Sense of Humour

Can be used in conjunction with the SenseAbility Essential Skills Module and DVD
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Welcome to Sense of Humour

Welcome to the Sense of Humour Module, one of the seven modules of beyondblue’s SenseAbility Suite.

SenseAbility is designed to help enhance and maintain resilience and psychological wellbeing in young people (ages 12–18) by building their social and emotional skills. Young people who possess sound social and emotional skills are generally better able to cope with the stressors of daily life. They also tend to have better relationships with their parents, teachers and peers, and perform better academically. Very importantly, having these skills makes it less likely that a young person will experience a significant mental health problem in the future.

This suite of modules uses a strength-based approach that asks students to concentrate less on things that they think might be ‘wrong’ with themselves or their world, and focus more on the things that are okay or good, and which they can capitalise on. For example, they might not have the body they think is ideal, but that body still allows them to move and talk and eat and feel. They may not be the most popular person in class, but they might still possess valued qualities like loyalty or the ability to share a joke, or take good care of their siblings. In short, if students take their focus away from ‘faults’ and ‘defects’ and build instead on their inherent qualities and things that they are competent or skilled at, they open themselves up to more opportunities to be satisfied in life.

The SenseAbility Suite covers six separate but interlinked life ‘Senses’; it also covers ‘Essential Skills’—important life and interaction skills often needed to cope with the changes and challenges of everyday life.

### THE SENSEABILITY SUITE

<table>
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<td><strong>SELF-WORTH</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge and belief in your strengths, qualities, and abilities, and an acceptance of your inherent value and individuality. Building and maintaining a belief in the value of the essential ‘you’ can help you face life’s changes and challenges more effectively. Self-worth is particularly important during transitional phases in your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTROL</strong></td>
<td>Belief that you have the skills and ability to cope with life’s challenges, and to manage your emotions. Includes a realistic recognition of what is within and what is outside your control. It is an understanding that, although you cannot control all of life’s events, you do have some control over your responses to those events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BELONGING</strong></td>
<td>The feeling of being valued, needed, accepted, and meaningfully connected to a social network. Feeling ‘connected’ to your friends, family, school, and community provides a Sense of Belonging, which is especially important when times are tough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
<td>Sense of Purpose (or meaning) is the motivation that drives you toward a satisfying future. It also helps you to get the most from the things you do and achieve – large and small – right now. Your Sense of Purpose is shaped by things you believe in and value – your own personal code of behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE</strong></td>
<td>Gives feelings of hopefulness about the future, allowing you to act purposefully and positively. It can help you feel encouraged about setting goals for the future and making plans to meet those goals. It involves positive expectations, realistic thinking, goal setting and problem-solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HUMOUR</strong></td>
<td>The ability to see the lighter and ‘funnier’ side of life, including your own foibles. A Sense of Humour enables you to appreciate laughter and to enjoy life. An important aspect of the sense is the ability to plan enjoyable/pleasant events into your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESSENTIAL SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>These are life skills which help you to interact more effectively with others, and to cope better with life’s changes and challenges. These skills are broken into six main types: helpful thinking and self-talk; emotion recognition and regulation; life problem solving; communicating effectively; planning and time management; and keeping well.</td>
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The Sense of Humour Module can be delivered as a stand-alone learning tool, or in combination with any or all of the other SenseAbility modules. For suggestions on delivering more than one module, see Delivering SenseAbility (p.53).
Your Sense of Humour is your ability to perceive and enjoy amusement, and to find enjoyment in life. It is also your ability to be amusing, and make others smile and laugh. It includes your capacity to relax and laugh at yourself and situations, and to see the lighter side of life. In short, it is your ability to share joy and laughter in a positive way that can make others feel good, too.

Our Sense of Humour is complex. It involves sophisticated mental and emotional processes, like changing perspective and seeing yourself and others in different contexts. It isn’t static and changes as we grow older and our tastes mature. What we find funny as a young child will often be very different to what makes us laugh when we are 16, and different again when we are middle-aged.

Laughter is very good for your mind and body. Laughter helps us to relax, increasing positive emotions and reducing stress. Laughter is a very important coping mechanism that helps us not only to enjoy good times more, but also to deal with challenges. If we develop the capacity to look for the lighter side of ourselves and of life events, we are better able to remain mentally and emotionally resilient.

Goals of this Module

This module aims to convey the many ways that a healthy Sense of Humour protects and promotes our wellbeing.

It is important to understand that we all have the ability to interpret events in more than one way, and that this control over our thoughts allows us to see the lighter side of challenging situations. Some activities you facilitate in this module may result in laughter. *It is important to stress the difference between laughing with others and laughing at others.*

Activities and discussions in this module will aim to make students think about:

- the importance of humour to a healthy mind and body
- how humour helps us cope with difficult situations
- how humour helps us connect with other people and to see things from new perspectives
- the importance of planning enjoyable and pleasant events into our schedules.
Here are the seven key goals of the Sense of Humour Module. Keep them in mind as you deliver each session. At the end of the module, your students should be able to:

1. DEFINE Sense of Humour.
2. UNDERSTAND what a Sense of Humour provides them with.
3. IDENTIFY the key features of Sense of Humour.
4. IDENTIFY aspects of Sense of Humour within themselves and how important the sense is in their own lives.
5. RECOGNISE how strong their own Sense of Humour is and their capacity to enhance it.
6. UNDERSTAND that their thoughts about events – not the events themselves – affect their feelings and behaviours, and that they have the ability to change those thoughts.
7. PRACTISE and APPLY their understanding and new knowledge in real life.

In your final session, revisit these seven key goals to ensure that your students have met them.

Many of this module's activities relate to the four main themes dominant in Sense of Humour:

1. **Lightening Up** – Most events that occur in life can be interpreted in different ways. While we may not have much control over some events, we can control the way we think about them. It is important to build these thinking skills so we can look for the lighter side of even difficult events. Seeing the lighter side also includes not taking ourselves too seriously, and accepting that some things are outside our control.

2. **Scheduling Enjoyable or Pleasant Events** – As our lives become busier, it becomes easy to place a lower priority on things that we may regard as simply fun or frivolous. However, it is very important to our wellbeing that we make certain to regularly do things that we enjoy, and which have the potential to make us smile and laugh.

3. **Mood & Physiology** – Laughter is a coping mechanism as old as the human species. A healthy laugh has positive effects on our emotional state, but also has a positive physical effect. Indeed, the act of laughing can trigger the release of chemicals that naturally help improve our mood. Laughter also reduces some of the hormones associated with the stress response, and has been found to reduce pain in some hospital patients. Humour helps us to relax; for instance, the body’s muscles relax more quickly after watching funny cartoons than looking at beautiful scenery.

4. **Values** – Much of what we find humorous depends upon the things in life, in ourselves, and in others that we value e.g. ethics, physical health, spirituality, family, security, craftsmanship, nature. Just as our values can change as we meet new people and experience new things, so too our Sense of Humour can evolve and embrace those values.

