they received support?
- Reflection: discuss with children. Ask do they know of agencies that can help a child with a difficult situation?

Material no additional materials needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

2) Exercise: How can we ask for help? (minimum 7 years of age)

The aim: to encourage children to ask for help in difficult situations and solve problems in a creative way. Children will learn several means by which to seek help.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

The procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask the children to find a partner and sit in pairs ▪ Give each pair a sheet of paper with the following story: <i>Imagine that you lost sight of your mother in the supermarket. Please suggest some ways in which you might find your mother.</i> ▪ Write all the solutions on the board ▪ If children do not find appropriate solutions, offer some suggestions as to how they might find their mother.
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Material	no additional materials needed
Remarks, notes	no additional remarks, notes
Variations	The teacher can also use the solution cards with younger children. The solution cards may give some examples about possible solutions and children can evaluate whether these solutions are effective.
Evaluations	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise. Questions for the evaluation: Did children find a solution to this situation (YES/NO)? Was it too difficult for them (YES/NO)? If it was difficult, you should do these kinds of exercises more frequently and you should talk about agencies that can help children in these kinds of situations.

3) Exercise: Doctor or businessman (minimum 14 years old)

The aim: to encourage children to solve problems and ask for help when they are in trouble. Encourage children to communicate with people who can help them in difficult situations, think of solutions and alternatives.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

The procedure

- Ask children to find a partner and sit in pairs
- Give each pair a sheet of paper with the following story: "Ken is smart, intelligent and gets good grades at school. Maths is his favourite subject. He wants to become a businessman in the future, but his father wants him to become a doctor. This contradiction between the father and Ken causes lots of different emotions in the family".
- Questions for the discussion:
 - How might Ken feel in this situation?
 - What should Ken say to convince his father?
 - How might the father feel in this situation?
 - Why does Ken's father want him to become a doctor?
 - How could they find a solution to this problem?
- Write all the solutions on the board.
- Now ask the class to choose the best solution for this situation
- Reflection: Discuss the solutions for the situation in the classroom.

Material no additional material needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks, notes

Variations The teacher can choose stories relevant to the age group.

Evaluations Were children able to understand and describe their own and other people's feelings in difficult situation? Did the children analyse different solutions? Were the solutions identified using the win-win principle?

4. Handling emotions

Description

The topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and reflection. The exercises are based on questions and answers, discussions and role play activities.

Learning objectives

This exercise teaches children to better understand and recognise their own and other peoples' emotions. This will enable them to express feelings, release emotions and to identify solutions to problems they encounter.

Information for the teacher

It is essential that children are relaxed before starting the exercises. Children should feel comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with one another. All responses should be kept confidential within the group. It is important that children are not allowed to comment on or laugh at the responses of others.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	single work, pair work	The exercises are suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)
Material	Pictures of people expressing different emotions, three pieces of A4 paper for each pupil, pencils.	
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable sharing emotions with others; support original and distinctive ideas and behaviours to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking.	
Variations	The teacher can use other issues appropriate for the age group or daily topics at school.	
Evaluation, reflection	Were students able to understand the other person's feelings (YES/ NO)? Were students able to find constructive solutions to the problem (YES/ NO)? Possible outcomes of the exercise are not expected immediately. The teacher can lead the discussion and encourage children to interact.	

1) Warm up exercise

Aim: This is a warm-up exercise that encourages children to recognise and express their emotions.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
25 minutes	single work, pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years of age)

- The procedure**
- Show the students pictures of people expressing different emotions (joy, sadness, worry, excitement, anxiety, anger)
 - Ask the children to describe what they see in the picture and name the possible feelings being expressed by people in the pictures.
 - Support the expression of all ideas
 - Give each child an A4 sheet of paper and pencils.
 - Write the word "Sadness" on the board
 - Ask the students to: *"Remember a situation when you were sad. Choose the colours that express sadness in your opinion. Close your eyes and draw what sadness looks like."* Allow 4-5 minutes for drawing.
 - When children have finished, give them another worksheet
 - Write the word "Happiness" on the board
 - Ask the students to: *"Remember a situation when you were happy. Choose the colours that express happiness in your opinion. Close your eyes and draw what happiness looks like."* Allow 4-5 minutes for drawing.
 - Give each child another worksheet
 - Write the word "Anger" on the board
 - Ask students to: *"Remember a situation when you were angry. Choose the colours which express anger in your opinion. Close your eyes and draw what anger looks like."* Allow 4-5 minutes for drawing.
 - Ask children to discuss the drawings with their neighbour: What is in the picture? Are there similarities between the pictures? What did you feel when drawing the pictures?

Material	Pictures of people who express different emotions, A4 sheets of paper, pencils.
Remarks, notes	Children should feel comfortable drawing pictures, encourage self-reflection
Variations	This exercise can be conducted using other emotions.
Evaluations	Were children able to remember a situation arising from these feelings? Did children recognise their feelings (YES/ NO)?

2) Exercise in pairs: Conflict with the teacher (minimum 7 years old)

Aim: In this exercise, children learn to better understand and recognise their own and other people's emotions. This will enable them to express feelings and release emotions in an appropriate way. They will learn to talk about emotions and be able to find solutions which will help them to feel better.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
25 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)

- The procedure**
- Ask students to find partner and sit in pairs
 - Give each pair a sheet of paper with the following story: "Peter attends the eighth grade in school. He is brave, direct and popular among his classmates. One day, Peter had a conflict with a teacher. He did not like the teacher who had set the math test. Peter got very angry, he insulted the teacher and walked out of the classroom. The teacher did not allow Peter to come back to class until he apologised".
 - Give each pair a worksheet with the following table:

How does Peter feel in this situation?	How does the teacher feel in this situation?	What helps people with their anger? What should people do?

