Background

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to accurately identify and label emotions in self and others and to appropriately regulate emotions within specific contexts and situations. School transition and the onset of puberty can be a challenging time for young people, and having a good understanding of emotions and their role can assist in this process. Emotions are defined as subjective internal feeling states that can be expressed through behaviour, thoughts, and physiology. The basic emotions are: fear, sadness, happiness, anger, disgust, and surprise. There is also a range of more complex emotions such as remorse, jealousy, pride, anticipation, boredom, excitement, disappointment, and guilt. Emotional literacy involves being aware of one’s own emotions and the emotions of others.

This session will introduce students to the idea that they have some control over mood, and outline an important strategy for promoting positive mood — making time to have fun, relax and do enjoyable activities. For some young people these may be social events; other students may prefer sports or private relaxing activities. Everyone is different. Identifying pleasurable activities and programming these into our lives is a way to build positive emotions.

Learning outcomes

Students will evaluate the influences on self-concept, self-esteem and resilience.

In this session, students will:

• describe what is meant by ‘feelings’;
• recognise that it is normal to experience a range of emotions, both positive and negative; and
• recognise that mood is influenced by situations and behaviours.

Students will recommend and demonstrate skills that promote a positive self-concept and resilience.

In this session, students will:

• try to improve mood by planning pleasant activities; and
• monitor the effect of a pleasant activity on mood.
session outline

- Review
- Activity 1. Introduction to emotions
- Activity 2. Recognising emotions
- Activity 3. The feel good factor
- Reflection
- Home tasks

Preparation/resources

No additional resources required.
**Review** [2–3 mins]

1. Review the previous session — e.g. self-talk and self-esteem. Remind the students that you can influence your self-esteem by the kind of self-talk you use.

2. Review home tasks — did students practise saying self-praising statements to themselves? And were students able to stop themselves when using unhelpful self-talk? If so, did it affect their Self Star Ratings?

3. Link to current session.

**Points to make**

- *The last session focused on some strategies you can use to build your self-esteem. Today’s session focuses on learning some strategies that promote positive mood.*
Activity 1. Introduction to emotions [10–15 mins]

Process

1. Ask the students to choose an emotion/feeling. Allow the students a few minutes to either draw a visual representation of the emotion (cartoon, picture, diagram) or practise miming the emotion. Refer students to page 52 of the Student Workbook, where they can draw the emotion.

2. Working in pairs/groups have the students try to guess each other’s representations of emotions.

3. If time allows, students could represent more than one emotion.

4. Whole class discussion — what are emotions/feelings?

5. Refer students to page 52 of the Student Workbook. As a class, brainstorm a list of the different types of emotions/feelings and record these in the space provided.

Points to make

- There are some basic emotions (universal across cultures; typically easier to recognise): fear, sadness, happiness, anger, disgust, and surprise.
- There are many more complex emotions (may not be so visible or recognisable): remorse, jealousy, pride, excitement, anticipation, boredom, disappointment, euphoria, guilt, etc.
- People may feel a mix of emotions. It is normal to experience a range of emotions, both negative and positive, at different times.

6. Refer students to pages 53 and 54 of the Student Workbook. Explain that we can feel different strengths of emotion. Introduce the Feelings Thermometer, explaining that this will help students to measure the strength of different emotions over the next couple of weeks.

Purpose

Students will be able to describe what an emotion or feeling is in their own language; they will be able to distinguish key emotions and identify different qualities and strengths of emotions.

Hint

Teachers may wish to explain that the words ‘emotions’ and ‘feelings’ can be used interchangeably.

Examples of possible answers:

- they are inside you or come from inside you
- they describe your mood
- feelings can include being sad or angry or happy
- they can affect the way you act
- the way you think about things that happen to you can make you feel different ways.

There are many different types of emotions; positive and negative.

Emotions can be felt in different strengths.
### Activity 2. Recognising emotions [10–15 mins]

#### Purpose

To help students develop an understanding of the link between emotions and events.