If you want to select activities by theme, you can do so easily using the Classroom Activities Guide (p.51).
Sense of Humour – like all of SenseAbility – is based on cognitive-behavioural principles. This evidence-based approach says that our thoughts play a central role in influencing our feelings and our consequent behaviour. In other words, when an event happens to us, it is our interpretation of and thoughts about the event – not the event itself – that leads us to feel certain emotions and act in particular ways.

In a school setting, an example of the A-B-C-D principle (shown below) might be when two students receive exactly the same exam score, yet have completely different emotional and behavioural reactions. One student might be disappointed and upset because he/she thinks it is not the top mark and therefore he/she did not perform effectively, while the other may be delighted because it is a better mark than he/she usually achieves. A clip demonstrating this is included on the Essential Skills DVD (Helpful Thinking & Self-talk, Unit 1, Clip #2).

Very importantly, this model proposes that while we often can’t change events, we do have the power to change the way we think about those events, and therefore how we feel and how we behave.

Put simply, the A-B-C-D approach means that changing the way we think can help make us feel better. Many of the activities and discussion cues included in this module – particularly the Core Activity ‘Give Me a Joke’ (p.14) – relate directly to this A-B-C-D Model. These will often include questions about what the students were thinking during the activity they just performed or the event being discussed, and how those thoughts affected the way they felt and what they did as a result. It is important for you to keep this thought–feeling–action link at the front of mind.

If you have already delivered a Core Activity similar to ‘Give Me a Joke’ with another Sense module, you may consider reinforcing students’ understanding of the A-B-C-D Model through another activity, such as ‘Noise in the Night’ (p.85), or by brainstorming scenarios where a single event can result in different feelings and actions in different people, simply because they thought about that event in different ways.

Once you feel your students have a good grasp of the A-B-C-D Model concept, the next step is to encourage them to get into the habit of challenging unhelpful thoughts about events in order to make themselves feel better (see p.7 for examples). The Essential Skills Module also examines strategies for challenging unhelpful thoughts (in the Helpful Thinking & Self-talk section) and is supported by DVD clips.
This module includes activities that aim to help students identify and exercise some Essential Skills that are particularly important to Sense of Humour, including:

- helpful self-talk/challenging unhelpful self-talk (see below)
- emotion recognition and regulation
- perspective-taking
- scheduling enjoyable/pleasant events
- self-care and keeping well.

**Self-talk – The Most Essential Skill**

The importance of helpful self-talk to wellbeing is difficult to overstate. Helpful self-talk is a skill critical to building a strong Sense of Humour. When we speak to ourselves helpfully, we are more likely to cope well with difficult or embarrassing events, and to involve ourselves in social situations. However, when we speak to ourselves unhelpfully, we are more likely to dwell on negative aspects of things that occur, and can be discouraged for attempting things or engaging in social situations.

The way we think and talk to ourselves can directly affect the way we feel and, consequently, the actions we take or don’t take. In this respect, self-talk relates directly to the A-B-C-D Model. Therefore, if we get into the habit of challenging unhelpful thoughts and generating alternative ways of thinking (see below), we help protect our emotional and mental wellbeing.

Look for opportunities during class discussions to draw out what your students were saying to themselves during activities or events and, consequently, how those thoughts made them feel and what they did as a result of this. Please note that some people find it difficult to remember what they were thinking or seeing in their mind, and some people get ‘thoughts’ and ‘feelings’ confused, e.g. ‘I felt I wasn’t good enough’ is in fact a thought, not a feeling.

Here are some examples of helpful and unhelpful self-talk relevant to Sense of Humour:

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<td><strong>There is a serious side to life, but that doesn’t mean I can’t have fun.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I don’t have much fun</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sometimes it’s helpful to look at the lighter side of things.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I’m too busy for frivolous things</strong></td>
<td><strong>I can find ways to have fun.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>I can talk to someone to help me feel better.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>I might be busy, but I know having fun is important, too.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>If I make time to have fun, I will feel refreshed and may focus better.</strong></td>
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Teaching Suggestions

HOW MANY ACTIVITIES?
Select and deliver as many activities as you think necessary to allow your students to understand and have sufficient practice at applying aspects of Sense of Humour. These activities are suggestions only, and you should feel free to create or find your own activities to spark fruitful discussion or deliver helpful information about Sense of Humour. All activities are itemised on the Classroom Activities Guide (p.51) and are also included in the Activities & Resources section (commencing p.55).

NON-PARTICIPATION
Some students, with good reason, may not wish to participate in either activities or discussion. This non-participation should be seen as a valid response to the material; it does not necessarily mean the student is not gaining insight from your delivery or other students’ participation. Allowing the student to observe is often the best course.

SENSITIVE ISSUES
Some activities or discussion points may cause distress to some vulnerable students. Vetting activities and references beforehand, and thorough debriefing when necessary, should decrease this risk.

HUMOUR IN THE CLASS AND SCHOOL
When it’s used well, humour can be a useful method to get messages across, to engage students, and to defuse potentially difficult situations. It is important that you, as a role model, also see the lighter side of yourself and events that occur in the classroom. An awareness that fun shared can be unifying is very valuable – however, it is important to stress the difference between laughing with others and laughing at others.
Activity Delivery

Each SenseAbility module offers around 20 classroom activities for you to choose from. Each activity is designed to provide an experience which you and your students can discuss to gain new understanding about how particular life ‘Senses’ apply in practical ways.

ACTIVITY NAME

The activities, generally, are only catalysts: it is class discussion that will open up understanding about the life senses, their application, and their importance to your students’ daily lives. These discussion points are stimulus suggestions only. You should feel free to use only those you agree are relevant, and to create and follow your own discussion threads. Some activities may have particular relevance to other work you are doing with the class (e.g. a study of society topic, a set text, or preparation for a sports event) so exploring that connection can be extremely valuable.

Activity Name

All activities in this module are listed alphabetically in the Classroom Activities Guide (p.51).

High Noon Balloons

ACTIVITY: ‘HIGH NOON BALLOONS’

TIME: One to five minutes

SIZE: Individual activity most fun when done as whole of class

SPACE: For students to move around

RESOURCES: Marking pens, four inflatable balloons per student, pens, paper

The aim is to place students in a pressured situation where they will eventually lose control. The result should be discussion about the need to regulate emotions, speak helpfully to ourselves, and prioritise commitments in order to minimise feelings of stress.

2. Give students one minute to list on paper four things they often feel are beyond their control (e.g. deadlines, family commitments, corporate greed, mobile phone bills, etc.).
3. Have them number these four potential stressors: 1 (most difficult to control) to 4 (most within control).
4. Have students write their four stressors on their balloons (one per balloon), and to write the corresponding rating number (1-4) on each balloon.
5. Now comes the tricky part: students must try to blow up their four balloons and keep them aloft with one hand while they inflate the Number 3 balloon, and so on.
6. Students who let their balloons hit the floor should retire from the playing area to let students with their balloons still aloft have more room.
7. The activity ends when the last student finally loses control and his/her balloons touch the floor.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What thoughts, feelings and physical symptoms did students experience during the exercise? E.g. racing heart, excitement, anger, frustration, giggling, etc.
• Did these seem voluntary or involuntary? Why do you think that was?
• What were you saying to yourself during the activity? Was this self-talk helpful or unhelpful?
• What strategies did successful players (i.e. those who got the most balloons inflated and/or kept them off the ground the longest) employ? Did these involve overcoming instinctive emotional reactions and using thinking skills? If so, what were they?
• In what ways is this activity similar to real life?
• Brainstorm some important lessons you might have learned from this activity (e.g. know your limitations, and accept that perhaps you can only handle two or three ‘balloons’ at a time)!
• Discuss the importance of 1) regulating knee-jerk emotional reactions, 2) helpful self-talk, and 3) prioritising tasks in our lives.