- Ask children to discuss this situation and complete worksheet in pairs
- Reflection: Discuss the situation and possible solutions to the situation in the classroom

Material a sheet of paper with a description of the situation, worksheets.

Remarks, notes no additional remarks or notes.

Variations The teacher can choose stories appropriate for the particular age group.

Evaluation Were the children able to understand and describe other people's feelings in this difficult situation?

5. Building skills for resolving conflicts

Description

Teaching children skills for conflict resolution is an important strategy for promoting good mental health. The aim of the exercise is to prepare children for managing conflict situations effectively, to develop their communication skills and facilitate the win-win attitude. Each topic includes a warm-up exercise, an exercise for pairs or groups, an individual exercise and reflection. The exercises are based on questions, answers and discussions.

Learning objectives

Following the exercises, students will be capable of analysing their own and other people's behaviour and emotions, and they will learn optimum conflict resolution techniques. Children should be able to find solutions for conflict situations that may arise in life.

Information for the teacher

It is essential that children are relaxed before starting the exercises. Children should feel comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with one another. Support tolerance and consideration for each other.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	pair work, group work	The exercises are suitable for children of all ages (minimum 7 years old)
Material	Small toys, 2-3 toys for each child.	
Remarks, notes	For younger children the teacher should provide more examples about passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour. The teacher should use examples appropriate for the age group.	
Variations	The teacher can use other topics appropriate for the age group or daily issues which emerge at school.	
Evaluation, reflection	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate how they perceive aggressive, passive and assertive behaviour.	

1) Warm up exercise

The name of the warm up exercise is “My attributes on bad days and good days”. The aim of the exercise is to encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings related to conflict situations. A warm-up exercise is important for participants to “warm” them up to the topic.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10-15 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

The procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Put small toys on the table ▪ Ask children to choose two of the toys. They should take into consideration: “Which toy describes your attributes on a bad day?” and “Which toy describes your attributes on a good day?” ▪ Ask children to show the toys to each other and talk about their attributes on a bad day and on a good day ▪ Ask students: “Does everyone have good days and bad days?“, “How can our mood influence conflicts in our everyday lives?“
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Material	small toys, 2-3 toys for each child.
Remarks, notes	no additional remarks, notes.
Variations	The teacher can use materials (postcards, pictures) appropriate for the age group.
Evaluations	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their readiness to continue.

2) Exercise: Differentiating passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour (minimum 7 years old)

The aim: the students will learn the meaning of the words “passive”, “aggressive”, and “assertive” in preparation for using effective approaches during conflict resolution.

Information for the teacher

Explain to the children that some people are naturally straightforward – we can tell easily how they feel about something or someone. Other people keep their feelings hidden. Hiding our feelings creates problems – for us and for others.

RESOURCES



Time

10-15 minutes

Didactic

Group work

Recommended target group

The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

The procedure

- Write on the board the words “passive”, “aggressive”, and “assertive”.
- Ask the children how they would describe, in general terms, a person who is passive, one who is aggressive, and another who is assertive.
- Guide the children to recognise passive, aggressive and assertive attributes.

Possible responses:

To be passive is to: disrespect oneself, undervalue personal needs, always place others’ interests first, suffer silently, blame oneself for the bad things that happen in life, listen only to others.

To be aggressive is to: disrespect others, overvalue personal needs, always place personal interests above others’ interests, be demanding, rude and blame others for negative events.

To be assertive is to: respect oneself as well as others, consider one’s own interests as well as others’ interests, be confident, talk as well as listen, express negative as well as positive feelings, be considerate as well as demanding, stand up for one’s own rights without dominating others.

Material

no additional materials are needed.

Remarks, notes

no additional remarks or notes.

Variations

The teacher can use worksheets or use this exercise during group work.

Evaluations

The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and evaluate their understanding about aggressive, passive and assertive behaviour.

3) Exercise: Passive, aggressive and assertive people in a conflict situation

The aim: students learn how an assertive response differs from, and is superior to, an aggressive or passive response by observing a fellow child participating in a role play activity.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15-25 minutes	group work	The exercise is suitable for students of all ages

- The procedure**
- Ask students to imagine that a classmate has just knocked down their books on to the floor on purpose. Ask for a volunteer from the class to demonstrate how the passive person might respond.
 - Ask the child who knocked down the books, how he/she might react to the passive response. Once this is finished, invite the class to discuss the role play.
 - Now ask the students to assume that a classmate has just knocked their books down. Ask for a volunteer from the class to demonstrate how the aggressive person might respond.
 - Now ask the child who knocked down the books how he/she might react to the aggressive response displayed. If a child wants to demonstrate how he/she thinks the child would have reacted, let him or her act it out. Once they have finished, invite the class to discuss the role play.
 - Now ask the class to imagine that a classmate has just knocked their books down, but this time ask for a volunteer to demonstrate how a self-confident, assertive person might respond.

Material no additional materials are needed.

Remarks, notes For younger children, the teacher should provide more examples about passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

Variations The teacher uses examples appropriate for the age group.

Evaluations The teacher should observe children during the exercise and evaluate how they understand the difference between aggressive, passive and assertive behaviour.

6. Strengthening relationships

Description

The aim of this exercise is to develop communication skills, to improve participants' understanding of behaviour and to facilitate a positive attitude. Students will acquire the basic skills of clear self-expression. A warm-up session is necessary for building rapport between children and teachers. It is also essential to encourage children to interact with one another. The warm-up exercise helps them to express their feelings verbally.

Learning objectives

Children analyse the area of communication and try to understand the motives of other people; they practice how to appreciate others so as to maintain friendships. They also learn to understand verbal and non-verbal communication.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30 minutes	individual work, pair work, group work	minimum 10 years old
Material	Small toys, 2-3 toys for each student.	
Remarks, notes	The teacher should prepare some communication skills materials in order to moderate the discussion and provide some examples.	
Variations	The teacher can use this exercise in relation to other topics.	
Evaluation, reflection	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and analyse whether or not they understood the process.	

