A classroom-based program developed to help build resilience in young Australians.
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Information and Support for youth mental health and well-being

WEBSITES
www.youthbeyondblue.com
www.lifeline.org.au
www.sane.org
www.reachout.com
www.headspace.org.au
www.somazone.com.au
www.inspire.org.au

HELPLINES
Youthbeyondblue: 1300 22 4636
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
Lifeline: 13 11 14
Sane Australia: 1800 18 7263

ONLINE COUNSELLING
www.kidshelp.com.au
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Program materials
The Year 9 program consists of the following:

- Teacher manual
- Video or DVD
- Student workbook
- Resource materials for review of Year 8 program and activities

Layout and use of the teacher manual
Each session is self-contained and presented as follows:

1. **Background**
   - Brief background information is provided at the start of each session.

2. **Learning outcomes**
   - Learning outcomes (key specific indicators) for each session are provided at the start of each session.

3. **Session outline**
   - Session outlines listing activities and video segments are provided at the start of each session.

   Sessions start with a brief review of the previous session – review poster of each previous session is provided as a resource at the end of each session and in the student book (review poster for the whole Year 8 program is provided in Session 1).

4. **Activities**
   - Sessions are based around activities, videos, and practice of skills.

   Each activity lists the preparation involved, an estimate of time for each activity, suggested grouping for the students, and suggested answers where necessary.

5. **Summary**
   - Sessions are completed with a brief summary of the main points for the whole session.

   Resource materials (or master copies that can be used for handouts or OHTs) for the particular session are contained at the back of each session or provided separately in the case of posters.

   Video segments are noted in each session where they occur with details on where the video clip occurs on the video. The DVD is broken into clear session chapters.
Layout and use of the student book

The student book is presented as follows:

- Activities that need to be completed in the book are provided for the relevant sessions.
- Key points or other relevant resource materials are provided for each session.
- Presenter scripts from the video are provided in relevant sessions.
- Home activities are listed for each session.
- Review of the previous session is provided at the beginning of each session.

Format and use of the video/DVD

The video has been designed to be used as a quick method of providing information to students, as a means of demonstrating skills, and as a means of providing variety and some visually stimulating materials.

Resource materials

Resource materials that support specific sessions are provided where needed. They are contained as a master copy in the teacher manual or are supplied as an additional resource with the program.

Role play and small group work

Working in groups and performing role plays are two of the strategies used to facilitate learning and skills acquisition. Both strategies can produce several benefits through developing skills to work cooperatively, communicate one’s own beliefs, and through practising skills in a safe environment. However, these activities need to be managed carefully to maximise student participation and learning.

Home activities

Students will be asked to complete home tasks after most sessions. These tasks are designed to consolidate learning from the sessions and to provide students with the opportunity to practise skills and to reflect individually on issues.

Group project

The group project is designed to allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to the topics taught throughout the program. Students will need to use a range of communication, problem solving and negotiation skills to work within a group. They will also be asked to use their knowledge and understanding of help-seeking and they may also draw on skills and knowledge from other areas of their schooling to assist in this process. Teachers may choose to assess this group project. The tasks that the students are asked to complete provide the framework and suggest the broad criteria that could form the basis of the assessment.

Teaching strategies, personal questions and disclosure

This classroom program is based upon activities that encourage analyses of situations, discussions about the behaviour of self and others, sharing experiences, values, thoughts and feelings, and self-reflection.

An overall approach to the program that facilitates discovery, discussion and sharing ideas and experiences is included in the following suggestions for teachers:

- Draw from the immediate experience, interpretations and perceptions of the students themselves.
- Make every attempt to enable students to define their own world.
- Consider the program from a positive perspective, as enhancing young people’s ability to negotiate and navigate their world even when discussing challenging issues or teaching specific skills related to problem solving.
While offering perspectives on adolescence as a significant transitional period, avoid promoting the notion that adolescence is problematic. Although activities that promote classroom discussion about values, thoughts, feelings and behaviours are an integral part of the Year 9 program, it is not intended that students have to talk about deeply personal experiences or raise sensitive topics or discuss issues that cause them personal discomfort. Situations may also arise where students may reveal or disclose personal information. Teachers need to be aware of the appropriate responses (e.g., protective interrupting) to the disclosure of personal information, and, where there is a serious concern, to be aware of school policies and procedures for referring concerns about a student.