Resources

Copiable and printable pages are included in the back of each module and on the SenseAbility CD. Other resources are generally not difficult to source – these include school equipment like sports mats, and readily purchasable items like drinking straws or balloons. Resources like pens, paper and glue are listed, but are assumed to be typical to most classrooms.

Aims & Results

A basic summary of what students should gain from this activity.

Instructions

A step-by-step approach to delivering the activity. Once you have read the instructions, you should feel free to deviate from them to deliver the activity in a way that you and your students will feel most comfortable with. You should also consider repeating the activity if you think it will benefit your students’ understanding.

Discussion Suggestions

The activities, generally, are only catalysts: it is class discussion that will open up understanding about the life senses, their application, and their importance to your students’ daily lives. These discussion points are stimulus suggestions only. You should feel free to use only those you agree are relevant, and to create and follow your own discussion threads. Some activities may have particular relevance to other work you are doing with the class (e.g. a study of society topic, a set text, or preparation for a sports event) so exploring that connection can be extremely valuable.
SENSE OF HUMOUR is the ability to see the lighter and ‘funnier’ side of life, including your own foibles. Having a sense of humour provides you with the ability to appreciate laughter and to enjoy life. An important aspect of the sense is the ability to plan enjoyable or pleasant events into your life.

FOR TEACHERS

- Despite your workload, make time in your own life for pleasant and/or enjoyable events. You need looking after, too!
- Be aware that humour is a uniting force: fun shared can be unifying and valuable.
- Stress the important difference between laughing with others and laughing at others.
- Provide opportunities for humour or laughter in the classroom to relieve boredom or tension, and to provide a balance to serious work.

MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS

- Don’t take yourself too seriously. The ability to find humour and to laugh – even in the face of serious and challenging events – is one of humankind’s most valuable traits.
- Humour helps make us resilient in the face of life’s uncertainties.
- Sense of Humour is very individual. There are some things most of us find funny, yet some things that seem amusing only to a few. Respect other people’s Sense of Humour; they are not better or worse for laughing (or not laughing) at the same time as you.
- Your Sense of Humour will change as you grow. What you found funny as a six-year-old won’t seem as funny when you’re 16 or when you’re 26.
- You don’t have to laugh when others do to have a good time. A strong Sense of Humour means appreciating laughter in others even when you’re not laughing.

ACTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP STRENGTHEN YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR

- Do things just for the fun of it – not everything in life has to have a practical benefit.
- Try something different: play the drums, run out in the rain, get on a slippery-slide for the first time in years, wear a silly hat and not care what others think.
- Get out your diary and mark out some clear time to watch or listen to something funny, or to do something you like. You have to make time for enjoyable things – it’s important!
While it is up to you how you deliver Sense of Humour, there are two main options:

**Suggested Program**: a detailed, step-by-step program in your choice of either three or five 45-minute (or longer) sessions.

**Flexible Delivery**: select and deliver as many activities and applications as you see fit to deliver a solid understanding of the material.

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### Suggested Program (3-Session Delivery)

- **Session 2 (p.21)**
  - Classroom Activity
  - Text- or Film/TV-based Discussion
  - Review Progress of Real-life Application

- **Session 3 (p.25)**
  - Classroom Activity (A)
  - Review Outcomes of Real-life Application (B)
  - Review of Understanding (C)
  - Distribute Hand-out (D)

### Suggested Program (5-Session Delivery)

- **Session 2 (p.21)**
  - Classroom Activity
  - Text- or Film/TV-based Discussion
  - Review Progress of Real-life Application

- **Session 3 (p.25)**
  - Classroom Activity (A)
  - Classroom Activity (E)
  - Review Progress of Real-life Application (F)

- **Session 4 (p.33)**
  - Classroom Activity
  - Classroom Activity
  - Review Progress of Real-life Application

- **Session 5 (p.37)**
  - Classroom Activity
  - Review Outcomes of Real-life Application
  - Review of Understanding
  - Distribute Hand-out

### Fully Flexible Delivery

- Choose either or both:
  - Classroom Activities
  - Real-life Applications

- Choose activities and applications most suited to your students’ current needs and/or curriculum stream. The Classroom Activities Guide (p.51) will assist.

- **Suggested Texts** p.48
- **Suggested Films & TV** p.49
- **Real-life Applications** p.50
- **Classroom Activities Guide** p.51

- Every session, check the progress of the Real-life Application introduced in the Foundation Session.

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**Final Review Session**

- Review Outcomes of Real-life Application
- Review of Understanding
- Distribute Hand-out

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**Delivery Options & Flowchart**

1. **Foundation Session (p.13)**
   - It is recommended that all students undertake this session regardless of delivery mode.
     - Core Activity
     - Introduce Sense of Humour
     - Personal Reflection
     - Introduce Real-life Application

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**START: Read this Module fully**

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**DELIVERY OPTIONS & FLOWCHART**

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Final recap/review of covered Senses and their importance

- **YES**
- **NO**

Proceed to deliver the next chosen SenseAbility module
Foundation Session

NB: It is highly recommended that this session be delivered to all students regardless of whether you have chosen a suggested program or flexible delivery.

A. Core Activity
   (5–10 minutes)

B. Introduce Sense of Humour
   (10 minutes)

C. Personal Reflection
   (15–20 minutes)

D. Introduce Real-life Application
   (5+ minutes)
NOTE TO TEACHERS:
The first activity in this session is the Core Activity ‘Give Me a Joke’. It aims to illustrate to students how their thoughts about an event affect their feelings and actions. This understanding is fundamental to all other activities in the Sense of Humour Module.

If you have already delivered ‘Give Me a Joke’ with another SenseAbility module (perhaps in another form, such as ‘Give Me a Song’ with Sense of Belonging), two alternative core activities for Sense of Humour are offered on p.15.

ACTIVITY: ‘GIVE ME A JOKE’

TIME: 5–10 minutes
SIZE: Whole of class
SPACE: No special requirements
RESOURCES: A-B-C-D Model (p.59 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is to allow students to experience a situation where their thoughts about an event affect their feelings.

The result should be that students understand that they can control the way they think about events and so exercise control over their emotional responses. The activity should also highlight the link between thoughts and feelings, and show how our thoughts have the power to increase or decrease our personal stress.

1. Tell your students that, in keeping with the topic of humour, you are going to randomly pick four people from the class to stand up and tell the other students a joke.*

2. Explain that everyone has five minutes to make up the joke they are going to tell using three elements that you choose (e.g. an elephant, a tissue, and a sports car), and that the jokes will be rated by class laughter. Students are NOT to talk with their classmates in this time.