1) Warm-up exercise

The aim of the exercise is to help the children become familiar with the topic. Children should understand the nature of verbal and non-verbal communication

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	Discussion in pairs	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

- The procedure**
- Ask children to greet each other by saying "Good morning". They should meet and say "Good morning" to every classmate.
 - Now ask children to greet once again and say "Good morning", but in an angry tone.
 - Then ask them to greet each other using only gestures. They should do so with every classmate.
 - Reflection: discuss how the class felt sharing these verbal and nonverbal greetings with each other.
 - Ask children to describe how greetings influence relationships between people. Why should we pay attention to greetings?

Material no additional material needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks or notes

Variations The teacher can choose other "greeting moods" for this exercise (disappointment, sadness).

2) Exercise: Appreciating another person's point of view (minimum 10 years of age)

Aim: Students should be taught that maintaining relationships requires work. They should practice successful communication and learn not to hurt people, and if they do hurt someone, children must have methods by which to deal with this. They should focus on other people's point of view and try to understand their motives.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20 minutes	group work	The exercise is suitable for students aged 10 years or older.

- The procedure**
- Ask the children to sit in groups of three
 - Give each group a worksheet with the following table. Ask students to read the situations carefully and to discuss within their group.
 - Students should consider the following questions: Why was Peter acting like that? What could the motivation have been? Is the win-win solution possible?
 - Reflection: Discuss the solutions for the situation in the classroom.
 - Ask each group to give some examples using "I sentences" in their communication.

Situation	What could be the motives of behaviour?	Express your opinion starting sentences with "I" and state own feelings
Your classmate Peter has just entered the classroom and he is in a bad mood. He starts teasing Betty, who is the smallest girl in the class. Peter tells Betty that her clothes and shoes are ugly. Betty begins to cry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Why is Peter in a bad mood? » How does Betty feel in this situation? » What could be Peter's motivation for teasing Betty? 	What could the win-win solution for the situation be? What should you tell Peter? "I do not like..." "I think that..." ...
Matthew and Paul were running round the classroom and jumping over the desks. The teacher's vase fell off the table. The teacher has just entered the classroom and starts asking questions. The boys do not say anything. The teacher says, if she does not find the culprit, all children will stay late after the lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What could the motivation of Matthew and Paul be? » What could the motivation of the teacher be? » How would your classmates feel? » If the entire class stays after school, how will it affect the relationship between the students? 	What could the win-win solution for the situation be? What should you tell Matthew and Paul? "I think that...." "I am feeling..."
Please write the five key points of friendship. How can you strengthen your friendship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Five key points of friendship are: 	"I increase my friendship by..."

Material	worksheets, a piece of paper for each group
Remarks, notes	This task requires some preparation from the teacher (i.e. creating examples of "I" sentences and win-win solutions), in order to assist the discussion.

Variations	The teacher can use other situations appropriate for the age group
Evaluation	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and analyse whether or not they understood all situations.

3) Exercise: Friendship scale (minimum 15 years of age)

Aim: This exercise allows adolescents to evaluate themselves as friends on the Friendship Scale. The higher the friendship score, the easier it is for the child to make friends. Participants learn that good relationships depend on how you treat other people.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20 minutes	individual work	The exercise is suitable for adolescents aged 15 years or older.

- The procedure**
- Ask the adolescent to complete the "Friendship Scale".
 - Tell them to read the questions carefully and answer "Yes" or "No".
 - Once participants have completed this task, they can calculate their total score as shown below:
 - Count the number of "Yes" answers between questions 6 and 11 and the number of "No" answers between questions 1 and 5.
 - Tell the children they score one point for each "No" (for questions 1-5), and one point for each "Yes" (for questions 6-11). The higher your friendship score, the easier it is for you to make friends.
 - Reflection: Analyse the answers; ask participants how a positive course of action in this situation may strengthen friendship?

Questions	YES	NO
Do you feel that you do not deserve to have friends?		
Are you very demanding?		
Are you ever disloyal?		
Are you critical of other people?		
Do you always wait for someone else to make the first friendly move?		
Do you offer help when people need it - even if they don't ask?		
Do you volunteer to take part in class or school activities rather than wait to be asked?		

Questions	YES	NO
Do you ever bother to talk to other people who seem shy or short of friends?		
In an argument, do you try to see things from the other person's point of view as well as your own?		
Do you listen when people talk to you?		
If someone looks miserable, would it occur to you to ask them if anything is wrong or try to cheer them up?		

Materials	worksheets.
Remarks, notes	This task requires some preparation from the teacher in regards to communication skills in order to moderate the discussion and give some examples.
Variations	The teacher can use other situations appropriate for the age group.
Evaluation	The teacher should observe the teenagers during the exercise and analyse whether or not the students understood the task.

7. Handling peer pressure

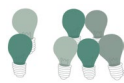
Description

Peer pressure occurs when an individual is persuaded to adopt similar values, beliefs and goals, to participate in the same activities as those in his or her peer group. Students should be able to recognise their own values and beliefs. They should be able to say who they are and see themselves as independent, unique and separate from peers.

Learning objectives

The students should be able to think independently and solve problems. They will share some experiences of being pressured into doing something by their friends and discuss when it is “OK” and when it is “not OK”. This activity will make students aware of the kinds of pressure they may experience with peers and the possible choices they have in regards to the decisions they make.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
30-35 minutes	pair work, group work	minimum 7 years old
Material	Worksheets.	
Remarks, notes	This task requires some preparation from the teacher in relation to communication skills, in order to moderate the discussion and give some examples.	
Variations	The teacher can use this exercise with other school topics.	
Evaluation, reflection	The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and analyse whether children understood all situations.	