Diversity

Each student brings with them unique characteristics and experiences shaped by personal, family, cultural, and social influences. This diversity should be valued and, wherever possible, celebrated. Individual and group differences may need to be acknowledged and considered in certain activities within the classroom program. Although this program aims to respect diversity, as a universal program, it is designed to cater to a wide range of students, but typically reflects the majority perspective. There may be individuals or groups of students for whom some of these materials will be less relevant. Teachers in specific situations (e.g., with a high multicultural population, with students with special needs, or in single-sex schools) may need to modify some of the activities, or the characters within activities, or the discussion points to cater for these students and make the experience relevant and meaningful whilst still meeting the stated learning outcomes.

Applying the classroom program to other learning areas

It is intended that skills taught in the classroom program should be applied by students across all aspects of their lives. In particular, skills to increase resilience, improve effective communication, build positive relationships, solve problems, and manage negative emotions are valuable life skills that enhance functioning and well-being. Teachers may also find that the concepts and skills that they are teaching can be used effectively in other settings within and outside the classroom. For example, the cognitive-behavioural framework described on page 16, with its emphasis on the role of thoughts and interpretations in feelings and behaviour and the benefits of employing helpful self-talk, can be applied successfully with other students and indeed with other teaching staff.

In addition many of the activities contained in the program could be effectively utilised in other learning areas. For example, the activities related to effective communication and reading emotions could be used in English classes to analyse written texts, plays, television shows and movies. The extension activity provided in Session 8 asks students to discuss issues of confidentiality in the context of seeking help. However, this is an important and complex topic that could provide a rich task for students to undertake. Students could be asked to research the topic of confidentiality in relation to different situations and different services. This could be addressed through studies of society, legal studies and other areas. The brief to design the youth-friendly space in Session 9 provides many opportunities to expand the task or to translate it to other areas. Students could be asked to design other areas, items, or services in the school. This task could involve: the IT area for web design and provision of information; design areas for the architectural and design components; and many other areas for needs analyses, gathering, analysing, and interpreting data, production of a submission, and presentation of findings to school administration.
The CBT conceptual framework for the Year 9 classroom program

Within the context of introducing a cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) approach into a universal classroom program, there are a number of principles that underpin its development and guide its delivery. The principles are based on the current evidence relating to best practice in the prevention of depression and in the development of skills for resilience and well-being. The CBT framework is based on two key components: the cognitive element and the behavioural element. The cognitive element is concerned with our thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations of our world and the behavioural element is concerned with our responses, actions and skills.

The Cognitive Element

In essence, the CBT approach states that our thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations about ourselves and the world around us influence our subsequent feelings and emotional response which, in turn, influence our actions and behaviours (see model below). Thus, when an event happens, it is our thoughts and beliefs about that event, and not the event itself, that leads us to feel and respond in certain ways. Although we cannot control events that happen to us, we can control how we think about and interpret those events and consequently how we feel about them and what we do about them. If individuals consistently have negative, self-defeating thoughts they will feel unhappy and may act in unhelpful, self-defeating ways. In fact, the cognitive model suggests that individuals who are depressed have frequent negative thoughts about themselves, the world around them, and their future. This same approach can be applied to other forms of problematic behaviours such as anxiety or aggression.

The Cognitive Model

Event ➔ Thought ➔ Feeling ➔ Action/reaction

When an event happens to us, it is our thoughts and interpretations of that event, and not the event itself that leads us to feel certain emotions and act in particular ways.

The Behavioural Element

The behavioural element of CBT focuses on the activities we engage in, the reinforcement we receive from our interactions (positive or negative outcomes), and the skills we have to interact effectively in interpersonal situations and to manage our lives. These skills include self-control, self-reflection, stress management, planning, problem solving, and a wide range of social skills.