3. Pretend to be busy with notes/work but try to observe your students’ reactions.

4. After one minute has elapsed, commence class discussion using the tables below (no one will be telling any jokes – this was just an experiment to gauge various reactions but do not tell the class this yet).

5. Commence class discussion using the tables below.

LIST STUDENTS’ RESPONSES

6. On the board draw up a five-column table. Label the first column ‘A: Event’ and write beneath it the only entry for that column: ‘Asked to tell a joke in front of the class’.

| A: Event |  |
|----------|  |
| As I asked to share a joke in front of the class |  |

7. Label the third and fourth columns ‘Emotions’ and ‘Bodily Symptoms’, respectively, under the broader title ‘C: Feelings’. Ask students: What were you feeling during the activity minute (e.g. anxious, excited, angry, unconcerned)? What was happening to your body (e.g. increased heart rate, sweaty palms, tense muscles)? Write the various answers in columns three and four.

8. Label the fifth column ‘D: Behaviour’ and ask those same students: What were you doing during the minute (e.g. fidgeting, looking around at friends/others, avoiding eye contact with the teacher)? Write responses in column five.

9. Label the second column ‘B: Thoughts’ and ask the same students: What was going through your mind when you were told that you might have to stand up and share a joke (e.g. ‘I’ll make a fool of myself’, ‘This is unfair’, ‘I like telling jokes!’)? Write responses in column two.

*You can substitute another activity for this, so long as it is likely to evoke a wide range of reactions in your students.

(cont.)
10. The table now completed, discuss how there were some very different reactions among the class to the same event.

11. You can now explain this was an experiment to gauge students’ responses to a specific event.

12. Project the A-B-C-D Model an OHT or give students a printed copy and explain how people can think differently about the same event and consequently have different feelings and actions. In other words, it is not the event but your interpretation of the event that leads to emotions and behaviours; you can change your feelings by changing your thinking. Therefore, challenging unhelpful thoughts and generating alternative, helpful ways to think, is an important way to help manage stress and curb unhelpful emotional reactions.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

- Highlight that a whole raft of different responses – anger, nervousness, excitement – all resulted from the one common event. What caused you all to feel and act in different ways.
- Brainstorm some thoughts that might challenge unhelpful self-talk for this activity (e.g. ‘Maybe I’ll actually come up with something good’ or ‘At least I’m not the only one, we’re all in the same boat’). What feelings might these more helpful thoughts have resulted in?
- Brainstorm some other real-life instances where people might have a variety of reactions to the same event. Try to predict the likely feelings and actions that result from various ways of thinking. Which thoughts would be helpful, and which would be unhelpful to the situation? Which thoughts would be most beneficial to the person’s overall goal (e.g. to be happy, to do a good job)?
- Brainstorm a list of events that have the potential for you to feel self-conscious or to dwell on the serious side of things (e.g. stumbling in front of peers, asking someone for a date, trying out for a sports team). But remember the amount of stress and anxiety you feel is linked directly to how you think about the event. This is because unhelpful thoughts have the potential to exacerbate feelings of self-consciousness and to allow us to dwell on the negative aspects of events. So changing the way you think is the most effective way to control your feelings and actions, and to reduce stress and anxiety, and to strengthen your Sense of Humour.
- If any student has a joke they would like to share, now is a good time to do so.

**Alternative Core Activities**

If you have already delivered ‘Give Me a Joke’ or similar with another Sense module (e.g. ‘Give Me a Song’ in Sense of Belonging), consider how long it has been since your students did that activity, and judge whether you think your students would benefit from revisiting the thoughts–feelings–actions relationship shown in the A-B-C-D Model. If so, consider one of the two options, below. However, do not labour the point – if your students understand that although they cannot control all of life’s events, they can control the way they think about them, the next important step is to encourage them to get into the habit of challenging unhelpful thoughts and changing them to more helpful thoughts.

With both the options below you can use the discussion points included with the core activity ‘Give Me a Joke’.

**OPTION 1**

Classroom Activity ‘Noise in the Night’ is included in the Activities & Resources section (p.85). This activity has the potential for role-play and shows how an event (an unusual noise heard in the night) can be interpreted in many different ways, resulting in many different emotional reactions and consequent actions.

**OPTION 2**

A Blank A-B-C-D Model is supplied in the Activities & Resources section (p.60) You can brainstorm with students various inciting events pertinent to Sense of Humour (e.g. approaching someone you like to ask for a date, but becoming tongue-tied and saying something silly by mistake) then have students, together or individually, draw in the remaining cartoon sections of the model. Follow this with class discussion about the value in challenging unhelpful thoughts.
WHAT IS SENSE OF HUMOUR?

Explain that your Sense of Humour is your ability to perceive and enjoy amusement, to share laughter in a positive way, and to take a joke.

**KEY FEATURES**

Having a Sense of Humour means that you:
- can see the lighter side of events
- take yourself less seriously
- get pleasure from sharing laughter and fun with others
- are better able to reduce your stress and cope with difficulties
- value fun and laughter, and make time for enjoyable or pleasant events.

**WHAT IT PROVIDES**

- A way to cope better with difficult situations.
- The ability to take yourself less seriously.
- A way to connect with other people, and share fun and joy with them.
- The ability to see things from new perspectives.
- A means to relax your body, increase positive emotions, and reduce stress.

It is important to remember two other things:

1. Sense of Humour can vary not only between individuals, but particularly between generations and cultures. Respecting other people’s Senses of Humour is a very important part of getting along with others.
2. It is okay to be serious in nature – being a generally serious person doesn’t mean you don’t have a Sense of Humour. What is important is that you are able to experience enjoyment regularly in your life.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

- Is a Sense of Humour innate? Or is it influenced by people around us? Can we shape what we find fun and funny?
- Is Sense of Humour universal (i.e. are there things that people in all cultures find funny)? Why are some jokes specific to cultures/nationalities/age groups?
- What might life be like without a Sense of Humour?
- How can our thinking affect whether we find something funny or not?
- Is your Sense of Humour unique, or do you share it with your family? Your friends? Other people/groups?
- Brainstorm some situations where a Sense of Humour might be really valuable.

**C. Personal Reflection**

**TASK: Assess your own Sense of Humour.**

Have students think about their own Sense of Humour: what shapes it, what reflects it, how strong it is, what strengthens/informs it, etc. This process could take the form of a chart, with different (perhaps intersecting) circles forming domains in which they write examples of things that amuse them.

**Topics might include:**
- Who/what do you find funny? Why?
- What things that others laugh at do you not find funny? Why?
- Has this always been the case?
- How similar is this to your peers/friends/family?
- How often do you laugh (e.g. hourly, daily, weekly)? Is that enough?

**TAKING IT FURTHER**

In their own time, students might create a Venn-type diagrammatic chart of things they find amusing, and see where those ‘humour sparks’ intersect with the tastes of other important people in their lives (e.g. friends, family, boyfriend/girlfriend).
The aim of Real-life Applications is for your students to apply what they have learned about Sense of Humour to life outside the classroom. This should provide students with opportunities to utilise thinking skills that enhance their own Sense of Humour.