1) Warm-up exercise

The aim of the exercise is to introduce children to the topic. Warm-up sessions are necessary in order to build rapport between children and teachers. It is also essential to encourage children to interact with one another.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

- The procedure**
- Ask students to share some experiences of being pushed into something by their friends against their wishes
 - Ask them to describe situations where it was easy to say NO to their friends
 - Now ask them to describe why it was difficult to say NO.
 - Reflection: discuss with children, what helps us to say NO?

Material no additional material needed

Remarks, notes no additional remarks or notes

2) Exercise: Discussing peer pressure (minimum 7 years of age)

The aim: The students should be able to recognise their own beliefs and values in the decision-making process. They should understand that their choices reflect their values and that they can explore their own values through the choices they make.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
20-25 minutes	group work	The exercise is suitable for students of all ages

- The procedure**
- Ask students to form groups of three
 - Ask them to carefully read each situation in the box below and consider their response before marking their choice (A or B).
 - Ask children to discuss with their group possible responses to the various situations. Encourage them to discuss their reasons for making each choice.
 - Allow 15 minutes for discussion within the groups.
 - Reflection: discuss possible solutions to the situation in the classroom. Encourage discussion using the following questions:
 - Was it easy or difficult to make a decision based on the situations presented to you? Why?
 - Have you faced a similar situation in your own life?
 - Why do you think it is difficult to stand your ground in some situations?

Situation	A	B
Your friends crack dirty jokes in the presence of your younger brother/sister. Everyone laughs. You...	Express your disapproval and refuse to join in on the laughter.	Laugh with the crowd
You returned home late after going to a party without your parents' permission. You...	Apologise and say that you will never do it again	Lie about where you were
Your friends ask you to miss a class and go to a movie with them. You...	Refuse to go with them.	Join the group and go
Your parents disapprove of your friends. You...	Try to explain why they are important to you	Ignore them and say, "You keep out of this. I'm old enough to choose my own friends".
Your parents ask you to study harder...	You try to study harder	You refuse to study harder

Situation	A	B
You are taking the entrance test for an exam. You are very keen on scoring high marks. Suddenly you realise you have a chance to copy off the best student. You...	Resist the temptation to copy	Copy the other student as much as you can
Some of your classmates win the school election, get a high rank or win a prize. You...	Congratulate them.	Resent their success and make nasty comments behind their backs.
You discover some people are spreading lies about you. You...	Ignore them	Get angry and hold a grudge.
You find a purse in the campus with lots of money in it. You...	Hand it over to the authorities	Take the money for yourself
Someone else has been falsely accused of something you have done. He or she is going to be punished undeservedly. You...	Own up and accept the punishment.	Keep quiet and let the innocent person receive the punishment.

Materials	worksheets.
Remarks, notes	This task requires some preparation from the teacher in order to assist the discussion and provide some examples.
Variations	The teacher can use the exercise with examples of different situations appropriate for the age group
Evaluation	The teacher should observe students during the exercise and analyse whether or not they understood the situations presented.

8. Healthy lifestyle

Description

A healthy lifestyle refers to an array of factors that positively affect your overall wellbeing. A healthy lifestyle encompasses more than just eating healthy foods and doing physical exercise. People should find their own personal approach for improving their eating, sleeping and relaxation habits for lifelong health benefits.

Learning objectives

The aim: to promote healthy lifestyles in children by helping them to make healthier choices.

RESOURCES



Time

30-35 minutes

Didactic

pair work, group work

Recommended target group

minimum 7 years old

Material

An A3 sheet of paper and pencils.

Remarks, notes

This task requires some preparation from the teacher – he/she should have knowledge about healthy and unhealthy lifestyle habits in order to moderate the discussion and provide examples.

Variations

The teacher can use this exercise with other issues/school topics appropriate for the age group.

Evaluation, reflection

The teacher should observe the students during the exercise and analyse whether or not they understood the situations presented.

1) Warm-up exercise

The aim of the exercise is to introduce children to the topic. Warm-up sessions are necessary to build rapport between children and teachers.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
10 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children of all ages

The procedure

- Ask children to find a partner
- Now tell the following story: *“Imagine that you meet a man who is 105 years old. The man is in very good health, he is positive, cheerful and he still does physical exercise in the morning”.*
- Ask students to think of 6 questions they would ask a person who is 105 years old.
- Ask them to discuss the lifestyle habits of this man with their partners.
- Give each pair a sheet of paper.
- Ask the groups to list the possible lifestyle habits of this man.
- Hang these lists up on the wall and view all the lifestyle habits simultaneously.
- Discuss the following with students: How may lifestyle habits influence this man’s health? Why should we think about our habits and value a healthy lifestyle?
- Reflection: Analyse these questions and lifestyle habits.

Material An A3 sheet of paper, pencils.

Remarks, notes This task requires some preparation by the teacher – he/she will require knowledge about nutrition in order to assist the discussion and provide some examples.

Variations The teacher can use other situations appropriate for the age group.

Evaluations The teacher should observe the children during the exercise and analyse whether or not children understood the task.

2) Exercise: An aquarium fish (minimum 7 years of age)

The aim: To promote a healthy lifestyle in children and the adoption of healthy nutrition habits and regular physical activity.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
15 minutes	pair work	The exercise is suitable for children aged 7 years or older

- The procedure**
- Ask students to find a partner and sit at their desks
 - Ask them to imagine the following: *Imagine that you are a fish in an aquarium. Your owner has given you only junk food and you do not have enough room to move around.*
 - Ask students to describe how they would feel (as the fish) in this situation?
 - How does junk food affect physical health?
 - What kind of food is healthy for the fish?
 - What should the fish do? How can the fish let the owner know that the food is not good for him/her?
 - Discuss the following with students: How can we characterise healthy foods for children? (refer to the food guide pyramid (Figure 2.9, page 61))

Material A piece of paper.