Applying the CBT Approach

The CBT approach suggests that we are able to change the way we feel and respond if we can change the way that we think about and interpret ourselves and the world around us. In practical terms, this means helping individuals to become aware of how they think about themselves and situations, and to teach them strategies to evaluate their thoughts and to establish more helpful patterns of thinking. In addition, individuals may need training to develop skills that will assist them individually and in interpersonal interactions. A key feature of the CBT approach is the emphasis on practise of skills across a wide variety of settings and situations. This is to ensure that new skills, both cognitive and behavioural, become familiar and comfortable to the individual. This increases the likelihood that the individual will identify and evaluate their thoughts and use their skills in different contexts. Within the CBT framework, the individual is an active participant who performs activities, monitors his/her thoughts and behaviours, evaluates and reviews his/her performance, and modifies subsequent thoughts and actions accordingly.
Principles of Effective Practice (PEPs)

In line with the other components of the beyondblue schools research initiative, a number of principles of effective practice have been developed for the classroom program. These principles, based on the CBT approach to behaviour change and the acquisition of skills, underpin the development and guide the implementation of the program. The links between thoughts, feelings, and actions are an implicit underpinning of the program and they are highlighted in different activities using different methods within the program. The program uses the CBT framework to help students understand these concepts and develop skills to use in their everyday lives. Skills acquisition is a key element of the CBT framework. The skills taught in the program are evidence-based and are central to managing relationships and interpersonal situations. The program aims to find a balance between making the material interesting and exciting for students, and providing sufficient opportunity to actually learn and practice the skills that they will need.

The PEPs for the classroom program are:

- The skills taught have high face validity (appear acceptable and relevant) and are developmentally appropriate.
- Students understand not just WHAT skills are important in dealing with relationship issues but WHY they are important.
- Skills need to be taught in a hierarchical manner, ensuring each skill is well established before moving on to the next.
- Skills need to be clear and specific (eg. using eye contact or monitoring facial expression) and not vague/general (eg. appearing cooperative).
- Students have opportunities to practise the skills (the more practice the greater the skill acquisition).
- Practise of skills needs to take place in a variety of different realistic contexts as this will make it more likely that these skills will be used in these real world settings in the future.
- Students need an opportunity to receive feedback from practice attempts.
- Role plays that are tailored to include real-life cues are an effective means of practising skills and increase the likelihood that skills will be used in real situations.
- Based on the evidence about skill acquisition, the program needs to include relevant and interesting examples/demonstration of use of the skill by models with whom the students can identify.
- Skills taught should be likely to lead to positive outcomes in real-life situations, so that they are rewarded and reinforced.

Relationship between the classroom program PEPs and principles of effective learning and teaching

Education systems nationally are committed to ensuring that all students are provided with the opportunity to obtain a balanced and equitable education that prepares them for present and future life roles. Although individual states may articulate these goals differently, the overriding commitment to the holistic development of the individual student is standard. The PEPs for the classroom program, based on the CBT approach, are complementary to the principles of effective learning and teaching outlined in states’ curriculum documents. The classroom program seeks to provide activities that are socially relevant and allow students to make meaning from their experiences. The program recognises that students bring unique characteristics, different personal experiences, and a variety of learning styles to the learning situation and seeks to capitalise on these differences. The program acknowledges that individuals have a reciprocal relationship with the environment in which they live and it seeks to maximise positive interactions within these environments. The classroom program also recognises the importance of learning partnerships and encourages the strengthening of partnerships between teachers and students, students and their peers, and teachers, students and the broader school community.
With the production of the second edition of the *beyondblue* classroom program (Year 9) the number of people who we have to thank for its development and production has grown.

We would firstly like to thank *beyondblue: the national depression initiative* for its continued support of the schools research initiative. We would also like to thank the *beyondblue* project management group for their input and support. As the *beyondblue* schools research initiative is in its second year of operation there has been a growing collaboration and sense of cohesion across the three states involved (Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia). The *beyondblue* state project teams in Victoria and South Australia provided valuable input and feedback on the program. We would particularly like to thank Andrea Krelle, state coordinator *beyondblue* project Victoria, who worked with the Queensland team in writing the program materials, ensuring that the materials met educational goals, and providing input into the professional development activities for teachers.