There are three options:
1. **Shorter-term activity** to run over approx. two school weeks if you are doing the 3-Session Delivery.
2. **Longer-term activity** to run over approx. four school weeks if you are doing the 5-Session Delivery.
3. **Create your own activity** to suit the needs and timeframes of your students.

Results of this activity:
- In each subsequent Sense of Humour session, review the progress of this activity.
- In your final Sense of Humour session, facilitate an in-depth class discussion about the activity and its effect on students’ Sense of Humour.

**OPTION 1: LAUGHTER CHART & ENJOYMENT MENU**  
(Duration: approx. two weeks*)

1. Each student charts things that were amusing to them over the week.
2. The chart should cover information including:
   a. What did you find funny?
   b. When was this?
   c. How funny?
   d. How long did it make you feel good for?
   e. Was this planned (e.g. set time aside to watch a TV sitcom) or circumstantial (e.g. a friend on the bus told you a good joke)?
3. At the end of the duration, the chart should be analysed so students gain some insight not only about how much laughter they are having in their lives at present, but to consider if they should schedule more enjoyable/amusing events into their lives.
4. Week Two: Every student develops a listing (or ‘menu’) of inexpensive and accessible things they can regularly do to bring enjoyment and pleasure into their lives.
5. The items on the menu should ideally be free, should certainly cost less than $5, and should be regularly accessible, hopefully at least every week.
6. The items may need to be sorted as ‘individual’, ‘family’, or ‘group’.
7. The items should be active (e.g. play touch football with friends) rather than passive (e.g. sit in front of the TV and watch a comedy show).
8. Consider having students turn these menus into an attractive brochure that they can refer to throughout the remainder of the year.

(*) adjust as necessary

**OPTION 2: LAUGHTER MASTER CLASS**  
(Duration: approx. four weeks*)

1. In small groups, students plan and conduct a Laughter Master Class.
2. This might come in the form of a laughter school (see p.22), a stand-up comedy show, or even a stress-management lunchtime program that is centred on laughter. What is important is that the Master Class aims to promote laughter as a means to feeling better.
3. The target audience of the Master Class might be other people in the same year as the students, or the whole school, or perhaps new junior students as part of their orientation into secondary school.
4. The students are responsible for planning, advertising, conducting, and (very importantly) assessing the effectiveness of their Laughter Master Classes.
5. At the end of the duration, after all Master Classes have been delivered, come together as a class in the last Sense of Humour session to discuss the outcomes and effectiveness of the various approaches.

(*) adjust as necessary
Suggested Program

For delivery over three or five sessions
Session 2

2A. Classroom Activity
   (15+ minutes)

2B. Text- or Film/TV-based Discussion
   (25+ minutes)

2C. Review Progress of Real-life Application from Foundation Session
   (5 minutes)
ACTIVITY: ‘LAUGHTER SCHOOL’

TIME: 15+ minutes  
SIZE: Small groups  
SPACE: For small groups to move around in and make noise  
RESOURCES: Laughter Style Cards (p.81 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is to involve students in an activity that causes laughter.

The result should be an understanding that the positive emotions that result from laughing are important to wellbeing.

1. Conduct a quick class discussion about the nature of laughter. Why can it sometimes be infectious? Why do we all enjoy it?
2. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.
3. Give each group a Laughter Style Card – each describes a different way to laugh (e.g. the Milkshake Laugh, the Horse Laugh, the Lawnmower Laugh).
4. Give each group a few minutes to learn and practise their new laugh style. NB: this is a loud activity!
5. Have the class come together. Have each group demonstrate the new laughter style just learned, and teach the style to the wider class.
6. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What thoughts went through your mind when the activity was announced? How would you describe how you felt? What was your mood like?

• How do you feel now after the activity? Is there a difference to how you felt before? If so, why might that be?

• What physical things seemed to happen to you during the activity (e.g. diaphragm spasmed, face muscles worked, sound came out, heart rate changed, tears of laughter)?

• What was happening in your group before the activity (e.g. cynical looks, eye rolls, sighs, excited comments, grinning)? What was different in your group when the teacher called for the activity to stop?

• How can humour bring groups together? How can having a healthy Sense of Humour improve interpersonal relationships?

• Why is laughter such an effective way to reduce stress and help us ‘reset’ ourselves in stressful times?
Choose a Suggested Text or a Film/TV Program from pages 48 or 49, respectively to discuss. Alternatively, select a book, poem, film or TV program that you or your students are already familiar with.

You can guide discussion using the suggested cues included with the summaries, or you can conduct class discussion in your own way about how the text/clip you’ve selected relates to Sense of Humour.

**2C. Review Progress of Real-life Application**

Commence a class discussion about your students’ progress on their chosen Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17): Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu, Laughter Master Class, or another activity you have chosen/created.

It is important to ensure the discussion remains centred on Sense of Humour.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu**

- Have you been surprised by the number/type of things you’ve laughed at?
- Did you find you have a particular type of humour (e.g. slapstick, absurd)? Is knowing what kind of humour you enjoy of any value to you (e.g. to help you pick friends, choose movies you might enjoy)? Do you think your Sense of Humour will stay like this or change over time?
- Do you think you are having enough enjoyable moments in your life? Why/why not?
- What might you be able to do to increase the number of enjoyable moments you have in your life?
- Have you found many inexpensive, accessible, and fun things to do? What thinking skills have you used to come up with them? What criteria have you set?
- Whose help might you enlist to increase the number of enjoyable moments you have in your life?

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Master Class**

- What approach did you decide to take with your class (e.g. screenings, stand-up, informational)?
- Why did your group choose this approach? Does it reflect your own Senses of Humour?
- How can people with different Senses of Humour still have enjoyable times together? What strategies work well?
- Have you determined a level of need in your planned target audience? How do you think they will benefit from your Master Class?
Session 3

3-SESSION DELIVERY

3A. Classroom Activity (10–15 minutes) pp.26–27
3B. Review Outcomes of Real-life Application from Foundation Session (10–15 minutes) p.28
3C. Review of Understanding (10–15 minutes) p.28
3D. Distribute Hand-out (5 minutes) p.28

END OF SENSE OF HUMOUR MODULE

5-SESSION DELIVERY

3A. Classroom Activity (10–15 minutes) p.26–27
(NB skip 3B, 3C, and 3D)
3E. Classroom Activity (15+ minutes) p.29
3F. Review Progress of Real-life Application from Foundation Session (5 minutes) p.30

COMMENCE SESSION 4
3A. Classroom Activity

Review the two activity options following and choose the one most appropriate for your students.

**OPTION 1:** ‘Day Lubber Lubber’ (geared toward younger secondary school students)

**OPTION 2:** ‘The Wrights Have Left’ (suitable for all secondary school students)

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### ACTIVITY: ‘DAY LUBBER LUBBER’ (Option 1)

**TIME:** 10–15 minutes  
**SIZE:** Small groups  
**SPACE:** For small groups to sit in circles  
**RESOURCES:** Word Cards and Action Cards (pp.72–73 or SenseAbility CD), two hats or buckets

The aim is for students to experience a situation where it is difficult for them to take themselves too seriously. The result should be discussion about the benefits of lightening up and looking at events from multiple perspectives.