Remarks, notes This task requires some preparation from the teacher regarding healthy and unhealthy lifestyle habits, in order to assist the discussion and provide some examples.

Variations The teacher can use other situations appropriate for the age group.

Evaluations The teacher should observe the students during the exercise and analyse whether or not they have understood the situations.

3) Exercise: Healthy and unhealthy lifestyles (minimum 14 years of age)

The aim: To analyse the meaning of a healthy/ unhealthy lifestyle; to promote healthy lifestyles in children; to adopt healthy nutrition habits and promote regular physical activity.

RESOURCES



Time	Didactic	Recommended target group
25 minutes	group work	The exercise is suitable for adolescents aged 14 years and older.

The procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draw two columns on the board ▪ Label one column “Healthy lifestyle” and the other column “Unhealthy lifestyle” ▪ Ask students the following questions: <i>What does “Healthy lifestyle” mean? Complete the table. What does “Unhealthy lifestyle” mean? Complete the table</i> ▪ Ask students to form four groups ▪ Give each group an A3 sheet of paper ▪ Ask two groups to draw an animal which lives an unhealthy lifestyle. <i>What would this animal look like? Describe the health of this animal. What might his/her mood be?</i> ▪ Ask the two groups to draw an animal which has lived a healthy lifestyle. <i>What would this animal look like? Describe the health of this animal. What might his/her mood be?</i> ▪ Ask the groups to show and describe the pictures. ▪ Ask the following questions and discuss them with the children: <i>What do the pictures have in common? What are the differences?</i> ▪ Ask the students to think about the animal. What are the health habits of each of them? Which animal do they identify with the most?
Material	A piece of paper.
Remarks, notes	This task requires some preparation from the teacher – he/she should have relevant knowledge about healthy and unhealthy lifestyle habits in order to moderate the discussion and provide some examples.
Variations	The teacher can implement this exercise using other school topics appropriate for the age group.
Evaluations	The teacher should observe the students during the exercise and analyse whether or not they understood all situations.

9. Building partnerships with parents

Warm-up exercise

Have a short brainstorming session about the following topic: How to engage parents in school life. What are the advantages and disadvantages of every idea?

1 Exercise How to make magic: creating solutions to parental involvement problems

Description

This exercise involves strategies for identifying solutions to encourage parental involvement and is a part of an in-service teacher education programme for enhancing parental involvement described by Hoover-Dempsey (2002). In fact, to some extent this is not a separate exercise but rather a general strategy for involving parents.

The topic of the exercise refers to the implementation of the Empowerment Paradigm. The aim of this exercise is to increase school staff member’s awareness about creating a holistic approach in building and implementing a programme focused on parental involvement.

RESOURCES



Duration	Working form	Recommended target group
depends on which element of the procedure is undertaken. Approximately 2 hours to discuss the 1-8 steps.	directed discussion, brainstorming, group work, pair work	staff of the school (mainly teachers)

The procedure Points to ponder before creating solutions:

- ‘Magic’ solutions (much like good magic) are usually created on the basis of hard work, practice, evaluation, and more hard work.
- In creating ‘magic’ solutions, it is important to think about your successes—not just to feel good or dwell in the past, but to analyse what has worked, why it has worked, and how those lessons might be useful in solving the present problem.

The procedure *Steps in creating 'magic solutions':*

1. What is the problem? State it clearly and define it!
2. How is the problem related to our goals (is it worth time and energy)?
3. What kind of problem-solving strategies can we use on this problem?
 - Problem-focused (get in there and work on the problem itself)?
 - Emotion-focused (change our reactions to the problem)?
 - What can I/we do? What do I/we want to do?
 - Which of the approaches is best, given the problem, our goals and the available resources?
4. What are the alternative strategies for solving the problem? Good quality possibilities are needed in order to get us closer to our goals, and brainstorming is key here! After brainstorming:
 - What are our priorities among these strategies?
 - What are the short term and long term strategies?
5. What strategies do we choose and how are we going to put them into action? Steps for developing and implementing the plan:
 - Do we want to take these on one at a time or work with several strategies simultaneously?
 - Who needs to be involved in making the plan work?
 - What are the specific steps in the plan?
 - Who's going to do what tasks, and when?
 - When will we try this out?
6. How will we know if our solution has worked?
Develop a plan for evaluating outcomes, including the assessment of:
 - What worked and why?
 - What did not work and why?
7. Gather evaluation and outcome information that you can use to improve strategies to involve parents.
8. Celebrate successes, and return to the process when new or revitalised 'magic' solutions are required.

Material	Required materials: PowerPoint presentations, worksheets (and possibly other materials prepared by the moderator).
Remarks, Notices	When conducting this exercise, it is important to incite interest in the topic and to motivate participants to be "actively present". Showing the advantages of involving parents is crucial.
Variations	Variations of the exercise will differ depending on the kind of school and other factors (i.e. student age, inclusive or non-inclusive settings, etc.), existing problems and the expertise of staff.
Evaluation and Reflection	It will take time before the results become apparent. It is recommended that a qualitative approach (e.g. unstructured interviews) is used to measure the effects (e.g. awareness of the participants).

2 Exercise Teaching parents how to deal with their children's behavioural issues

Description

This exercise provides parents with a “tool” for dealing with behavioural difficulties and enables teachers to help and support parents where necessary.

The aim of the exercise is to teach educators how to change the parents' view on their children's behaviour and help them to understand the connection between the child's behaviour and the way in which parents respond to them.

RESOURCES



Duration	Working form	Recommended target group
90 minutes	a brief introductory lecture explaining the aim of the exercise and presentation of the steps to be taken; group work and pair-work.	Teachers and parents of the teenagers.

The procedure **Step 1:** Depersonalise the words you use from “You are...” to “You behave like...”

