HOW REAL IS THAT?
Background

The theme for the Year 10 program is “Getting on in your world and getting on with your future”. The program takes into account the growing maturity of the students and the changes and challenges that they will meet over the next few years, e.g. choosing subjects, planning for work, apprenticeships, TAFE, university, changes in family, friendships, schools, and increasing responsibilities.

The program seeks to challenge students to analyse situations and interactions, to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours, and to examine different ways of thinking about situations. However, some students do not like the idea of having to undertake subjects that entail training in “life skills” so it is important to attempt to counter this negativity and to engage students in the process of learning. If required, possible strategies to address this issue will need to recognise the specific characteristics of individual classes.

The program for Year 10 has been developed around Strongbbox, a series of 10 episodes following the lives of six contestants who have been selected to face a series of challenges while living together, isolated from their friends and families. As in reality television programs, the contestants are judged on the way they deal with the challenges, but in Strongbbox they are also rated on the six senses: (1) sense of self-worth, (2) sense of belonging, (3) sense of control, (4) sense of purpose or meaning, (5) sense of future, and (6) sense of humour. Research has shown that these senses and the skills associated with them play an important role as protective factors against mental health problems. The concept of the senses was introduced to students in the Year 9 program and forms the basis for the activities in this program.

The introduction to the program in Session 1 has purposely been kept very brief, so that the focus of the session is on the reality show concept to help ensure that the students are immediately engaged in the lives of the characters. Students will be able to see how different people respond to different situations in different ways, and, as the contest unfolds, the students will be able to use their skills of helpful thinking, emotional recognition, emotional regulation, perspective taking, problem solving, countering negativity and stress reduction in situations that can and do occur in their own lives.

Learning outcomes

In this session students:

- Revise skills needed for effective social interaction
- Recognise the role of the senses as protective factors in building good mental health problems
- Use a range of verbal and non-verbal cues to examine behaviour in others
### Key messages

- **The six senses (self-worth, control, belonging, purpose, future, and humour) play an important role in meeting life challenges.**
- **The skills associated with these senses help build good mental health and wellbeing.**
- **These skills can be used in everyday life.**

*Skills: perspective taking, social skills*

### Session outline

1.1 **Discussion**
1.2 **Quiz** – Reality bites  
1.3 **Discussion** – Reality TV characters  
1.4 **Video** – Episode 1 of Strongbbox  
1.5 **Activity** – First impressions  
1.6 **Extra activity** – If I were chosen…

### Materials

- Video set at Episode 1  
- Resource 1.1  
- Paper for groups to record answers  
- Quiz prize [optional]  
- Resource 1.2  
- Student books [not to be handed out until Activity 1.5]
Session Plan

1.1 Discussion

**Learning environment:** Whole class

**Preparation/materials:**
- No specific requirements

**Procedure**
1. **Explain** to students that over the next 10 weeks they will have the opportunity to watch a reality program where 6 contestants are competing for a prize.
2. **Discuss** reality shows, who watches them, why do they like them, which ones are favourites?
3. **Brainstorm** some reality shows that students watch and make a list on the board.
4. **Discuss** the idea that reality shows are often about competition, and about winners and losers, so tell them they’re going to start off with a competition.

1.2 Quiz – Reality bites

**Learning environment:** Small groups

**Preparation/materials:**
- Resource 1.1 – Reality TV quiz [1 copy for teacher]
- Paper for groups to record answers [1 per group]
- Quiz prize [optional]

**Procedure**
1. **Draw up** a scoring chart on a board using the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Hand out** paper to groups to record their answers on.

3. **Read out** scoring instructions from Resource 1.1. Read out the questions at a specified time interval of approximately 30 - 45 seconds. This will allow time for brief discussion and to reach agreement, whilst keeping the competition moving by making it short and sharp. Teams may need to talk quietly or whisper. Teams are to write answers on the paper provided.

4. At the end of each round, **read out** the answers and record points on the board.

5. **Repeat** for the 3 rounds.

6. After the final round **fill in** the total column and find the winning team (optional: prize for the winning team or appropriate recognition).

1.3 Discussion – Reality TV characters  

1. **Discuss** some of the reality show characters, and reflect on the following:
   - Why do students like them, why don’t they like them?
   - What are some characteristics or skills of the winners/the losers?
   - How did you recognise these skills (e.g. verbals, non-verbals, actions and responses)?

2. **Explain** how:

   Research shows that people who are able to cope with the challenges, changes, successes, failures or disappointments that happen in their lives have a range of skills that are linked to a number of senses: a sense of self-worth, sense of belonging, sense of control, sense of purpose, sense of future, and sense of humour. If you watch the reality programs on TV you will find that often the winners display these types of characteristics.

3. **Explain** that they are now going to watch a reality program.

1.4 Video – Episode 1 of Strongbbox  

What’s happening this week? **Meet the 6 young contestants who will be living in the Strongbbox house, the 3 judges who will be rating them, and the resident expert.**

>>>PLAY VIDEO NOW
1.5 Activity – First impressions

**Learning environment**  Whole class

**Preparation/materials**
- Resource 1.2 – Senses rating scale [1 copy for teacher]

**Procedure**

1. **Hand out** student book.

2. **Introduce** the rating scale the judges will be using on page 4 of their student books (Resource 1.2) and explain that the rating is simple: just low, medium or high on each of the six senses. **Highlight** each of the senses and its description listed on the rating scale. Draw students’ attention to the tips for rating that are included with the rating scale. Students will be asked to do their own ratings of the contestants on the senses.

3. **Refer** students to the photos of the contestants on page 6 of their books (and bottom of Resource 1.2). **Ask** students to describe what their first impressions of the contestants were and why they reached that impression. For example, was it body language, the words they used, their tone of voice or other factors? **Ask** students to write their impressions on page 6 of their books to refer to and compare with ratings later in the series.

4. **Discuss** how first impressions can sometimes be accurate and at other times wrong. Ask for any examples of first impressions that were right and why, and that were wrong and why (students may wish to relate this to any contestants they have seen on reality shows). What made you change your mind? **Explain** that sometimes you may get it wrong because you don’t know what the other person is thinking or you don’t understand their perspective. This often changes as we get to know people better.

5. **Conclude** by advising students they will be watching and discussing how the contestants in the video perform and behave over the next 9 weeks.

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1.6 Extra activity – If I were chosen...

1. **Choose** one of the winning contestants from a reality show and do a quick check list of the senses rating scale, rating the characteristics of the winner against the scale. Discuss with students how they recognised the skills, e.g. verbal/non-verbal, tone of voice, posture etc., and how the characteristics helped the winner in the contest.

2. **Refer** students to page 7 of their book. **Ask** students to write down 3 words that describe how they would feel if they were chosen for a reality show.
   - What were they thinking to cause them to feel that way?
   - How might they act if they think that way?