1. Break the class into small groups of five to seven students and have each group form a seated circle.
2. Put the Word Cards in one bucket and the Action Cards in another. Word Cards have single, common words such as ‘Out’, ‘Go’, and ‘Morning’. Action Cards have funny tasks such as ‘Stand up and do a little dance’, and ‘Pretend your hands are puppets having an argument’.
3. Have every student pick one word from each bucket. They are allowed to read their cards, but not to reveal their contents to others.
4. Explain the activity: each group is going to begin an amiable conversation about a topic of your (the teacher’s) choice (e.g. the price of concert tickets, favourite holiday destinations). But as soon as any student hears the word on his/her Word Card, they must instantly perform the task on their Action Card. For example, when Jane hears someone say the word ‘Day’ she must make a face and loudly say ‘Lubber Lubber’.
5. Laughter will make the job difficult, but make sure people perform their actions while the others stay on topic with the themed conversation.
6. It is up to you whether they need to obey their Action Card every time or only the first time they hear their word.
7. When you feel the activity is running out of puff, bring the class together for a discussion.

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### DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What were you thinking and feeling when you read your Action Card and realised what you had to do in front of others?
- Would you still feel that way if you had to do the activity again? Why/why not?
- What did you think of others who were performing in your group?
- What are the general differences between the way people thought about themselves and thought about others?
- What are some negative implications of taking yourself too seriously?
- How do you strike a balance between behaving with dignity and taking yourself too seriously? What thinking tools can help you ‘lighten up’?
ACTIVITY: ‘THE WRIGHTS HAVE LEFT’ (Option 2)

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Clear room to move around
RESOURCES: Story Sheet (p.93 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is for students to experience a situation where the group has an enjoyable experience and laughter is likely to be infectious.

The result should be engaging discussion about the physical, emotional, and bonding benefits of laughter.

1. Have the class/group form a large standing circle, everyone facing inwards.
2. Choose a confident reader to be the storyteller and give that student the Story Sheet. It is a simple tale about a family named the Wrights who leave home to go on a holiday.
3. Explain the rules: when students hear the word ‘right’ (but not ‘Wright!’) they must take one step clockwise, to the left. When they hear the word ‘left’ they must take one step counter-clockwise to the right.
4. Have the storyteller commence. Reacting to all the ‘lefts’ and ‘rights’ will soon have the class laughing.
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you thinking and feeling when the activity was explained? E.g. You thought, ‘This will be fun’ and felt excited, or you thought, ‘This sounds like a kids’ game’ and felt bored.
• What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? Were these different to your thoughts and feelings before the activity started?
• Who laughed during the activity? Were you planning on laughing? Why did you?
• Brainstorm a quick list of reasons you enjoy being with your friends. Is sharing laughter one of them? Why is that so important?
• Why is laughter so important for all of us, both as individuals and as members of close groups? E.g. It helps us feel better, combats symptoms of stress, and also bonds us together.

IMPORTANT CHECK

If you are doing a 5-Session Delivery skip NOW to Section 3E (p.29).
If you are doing a 3-Session Delivery continue to Sections 3B through 3D.
In the 3-Session Delivery, this is your final Sense of Humour session, so it is very important to commence a class discussion to review what your students learned from the Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17). This is a valuable opportunity for them to reflect on how important their Sense of Humour is in their everyday lives.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu

• What conclusions did you draw about the amount of laughter and enjoyment you have in your life right now? What makes you think that?
• How much of the fun and funniness in your life is planned, and how much happens incidentally? Is that a good balance?
• Do you think you should plan more enjoyable/pleasant events into your life?
• Was it easy or difficult to come up with a menu of enjoyable, accessible activities? Why/why not?
• Will your menu prove a useful resource to you in the future?

3C. Review of Understanding

This is your chance to evaluate whether your students can demonstrate a solid understanding about the importance of Sense of Humour in their lives. Use the seven Module Goals as a checklist. Can your students:

1. DEFINE Sense of Humour?
2. UNDERSTAND what a Sense of Humour provides them with?
3. IDENTIFY the key features of Sense of Humour?
4. IDENTIFY aspects of Sense of Humour within themselves and how important the sense is in their own lives?
5. RECOGNISE how strong their own Sense of Humour is, and their capacity to enhance it?
6. UNDERSTAND that their thoughts about events – not the events themselves – affect their feelings and behaviours, and that they have the ability to change those thoughts?
7. PRACTISE and APPLY their understanding and knowledge about Sense of Humour in real life?

There are many ways you may choose to check your students’ understanding of Sense of Humour, including a written evaluation (e.g. a short creative essay or quiz), class discussion or even role-play.

Now is also an excellent time to brainstorm as a class some ways that your students may be able to enhance their own Sense of Humour.

If you feel your students require more work simply:
• select other activities you haven’t already done using the Classroom Activities Guide (p.51)
• select and discuss other Suggested Texts (p.48) or Films/TV Programs (p.49)
• find/create your own activities and discussion references to help build understanding about Sense of Humour.

3D. Distribute Hand-out

A hand-out summarising Sense of Humour is included as a photocopiable page in the Activities & Resources section (p.57) and also in PDF on the SenseAbility CD.

1. Distribute one per student.
2. Consider a closing discussion about seeking help and the places where someone struggling with their Sense of Humour might find such help (e.g. trusted friends and adults, school counsellor, medical professionals, Lifeline, Kids Helpline).
SUGGESTED PROGRAM – SESSION 3

3E. Classroom Activity

Review the two activity options following and choose the one most appropriate for your students.

OPTION 2: ‘My Duckle Wuckle’ (suitable for all secondary school students).

ACTIVITY: ‘A-HA-HA’ (Option 1)

TIME: 5–10 minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: Clear room to lie down
RESOURCES: Checkerboard and checkers (optional)

NB: This activity is best for girls. Be sensitive to issues like personal proximity and body self-consciousness.

The aim is for students to participate in an activity where laughter is likely.

The result should be class discussion about the physiological benefits of laughter.

1. Set a serious mood and explain that this is an activity focusing on self-control.
2. Break the class into small groups of three to five students. Have these small groups lay in circles on their backs, so each student has his/her head on the tummy of another student in the group.*
3. Eyes closed (optional).
4. Explain that the challenge here is not to laugh.
5. Nominate a ‘first person’ in each group. That student is to say a loud, ‘Ha!’ Going clockwise, the next student must say, ‘Ha-Ha!’ The third student must then say, ‘Ha-Ha-Ha!’ and so-forth, continuing around the group until it breaks down with laughter.
6. To vary: create a race between groups. Each time a group successfully completes a ‘Ha-Ha’ cycle of the circle without breaking into uncontrollable laughter, one member gets to his/her feet and runs to a checkerboard to advance a checker one row forward. Any group failing a cycle must retreat a row. The first group to ‘cross’ the checkerboard wins.
7. Commence class discussion.