We would also like to thank the *beyondblue* Advisory/Reference Committees in each state that provide advice and strategic assistance to the *beyondblue* school research initiative. These committees work to strengthen the education-mental health interface.

One of the authors, Lois Kennedy, has made an outstanding contribution to the development of the materials. Lois had wide experience in the Queensland education system as a teacher and in curriculum development and she has also worked on many national education projects, bringing this broad experience to the development of the program materials. She played a key role in the production of the Year 8 classroom program and has contributed to the development of the professional development activities. Her patience and sense of humour are greatly appreciated.

Professor Doune Macdonald (Department of Human Movement Studies) and Dr Kate Sofronoff (School of Psychology) at the University of Queensland also provided support and critical feedback throughout the production process. We would particularly like to thank Sharon Burke and Peta Lilley who were employed part-time on the Queensland team and contributed to the early development of the materials.

Special thanks for his professionalism go to Stephen Irwin of SeaWitch Creations who was responsible for the design process, organising publication of the written materials and producing the video materials used in the program. We would also like to pay special thanks to the staff and students at Ipswich State High School for allowing us to film the video at their school and for their continued involvement in the *beyondblue* schools research initiative.

While producing the classroom program, we met many young people whose motivation, enthusiasm, willingness to give so generously of themselves and commitment to mental health promotion has been inspiring. These young people embody the concept of meaningful participation in the community. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Raw Metal, a troupe of extremely talented male tap dancers who have partnered with *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*. They are seen performing at high energy on the video and they have attended many school-based activities to talk to students about mental health promotion. We would also like to thank the talented actors who perform on the video for their professionalism and interest in promoting good mental health and well-being.

Finally, and importantly, we would like to thank all of the teachers and students who participated in the Year 8 classroom program and provided feedback on the program through informal chats, formal reviews and by completing surveys. We appreciate the time that teachers made available to talk with us about the program, and are impressed by the genuine and continued interest that teachers have in the well-being of their students. Although we could not incorporate every piece of the feedback into the Year 9 program, we have tried to address the major issues and hope that this is reflected in the new program.

There are undoubtedly many other people who have helped us in the design and development of this classroom program. If we have forgotten to mention you by name, please forgive us.
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- **Nick Cooper**
- **Justin Tamblyn**
- **Mark Hill**
- **Kyle Moyle**
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- **Stephen Iwin**
- **Kelsie McDonald**
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Welcome to the Year 9 classroom program, which is the second program produced as part of the beyondblue schools research initiative. This program has been designed to build on the material covered in the Year 8 program and to build on the skills that were taught in that program.

Components of the beyondblue schools research initiative

The beyondblue schools research initiative is a partnership between schools and beyondblue state project teams that commenced in 2002. There are 50 schools across Queensland, Victoria and South Australia participating in this initiative. The initiative has been designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an integrated school-based intervention in reducing the level of depression in young people.

The beyondblue schools research initiative has the following major aims:

- Reduce levels of depression experienced by young people
- Engage whole school communities to promote emotional well-being and social connectedness
- Increase awareness and understanding of adolescent depression and its impact
- Increase the capacity of school communities to plan and evaluate any future work they might do in this area
There are **FOUR** components in the *beyondblue* schools research initiative:

1. **Supportive environments**
   
   A whole-school strategy that aims to strengthen relationships and participation in the school.

2. **Pathways for care and education**
   
   Exploring how best to enable students to access support and professional services through school and within the community.

3. **Community forums**
   
   Promote the well-being of the whole school community by improving the knowledge and awareness of mental health, challenge the stigma associated with depression, and provide information to enable young people to seek both help for themselves and to help peers.

4. **Classroom program**
   
   A universal (designed for all students) program that builds hierarchically on the previous programs and aims to develop and enhance core skills for resilience in young people.