The aim of the first step is to change the parents' point of view on their children's traits. The following elements should form part of the training for parents:

- Change your negative thoughts relating to your child, i.e. “my child is...lazy, disobedient, etc.” Instead, focus on what he or she does, i.e. she refuses to follow my instructions. This means focusing on facts and particular behaviours, rather than on the child's personal attributes or the way in which we perceive these.
- Write on a sheet of paper what your child does wrong, what kind of behaviours your child exhibits which seem inappropriate to you or which you do not accept.
- Identify from this list the most unacceptable behaviour for you (e.g. disobedience).
- Parents then prepare to observe their children's behaviours for one week and count the number of occurrences (frequency) of this behaviour(s).

Step 2: Analyse the situations that precede undesirable behaviour and the consequences of this behaviour.

In the second phase of the training, try to encourage parents to make an alternative observation in relation to unacceptable behaviour (e.g. refusal to follow parents' instructions):

- The procedure**
- What preceded the bad behaviour? (Create a detailed description of the situation. For example, if the most frequent scenario is when the parent is ordering the child to do something, then maybe the parent came across as too “bossy”.)
 - What was the child’s reaction? (Describe how the child responded)
 - What happened later? (Describe the consequences of the bad behaviour, i.e. “I gave up and I cleared the table by myself”; or “Then we started to have a row”)
 - The second phase of the training aims to help parents understand the connection between their own behaviour and the way in which children respond to them. Parents may unconsciously affect their child’s behaviour in the following ways:

Expected child’s behaviour + parental reinforcement = more expected behaviours

Expected child’s behaviour + lack of parental reinforcement = less expected behaviours

Undesired child’s behaviour + parental reinforcement = more undesired behaviours

Undesired child’s behaviour + lack of parental reinforcement = less undesired behaviours

Material	Required materials include: worksheets cited in Babiuch’s book (2003), PowerPoint presentations explaining the main aims of the exercises.
Remarks, Notices	Exercises should include a follow-up session (eg. to discuss whether or not the exercise has proven successful).
Variations	Variations of this exercise will depend on the kinds of behavioural problems exhibited by the students.
Evaluation and Reflection	Tools for measuring outcomes may include worksheets for reflection and conclusions, which are delivered to teachers who use this approach and to parents who have learned this method.

10. Classroom management

Warm-up exercise

Have a short brainstorming session about the most common difficulties experienced by teachers in class and the most popular ways in which teachers cope with bad behaviour.

1 Exercise

Persistent look

Description

The learning objectives are to develop and improve nonverbal communication between you and your students and to teach you to control reactions, especially when student's behaviours are inappropriate.

RESOURCES



Preparation time

this exercise does not require any preparation

Recommended target group

school staff especially teachers

The procedure One of the teachers from a pair is looking persistently at the second one. The second teacher is provoking the first one to react, i.e. by telling jokes, making faces, etc., but without touching the other. The first teacher should show a facial expression that says: "I'm waiting. Calm down.," but he/she cannot frown or have a menacing facial expression. Usually it is possible to stay cool for 10 seconds. After that, the second teacher informs the first what reactions and expressions he has noticed from his/her face during the exercise (Robertson, J 1998).

Material In this exercise no materials are needed, but you will need following table:

Worksheet 1: Teachers self-observation template

Question	Answer
What has happened in the classroom?	
How have I reacted?	
What did I expect?	

Worksheet 1: Teachers self-observation template	
Question	Answer
Has it been effective?	
Have student reactions been consistent with my expectations?	
What do I need to change?	
How should I have reacted?	
Remarks, Notes	<p>Recommendation: this exercise needs to be done in a quiet and peaceful place where nobody will disturb or distract the working pair.</p> <p>The following challenges may be encountered during this exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher's reluctance to introduce an exercise with innovative character; ▪ To convince teachers that verbal communication is not the only form of communication which can be used with students; ▪ To prove that nonverbal communication can be as effective as verbal communication.
Variations	One teacher attempts to present his/her emotions through facial expression alone, i.e. anger, satisfaction, delight, approval, seriousness, disappointment, resentment, disapproval. The second teacher tries to read the meaning of the facial expressions.
Evaluation and Reflection	In order to evaluate whether or not this exercise has worked, teachers can conduct self-observation of their own reactions and the students' reactions to their behaviour during the class and answer the questions in the worksheet (see: Materials, Worksheet 1).

2 Exercise Teacher's reaction to inappropriate student behaviour

Description

The learning objectives are to find alternative ways of coping with difficult situations in the classroom, and to understand that many conventional responses are not always effective and can be replaced by some innovative ones.

RESOURCES



Preparation time

10 minutes

Duration

60 minutes

Recommended target group

Teachers

The procedure

1. Teachers are divided into five groups.
2. Teachers choose one scenario to discuss. The scenarios present student behaviours in the classroom during the lesson, with examples of teacher's reactions.
3. Discussion in pairs: Participants consider teacher's reactions to the behaviour described in the scenario and identify what was useless and ineffective. They then suggest alternative responses which will be more effective in terms of disciplining students.
4. Each pair presents their scenarios with an example of an alternative teacher response.
5. Group discussion commences after each pair have made their presentation.

Material

During this exercise participants will need working sheets with the following scenarios:

- The student throws his book on his friend's desk. The teacher shouts, offended and surprised: "Adam! Could you please put your book back in the proper way? You are going to damage it and no one else will be able to use it after you!"
- Two boys in the classroom are hitting each other with their copybooks. The teacher shouts angrily: "Hey! If I see you fighting once more, I will speak to your parents after school!"
- A girl arrives into the classroom 10 minutes late. The teacher enquires: "Do you know what time it is? The lesson started 10 minutes ago!"
- A few students are singing during the lesson. The teacher asks with a smile: "Who is singing? Adam, is that you?"
- A boy receives a sheet of paper from the teacher and throws it in the bin. The teacher says to him merrily: "Oh, Adam. I just prepared this material for you". (Robertson, 1998).