#### Process

1. Refer students to pages 56 and 57 of the Student Workbook. Students can choose to read one of the stories — either ‘A day in the life of James’ or ‘A day in the life of Anna’.

2. Refer students to page 55 of the Student Workbook. Have the students identify and record as many of the emotions experienced by the character as possible, noting the body language that was linked to the emotion.

#### Points to make

- A person’s facial expression or body gestures can give us information about the way the person is feeling. For example, if a person is standing with their arms folded tightly across their chest, this could be a sign that the person is feeling angry or uncomfortable. This kind of non-verbal communication is often called ‘body language’.

3. Students can also rate the strength of feelings they think the characters would experience using the Feelings Thermometer.

4. As a class, discuss responses.

#### Hint

Teachers may prefer to identify and use their own very short story that illustrates a broad range of emotions experienced by the character(s).

Body language can give us clues about the emotions other people are feeling.
Activity 3. The feel good factor [15 mins]

Process

1. Refer students to page 58 of the Student Workbook. Ask students to brainstorm the activities they do to make them feel good or to enjoy themselves. Record responses.

2. In groups, discuss the activities listed on the Feel Good cards on pages 60 and 61 of the Student Workbook. Have the students make a list of their own favourite activities in the blank cards provided on page 62.

3. Discuss the link between engaging in feel good activities and mood.

Points to make

• The activities we do influence our mood — therefore we can increase our chances of feeling positive and happy by making enough time to do enjoyable activities on a regular basis.

• There are some activities that make you feel good that are easy to do on a regular/daily basis (e.g. have a relaxing bath/shower, watch a TV program, go for a walk), and some that are very enjoyable, but that you can do less often (e.g. see a movie, stay at a friend’s, go bowling).

4. Refer students to page 59 of the Student Workbook. Explain to the students that they will be developing a pictorial menu of their preferred activities (along the lines of a fast-food restaurant menu). Have the students list or draw the possible choices of activities within their own budget, listing prices as well.

Reflection [4–5 mins]

Refer students to page 63 of the Student Workbook. Ask students to complete the following tasks:

• Think back over the past week of times when you have done any of the activities from your ‘Feel Good’ Menu. Can you remember how you felt at the time?

• You may want to record the emotion in the space below, and to rate the strength of the emotion using the Feelings Thermometer.
Home tasks [1–2 mins]

Refer students to page 63 of the Student Workbook. The home tasks for this week are:

• Over the next week complete an Activity Diary. An example of a completed diary is given at the end of this section. You are asked to record what you were doing when you were feeling your best and when you were feeling your worst. You also need to record the emotion you felt, and the strength of the emotion using the Feelings Thermometer, as shown in the sample diary.

• Pick one activity from your ‘Feel Good’ Menu to do over the next week. Does engaging in the pleasant activity affect your mood? If so, how?

See sample diary (Resource 5.2) at the end of this session.
activity 1  Introduction to emotions

Feelings Thermometer

0  Not much feeling at all
1
2
3  Little bit of feeling
4
5  Moderate amount of feeling
6
7  Fairly strong feeling
8
9
10  Very strong feeling
### My activities and feelings record (example)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>What were you doing?</th>
<th>What feeling? Rating (1–10)</th>
<th>What were you doing?</th>
<th>What feeling? Rating (1–10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Shopping for new skirt with my sister</td>
<td>Happy 8</td>
<td>Arguing with my sister</td>
<td>Angry 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Watching TV with my parents</td>
<td>Happy 7</td>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>Bored 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Playing soccer after school</td>
<td>Happy 9</td>
<td>Trying to write an assignment for English</td>
<td>Worried 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Eating Chinese take-away with my family</td>
<td>Happy 6</td>
<td>Tidying my room</td>
<td>Nothing much 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Watching TV with my friends</td>
<td>Relaxed 8</td>
<td>Handing in my English assignment</td>
<td>Worried 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Playing soccer for school B team</td>
<td>Excited 8</td>
<td>Going shopping with Gran</td>
<td>Bored 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Going to the movies</td>
<td>Happy 9</td>
<td>Going for a family walk</td>
<td>Bored 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>