The four components are designed to work in unison with each other. The supportive environment within the school provides the underpinning and framework within which the other components operate. The supportive environment encompasses relationships between students and students, students and teachers, teachers and other school personnel, and school members and the wider community. Within this supportive environment, community forums are used as a means of increasing well-being of students and integrating the wider community into the school environment. The pathways for care and education will be facilitated by an environment in which mental health and well-being is a focus and seeking help for self and others is fostered. The community forums provide a further mechanism for linking with community service providers and identifying subsequent pathways for care and education. Finally, the classroom program is delivered by teachers in the classroom. It aims to build skills to increase resilience and promote emotional well-being in students. In addition, the program seeks to increase student participation in the classroom and the wider school community and to explore and build positive relationships. It also aims to increase help-seeking among students and their peers and to examine the pathways for care and education available to young people. Finally, students are involved in planning and attending community forums to raise awareness and reduce stigma about mental health issues. Skills and strategies that are taught in the classroom program are designed to be applied across other areas of the young person’s life and to be used by teachers in other contexts as well as the specific class in which the program is delivered. The program is consistent with health promoting schools frameworks that emphasise the importance of an inclusive, safe and supportive environment, a curriculum that promotes well-being, and partnerships with the wider community.
**beyondblue** schools research initiative milestones

In 2003, 50 schools across Queensland, Victoria and South Australia agreed to participate in the **beyondblue** schools research initiative: 25 as full intervention schools and 25 as community forum schools. In the 25 full intervention schools, school action teams have been formed to work in partnership with the state **beyondblue** project teams to implement and evaluate the initiative. A 2-day professional development (PD) workshop was held for school action teams as the first step in this process. Students and teachers who consented to participate completed a self-report survey in Term 2, 2003. The surveys included questions about social and emotional well-being and perceptions of the school. Relevant survey data have been collated and provided to each school as a comprehensive report to assist in planning for future activities.

The Year 8 classroom program was delivered to all Year 8 students in the intervention schools in Term 3, 2003 after a 1-day PD workshop for teachers. Feedback on the program was obtained from teachers throughout the course of its delivery, through interviews and written surveys as well as in meetings between teachers and research staff.

Two ½-day PD workshops addressing pathways for care and education have been conducted with school action team staff in Term 4, 2003 and Terms 1 and 2 in 2004. Community forums designed to improve knowledge and awareness of mental health and to network local service providers with the school community have been staged by schools and **beyondblue** project teams, commencing in Term 4, 2003. The forums were delivered in many different ways and have provided a means of informing students and their parents about mental health issues and pathways for care as well as networking with youth-focused service providers.

School action teams have used data that were gathered through surveys and informal means to develop school action plans around the four components of the initiative. Progress against these action plans is being monitored on an ongoing basis.

**The 3-year classroom program**

The major goal of the classroom program over the three years is to facilitate the learning of core skills for resilience. Overall, the program aims to enhance five senses that are recognised as protective factors against mental health problems: (1) sense of self-worth, (2) sense of belonging, (3) sense of control, (4) sense of meaning or purpose, and (5) sense of future.

The theme of the Year 8 program was “Getting to know yourself” and the program covered the following topics: images of adolescence; self-concept; emotions and emotional regulation; the thinking-feeling link; coping with challenges and stress; planning for emotional health; and a group project.

**The Year 9 program**

The Year 9 program builds hierarchically on the skills and knowledge taught in the Year 8 program. Its main focus is on sense of belonging and is framed within the context of relationships and the skills needed to form and maintain different relationships. A second focus is on exploring sources of support and how to seek help for self and others and providing students with the opportunity to identify and develop youth-friendly support services that could be delivered within the school setting.
Major issues for Year 9 students