You will need following worksheet:

Worksheet 1: Reactions rating template

Conventional reaction		Alternative reaction	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages

Remarks, Notes	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to convince teachers that an angry reaction is not always appropriate or necessary in the situation.
Variations	<p>Other forms of this exercise include teachers role playing the scenes from the scenarios and then discussing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How they felt as the teacher? How they felt as the student? Which reaction was the most effective?
Evaluation and Reflection	<p>Teachers can rate the effectiveness of different reactions in each scenario (see: Materials, Worksheet 1).</p>

11. Guidelines for Handling (cyber) bullying and harassment

Warm-up exercise

Ask students to sit in a circle. Pass a small ball around the group and when it comes to you explain how you use the Internet (i.e. What do you use it for? In what situation? How often do you use the internet?).

1 Exercise Typology of electronic aggression

Description

The learning objective is to provide you with information about the phenomenon of electronic aggression, especially in relation to cyberbullying (and electronic aggression in a broader sense).

RESOURCES



Preparation time

5 minutes

Duration

45 minutes

Recommended target group

Student of any age

- The procedure**
- Ask students to analyse the table about electronic aggression below. Their task is to identify features which differentiate electronic aggression from face-to-face aggression (see: Materials, Worksheet 1). The discussion in the classroom should involve the following questions:
 - Is peer-to-peer aggression via electronic media the same as face-to-face aggression?
 - Have the participants themselves experienced victimization while using social media? If 'yes', what were the consequences of this victimization? (Pyżalski, 2010)

Material

Below you will find the worksheets needed to conduct this exercise.

**Worksheet 1: Typology of electronic aggression by Kowalski, Limber & Agatson (2008)
(modified by Pyżalski, 2010)**

Type	Description
Flaming	Flaming is an aggressive word exchange between people who are communicating via public channels, e.g. chat-rooms and discussion forums. This type of aggression implies the participation of two or more persons.
Harassment	Harassment involves sending hostile messages (e.g. aggressive, derisive) to the victim through electronic communication channels (instant messaging services or short text messages). This type of aggression is also observed in online gaming. Harassment implies there are only two agents directly engaged in the act; it differs from flaming in this regard.
Impersonation	Impersonation or identity theft means the aggressor takes on the identity of his victim in cyberspace. This can be achieved by obtaining someone's e-mail, messenger or profile password (the aggressor can either steal it or get it from the victim's friend). The aggressor may impersonate his victim in order to perpetrate aggression against a third party, e.g. by using a stolen account to send offensive content to peers or teachers.
Outing	Outing refers to divulging private information about or belonging to the victim, which the aggressor had intercepted (e.g. chat history, letters, images) and made electronically accessible to a third party. The content is either stolen from the victim's computer or cell phone, or was obtained by the aggressor during the time he or she was on close terms with the victim, who showed their trust and was willing to share their secrets (e.g. over a chat site or on an instant messaging service).
Cyberstalking	Cyberstalking means stalking of an individual and flooding them with unwelcome messages. This type of aggression happens most often in cases where the victim and aggressors previously maintained a close relationship, e.g. former boyfriend or girlfriend (Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002).
Happy slapping	It refers to provoking and attacking a person and recording this event on film or in pictures. Later, the aggressor publishes the embarrassing content in the Internet.
Denigration	It means publishing of false and denigrating content by means of electronic media or any other material related to the victim, e.g. altered images suggesting the victim engages in sexual acts, or false information about events in which the victim presumably participated.
Exclusion	Exclusion is an act of a deliberate excluding/banning of the victim from a list of Internet contacts (e.g. a list of friends on social service websites).
'Technical' aggression	The aggressor directs actions towards the victim's computer, software or electronic infrastructure (e.g. a website) rather than directly towards the victim. This action includes deliberate spreading of computer viruses as well as hacking other peoples' computers.

Worksheet 2: Electronic aggression- consequences	
Type	Consequences
Flaming	
Harassment	
Impersonation	
Outing	
Cyberstalking	
Happy slapping	
Denigration	
Exclusion	
'Technical' aggression	
Remarks, Notices	This task requires some preparation by the teacher – he/she requires knowledge about electronic aggression characteristics in order to sustain and moderate the discussion.
Variations	Groups of four students receive worksheets with information about different types of electronic aggression. Reading the description, they must identify differences and similarities between online and offline aggression. This variation of the exercise will require less time.
Evaluation and Reflection	The students task is to complete the table (see: Materials, Worksheet 2) based on their reflections about the possible consequences of different types of electronic aggression for bullies/victims.

2 Exercise

Netiquette

Description

The learning objectives of this exercise are to find an innovative solution to coping with cyber-bullying and to inform students of the rules of internet use and that breaking these may result in negative consequences.

RESOURCES



Preparation time

5 minutes

Duration

40 minutes + 5 minutes for summarising

Recommended target group

Older students in primary school and students in secondary

The procedure You can give students the following list of netiquette rules (Shea, 1994):

- Never mail or post anything that you wouldn't say to your reader's face;
- Don't respond on flame-bait;
- Don't read other people's private email;
- Check grammar and spelling before you post.

After this, students choose one of the rules and working in pairs they discuss the following questions:

- Have you ever seen this rule on the internet? Where?
- Is that rule needed?
- Why is the rule needed or not needed?
- Do you follow that rule? Why?
- What could be changed in that rule in order to ensure that it will be followed by all internet users?
- What consequences/punishment should be used when someone breaks this rule?

After 10 minutes, one pair of students joins another pair. Now there will be groups consisting of four students each. Each pair in each group presents the rule they discussed and gives feedback to the new pair. The task for the first pair is to convince the second pair that their rule is more important and state why.

The procedure After 10 minutes of discussion, each group presents their results to the whole class. Then all students discuss the following:

- Is netiquette necessary and why?
- For whom is it helpful?
- What can be done to convince students to follow these rules?

Material You will need to prepare worksheets with a few rules which exist on the Internet – above you can find some examples (Shea, 1994), however you can also prepare your own ideas of rules using netiquettes available on the internet or social networking sites.

Worksheet 1: Self observation template for students

Questions	Answers
Which rule is the most important for me as an internet user?	
Why is it so important?	
Do I follow every rule on the social networking site I belong to?	
Which rule did I break in the last 30 days?	
Why did I break that rule?	
What were the consequences?	
How could I respond better?	
What can I do to fix the situation now?	
What have I learned during the class about netiquette?	

Worksheet 2: Evaluation of the activities template for teachers	
Questions	Answers
What were the outcomes of this class?	
What have the students learned?	
What were the advantages of introducing this topic?	
What were the disadvantages of introducing this topic?	
What can be improved?	
What are the benefits for me?	
Remarks, Notices	<p>In this task, the following challenges may be encountered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students might be reluctant to read netiquette rules when they register on some websites; ▪ Students may need to be convinced that at least some of the rules are needed and that they help to create safety for internet users; ▪ It may be necessary to clarify that breaking the rules on the internet results in negative consequences.
Variations	<p>The four-person groups can create their own netiquette and present it to the rest of students with justification for every rule. Allow 15-25 minutes for this activity. Then the class discusses the netiquettes and tries to create one common netiquette which will be accepted by every student in the classroom. This variation requires more time, especially when students have to prepare the rules.</p>
Evaluation and Reflection	<p>Following this exercise, students and teachers can conduct self-observation in order to increase self-awareness and develop positive attitudes towards safe and appropriate internet usage (see: Materials, Worksheet 1, 2).</p>

3 Exercise

Dealing with cyberbullying

Description

The learning objectives are to find an innovative solution to coping with cyberbullying and to identify what teachers can do in order to achieve effective solutions for preventing cyberbullying.

RESOURCES



Preparation time

5 minutes



Duration

45 minutes



Recommended target group

Teachers

The procedure A group of teachers is divided into four smaller groups. The topic to be discussed during this task is: What can the school/teacher do in order to prevent cyberbullying?

Every group receives a worksheet (see: Materials, Worksheet 1).

1. To begin with, each group works on the task of successfully solving the problem of cyberbullying. Although this is an extremely difficult problem to solve, the groups are encouraged to suggest solutions, even those which appear unrealistic or idealistic.
2. Following this, each group passes their worksheet to the group on their left hand side.

Now all groups write down a solution which is deemed more *conventional and possible*. Pass around the worksheets.

3. The third step is to develop a solution which is deemed even more likely. Pass around the worksheets.
4. The fourth step is to identify the *most realistic* solution which is also easy to implement. Following these four steps, each of the groups presents their solutions.

Material In order to fulfill this task you will need the following worksheets.

Worksheet 1

1. Weird, impossible idea of solving this problem



2. More conventional and possible



3. Even more possible solution



4. The most realistic and easy to implement



Worksheet 2: The contribution of the school and the teacher in relation to the prevention of cyberbullying

What can I do in order to prevent cyberbullying?	What can school do in order to prevent cyberbullying?

Remarks, Notices	The most important challenge of this exercise is to convince teachers that cyberbullying prevention is possible and that it can be a positive initiative which leads to constructive and effective results, e.g. improved school and class management and reduced school violence.
Variations	Teachers working in pairs can think about what they themselves and the school can do in order to help prevent cyberbullying (see: Materials, Worksheet 2).
Evaluation and Reflection	Teachers can rate the effectiveness of every scenario and discuss the possibility of implementing some of their ideas.

4 Exercise

Bullying bystanders

Description

The learning objectives are to encourage students to react when they see that someone is being bullied and to be aware that bystanders play a very important role in relation to bullying and cyberbullying intervention especially, because they can give a victim significant support.

RESOURCES



Preparation time

10 minutes

Duration

45 minutes

Recommended target group

Student of any age

The procedure

1. A group of students draw one of the following scenarios:
 - You see that one of your classmates has been pushed by two boys. It happens almost every day. What can you do to help him/her?
 - You have noticed that one of your classmates is excluded from the group and other students avoid them. What can you do to help this student?
 - You hear one of your classmates saying: "You are ugly and stupid" to the same girl every day for a whole month. What can you do to help her?
 - You see that your classmate's books are thrown out of the backpack by one boy every day after class. What can you do to help the unfortunate student?
2. Groups present the scene but they have to create their own ending for the story.
3. Viewers record remarks in the table (see: Materials, Worksheet 1) – advantages and disadvantages of the solution.
4. At the end, students share their remarks, discuss them and try to improve the solution for every scenario.

Material

During this exercise you will need the following worksheets. You will also need a worksheet with the table below for summarising the solutions which are developed.

Worksheet 1: Advantages and disadvantages of the solution

Solution:.....

Advantages	Disadvantages	Improvements

Worksheet 2: Evaluation of the activities template for teachers

Questions	Answers
What have the students learned?	
What was the biggest advantage of this topic?	
What was the biggest disadvantage of this topic?	
What can be improved?	
What are the benefits for me?	

Worksheet 3: Evaluation of the activities template for students

Questions	Answers
What have I learned?	
What was the biggest advantage of this topic?	
What was the biggest disadvantage of this topic?	
What can be improved?	
What are the benefits for me?	

Remarks, Notices	A significant challenge of this exercise is to overcome students' barriers and fears around responding when they see that something bad happening to someone else.
Variations	The teacher might present one of the scenarios to the students and initiate a discussion. The students are asked to list possible solutions to this situation and identify the best option. This variation requires less time and does not require any worksheets.
Evaluation and Reflection	Teachers and students can conduct self-observation based on the questions in the table (see: Materials, Worksheet 2, 3).

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