Life for students across all years of schooling can be exciting and challenging. There are many issues that may be confronted; many will have positive outcomes but some may be more difficult to negotiate. Students in Year 9 have identified a number of common issues, both positive and negative, that confront them such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>PEERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting on with brothers and sisters</td>
<td>Peer pressure to take drugs, have sex or do illegal things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to please parents</td>
<td>Keeping up with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental separation or divorce</td>
<td>Being put down, teased or bullied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money problems</td>
<td>Increased social activities with friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure to achieve</td>
<td>Going out more</td>
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<td>Gaining more independence</td>
<td>Pressure to achieve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being given more responsibility</td>
<td>Pressure not to achieve</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>PERSONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to perform</td>
<td>Puberty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>Body image</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
<td>Sexual health</td>
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<td>Increasing academic demands</td>
<td>Stress</td>
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<td>Subject choice</td>
<td>Mental health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career choice</td>
<td>Keeping fit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being given more responsibility</td>
<td>Eating well</td>
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<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY OR SOCIAL ISSUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural, spirituality and religious differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Going out (dating)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social, recreational, sporting and community activities</td>
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The Year 9 program aims to allow students, both individually and in groups, to explore some of these issues as they relate to themselves and others. As many of these issues occur within the context of relationships, the program will use this framework to identify and develop skills necessary to deal with these issues and manage these relationships.

Feedback from teachers and students on Year 8 program

After the Year 8 program was delivered, feedback on its content, format, and mode of delivery was sought from teachers who had been involved in its delivery as well as from students who had participated in the program. We have attempted to incorporate this feedback into the development of the Year 9 program wherever possible. We have responded to consistent themes in the feedback. One of the major challenges encountered by some teachers of the Year 8 program was the lack of time to complete activities. In part, this was dependent on the length of the individual class periods, the level of understanding of the class, and the amount of discussion generated by each activity. Although we have written sessions for 45-minute classes, we strongly suggest that classes run for a longer period to allow full discussions of topics to take place. Based on feedback, the Year 9 program uses a variety of media to present materials to cater for the different learning styles of students.

Learning outcomes

As with the Year 8 program, outcomes from the learning area of Health and Physical Education have been selected as the basis for planning the Year 9 sessions and activities. However, teachers can support the promotion of mental health across all learning areas, for example, through the study of literature and drama, and the investigation of cultural, social, economic, equity and diversity issues.

Health and Physical Education curriculum documents across all states and territories recognise the importance of the link between mental health, and learning and performance at school. This importance is reflected in learning outcomes that provide opportunities for young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to: cope with challenges and changes in
their lives; develop feelings of self-worth; interact effectively with others; and form fulfilling relationships. These outcomes provided a key focus for planning the Year 8 and Year 9 classroom activities.

Throughout the 10 sessions of the program, students will be given the opportunity to work towards the achievement of some of the outcomes from the Health and Physical Education curriculum documents. The learning outcomes reflect what is expected that students will know, achieve and be able to demonstrate after taking part in the range of activities and learning experiences over the 10 sessions.

The Year 8 program specified the following overall learning outcomes:

Students will:

- Evaluate the influences on self-concept, self-esteem and resilience.
- Describe ways people define their own and others’ identity.
- Analyse changes associated with growth, development and significant transitions.
- Recommend and demonstrate skills that promote a positive self-concept and resilience.

The Year 9 program has identified the following overall learning outcomes:

Students will:

- Describe the role of thoughts and emotions in relationships, and develop strategies for helpful self-talk and emotional regulation.
- Demonstrate communication skills, problem solving and conflict resolution to manage relationships effectively.
- Develop the capacity to take the perspective of other people.
- Explore the dynamics of relationships and how these impact on well-being.
- Describe what is meant by mental health, and explore its contribution to well-being.
- Develop options for seeking support and for meeting mental health needs.

In addition to the overall learning outcomes for the Year 9 program, there are individual learning outcomes specific to each individual session. These individual outcomes or indicators outline what each session aims to achieve. Each session also contributes to overall learning outcomes for the Year 9 program listed above.

The table on page 12 provides a brief outline of each session in the Year 9 program including the topics to be covered and the overall learning outcome/s to which the session contributes. Individual learning outcomes for each session are found at the beginning of each session.