*If you think this close contact might be too confronting, consider having students stand in a circle with linked arms.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What were you thinking and feeling when the rules of the activity were explained? Were you excited? Anxious? Annoyed? What were you saying to yourself?
- What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? Were these different to your thoughts and feelings before the activity started?
- What were your physical symptoms during the activity? How do you feel physically now?
- What were people who remained serious longest saying to themselves during the activity? Did this change? What were you thinking when other members of your group were unable to control themselves?
- What situations in real life might be similar to this activity? Why is it so important to put events into perspective and find ways to discover their enjoyable aspects?
3E. Classroom Activity

ACTIVITY: ‘MY DUCKLE WUCKLE’ (Option 2)

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Room for a large circle of chairs
RESOURCES: Nil

The aim is for students to participate in an amusing activity that makes its participants look a little ridiculous. The result should be discussion about healthy perspective-taking and lightening up, and that a healthy Sense of Humour can involve both giving and taking amusement.

1. Form a circle of chairs with a seat for every student minus one.

2. The person without a chair stands in the middle. The aim of that person is to find a seat by making a seated person laugh. If the standing person succeeds in making a seated person laugh, that person must surrender their seat, become the new person in the middle, and must seek to unseat another player.

3. Nominate a person to be the first person in the middle. Everyone else sits. The person in the middle chooses someone seated, goes up as close to them as they like, and asks, ‘Will you buy my Duckle Wuckle?’ The respondent must reply: ‘No. I will not buy your Duckle Wuckle’ without smiling or laughing. The person in the middle can continue the pitch, e.g. ‘But Duckle Wuckle can do things like (e.g. cook pancakes, dance the Tango, whistle Waltzing Matilda)’. If the respondent replies a second time: ‘No. I will not buy your Duckle Wuckle’ with a straight face, the person in the middle must find a new person to peddle Duckle Wuckle to.

4. You must ensure the dialogues take place without intimidation or innuendo, and ensure that the same ‘easy laughs’ are not chosen too regularly.

5. Continue the activity until everyone gets a go, or the activity starts to lag.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you saying to yourself when the activity rules were announced? Was this self-talk helpful during the activity? Did it change? Why/why not?

• For those who played the person in the middle: Was your thinking different when you were trying to sell Duckle Wuckle compared with when you were sitting in the circle trying not to laugh? In what ways?

• When is it appropriate to laugh at someone, and when is it not? Brainstorm various circumstances.

• What is the difference between laughing with someone, and laughing at them?

• When is it appropriate to laugh at yourself? When is it not? What is the difference between making fun of yourself lightly and speaking to yourself unhelpfully?

3F. Review Progress of Real-life Application

Commence a class discussion about your students’ progress on their chosen Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17), the Laughter Master Class. It is important to ensure the discussion remains centred on Sense of Humour.
Session 4

4A. Classroom Activity
   (15+ minutes)

4B. Classroom Activity
   (15+ minutes)

4C. Review Progress of Real-life Application from Foundation Session
   (5 minutes)
**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

- What strategies did the successful team/s employ? Did they have a laugh or did they treat the activity seriously?
- Did laughter help or hinder the activity? Did it help bind the group as a team?
- Which team enjoyed the activity most (use applause to evaluate)? How seriously did they treat the activity?
- What did you think and feel when you read your Wild Card? How did you react? In retrospect, were your thoughts helpful or constructive, or not? Why/why not?
- Reflect that this is like the A-B-C-D Model, and everyone was responding to the same event (i.e. had the same goal) and very similar challenges, but different people thought and felt about it in different ways.
- How is this activity analogous to real life situations? What would the sludge represent? What would the keys represent? What would the Wild Cards represent? How would a strong Sense of Humour assist you in situations like that?
- Did you receive good help from your teammates? Did their Senses of Humour affect your own? In what ways?
4B. Classroom Activity

ACTIVITY: RATE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR

**TIME:** 15+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Individuals  
**SPACE:** No special requirements  
**RESOURCES:** Quiz and Quiz Results (pp.90–91 or SenseAbility CD), pens

The aim is for students to consider what amuses them and why.

The result should be an understanding that people have diverse tastes in comedy, but that does not mean they have a better or worse Sense of Humour than others.

1. Set the tone with a brief class discussion about favourite comedy films. This will demonstrate that people have quite different ideas about what is funny.
2. Distribute the Quiz (one per student). This is a multiple-choice quiz.
3. Allow students around five minutes to complete the Quiz.
4. Once done, project the Quiz Results. Students can add their score to gain an interpretation of their humour type (e.g. absurd, slapstick, sarcastic) – these ratings are up for debate!
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Did your quiz result accurately reflect the way you regard your own Sense of Humour? If not, why not?
- What do you think about people who received the same rating as you? What do you think about students who received different ratings to you? Why?
- How would you describe your mood when you commenced the Quiz? If you did this quiz on a different day, in a different mood, would you get the same result? Why/why not?
- Why do Senses of Humour differ from person to person? Why might they change as we get older, and we experience new things and meet new people?
- Does it matter how other people regard your humour type? Why/why not?
- Discuss how having a strong Sense of Humour does not depend on the kinds of things you find most amusing. It depends on your ability to employ it regularly to think helpfully about life events, to share fun with others, and to keep your own emotions positive and hopeful so that you enjoy life.

4C. Review Progress of Real-life Application

Commence a class discussion about your students’ progress on the Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17), Laughter Master Class. It is important to ensure the discussion remains centred on Sense of Humour.
Session 5

5A. Classroom Activity
   (10+ minutes)

5B. Review the Outcomes of Real-life Application from Foundation Session
   (10+ minutes)

5C. Review of Understanding
   (10+ minutes)

5D. Distribute Hand-out
   (5 minutes)
5A. Classroom Activity

Review the two activities following and choose the one most appropriate for your students.

OPTION 1: ‘At Least It’s Not Raining’
OPTION 2: ‘Adiaphoretic’

ACTIVITY: ‘AT LEAST IT’S NOT RAINING’ (Option 1)

TIME: 10+ minutes
SIZE: Individuals
SPACE: No Special Requirements
RESOURCES: Blank Cartoons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 (pp.64–69 or SenseAbility CD), pens

The aim is to have students consider situations in a light-hearted manner.

The result should be practical exercising of helpful and flexible thinking skills that are important to a healthy Sense of Humour.

1. Give students a copy of each of the six blank cartoons (if time is limited, give students only three each).
2. Students are to supply two captions for each of their cartoons: one that they think is funny, and one that is not.
3. Allow around 90 seconds per cartoon.
4. Project each of the blank cartoons one by one and ask willing students to read aloud their two captions for that cartoon.
5. Rate the most amusing caption by class applause.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• For students who developed captions that drew strong applause: How did you come up with the ideas? What thinking skills did you use?
• Why were the funny captions amusing? What qualities went toward making a funny caption?
• Why were the unfunny captions unamusing? Were any of these amusing to select people? If so, why?
• Flexible thinking is very important to building and maintaining a healthy Sense of Humour. Why might this be?
• How can flexible thinking and a Sense of Humour help you weather difficult events in day-to-day life? (Brainstorm some examples from students’ lives.) What did you think? How did helpful/flexible thinking make you feel in those situations? How might you have felt differently if you’d thought differently?
ACTIVITY: ‘ADIAPHORETIC’ (Option 2)

TIME: 10+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to sit
RESOURCES: Dictionaries, pens, paper

The aim is to have students use flexible thinking to create amusement for themselves and others.
The result should be an understanding that a strong Sense of Humour relies on our looking at events in creative, open-minded ways and from different perspectives.

1. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.
2. One at a time, every student in each group will flick through the dictionary and find a word that they believe their group mates will not know the meaning of (e.g. Adiaphoretic: preventing or reducing perspiration).
   (NB: The students don’t reveal the meaning of the word yet.)
3. The other members of the group must now come up with entertaining and, at least, slightly plausible definitions for the mysterious word. Write down the definitions that result in the most laughter.
4. When everyone in the group has had the chance to find a word, and a list of the funniest definitions has been written, come together as a class and have each group share it's funniest definitions with the wider class. They should conclude with reading the correct dictionary definitions.
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Were the correct dictionary definitions ever funny?
- Why did the made-up definitions make people laugh? Was it because of surprising associations? Absurdity? Witty rhymings?
- What thinking skills did creators of funny definitions employ?
- Everyone in the group had the same word to work with, yet everyone came up with different interpretations. How is this like the application of the A-B-C-D Model to life events?
- Discuss how none of this activity's laughter could have occurred if students simply took words at face value. Having a Sense of Humour sometimes requires effort and the application of thinking skills including perspective-taking.
5B. Review Outcomes of Real-life Application

In the 5-Session Delivery, this is your final Sense of Humour session. Commence a class discussion to review what your students learned from the Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17). This is a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on how important their Sense of Humour is in their everyday lives.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Master Class

- Were your preparations for the Master Class easy or difficult? Why?
- What was the response to your class? How did you quantify its success?
- What would you do differently? Why?
- What did the process teach you about your own and others’ Sense of Humour?
- What thinking skills did the activity teach you that you can use in your day-to-day life?

5C. Review of Understanding

This is your chance to evaluate whether your students can demonstrate a solid understanding about the importance of Sense of Humour in their lives.

To assist in this, use the seven Module Goals as a checklist. Can your students:

1. DEFINE Sense of Humour?
2. UNDERSTAND what a Sense of Humour provides them with?
3. IDENTIFY the key features of Sense of Humour?
4. IDENTIFY aspects of Sense of Humour within themselves and how important the sense is in their own lives?
5. RECOGNISE how strong their own Sense of Humour is, and their capacity to enhance it?
6. UNDERSTAND that their thoughts about events – not the events themselves – affect their feelings and behaviours, and they have the ability to change those thoughts?
7. PRACTISE and APPLY their understanding and knowledge about Sense of Humour in real life?

There are many ways you may choose to check your students’ understanding about Sense of Humour, including a written evaluation (e.g. a short creative essay or quiz), class discussion or even role-play.

Now is also an excellent time to brainstorm as a class some ways that your students may be able to enhance their own Sense of Humour.

If you feel your students require more work simply:

- select other activities you haven’t already done using the Classroom Activities Guide (p.51)
- select and discuss other Suggested Texts (p.48) or Films/TV Programs (p.49)
- find/create your own activities and discussion references to help build understanding about Sense of Humour.

5D. Distribute Hand-out

A hand-out, summarising Sense of Humour is included as a photocopiable page in the Activities & Resources section (p.57) and in PDF on the SenseAbility CD.

1. Distribute one per student.
2. Consider a closing discussion about seeking help and the places where someone struggling with their Sense of Humour might find help (trusted friends and adults, school counsellor, medical professionals, Kids Helpline, Lifeline).
Flexible Delivery

REMINDER
Ensure you have delivered the Foundation Session (p.13) before continuing

ONGOING SESSIONS
A. Review Progress of Real-life Application from the Foundation Session
B. Select/Create Classroom Activities and Lead Discussion

FINAL SESSION
C. Review Outcomes of Real-life Application from the Foundation Session
D. Review of Understanding
E. Distribute Hand-out (p.57)
It is up to you how many sessions you now devote to completing the delivery of Sense of Humour. You are the best judge of when your students have fulfilled the following seven Module Goals:

1. DEFINE Sense of Humour.
2. UNDERSTAND what a Sense of Humour provides them with.
3. IDENTIFY the key features of Sense of Humour.
4. IDENTIFY aspects of Sense of Humour within themselves and how important the sense is in their own lives.
5. RECOGNISE how strong their own Sense of Humour is, and their capacity to enhance it.
6. UNDERSTAND that their thoughts about events – not the events themselves – affect their feelings and behaviours, and they have the ability to change those thoughts.
7. PRACTISE and APPLY their understanding and knowledge about Sense of Humour in real life.

RECOMMENDATIONS
In each ongoing session:
- Review progress of the Real-life Application commenced in the Foundation Session (p.17)
- Select/create classroom activities and lead discussion.

In the final session:
- Review understanding about Sense of Humour
- Review outcomes of Real-life Application commenced in the Foundation Session (p.17)
- Distribute hand-out (p.57).

A. Review Progress of Real-life Application

Each session, you should make time for students to discuss their progress on their chosen Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17): Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu, Laughter Master Class, or another activity you have chosen/created.

It is important to ensure the discussion remains centred on Sense of Humour.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu

- Have you been surprised by the number/type of things you’ve laughed at?
- Did you find you have a particular type of humour (e.g. slapstick, absurd)? Is knowing what kind of humour you enjoy of any value to you (e.g. to help you pick friends, choose movies you might enjoy)? Do you think your Sense of Humour will stay like this or change over time?
- Do you think you are having enough enjoyable moments in your life? Why/why not?
- What might you be able to do to increase the number of enjoyable moments you have in your life?
- Have you found many inexpensive, accessible and fun things to do? What thinking skills have you used to come up with them? What criteria have you set?
- Whose help might you enlist to increase the number of enjoyable moments you have in your life?

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Master Class

- What approach did you decide to take with your class (e.g. screenings, stand-up, informational)?
- Why did your group choose on this approach? Does it reflect your own Senses of Humour?
- How can people with different Senses of Humour still have enjoyable times together? What strategies work well?
- Have you determined a level of need in your planned target audience? How do you think they will benefit from your Master Class?
- How might you evaluate the effectiveness of your Master Class?
B. Select/Create Classroom Activities

Choose and facilitate activities and discussions that you think will help deliver a sound understanding about Sense of Future and its importance in day-to-day life.

You can:

Choose from activities supplied in this module:
- Suggested Texts (p.48)
- Suggested Film/TV Programs (p.49)
- Real-life Applications (p.50)
- Classroom Activities (see Guide p.51)

And/Or

Find or create your own classroom activities, develop your own Real-life Applications, and decide appropriate text, film or television references that students are already using or you are already familiar with.

Remember: the activities and references are only catalysts: the real learning benefits come through rewarding class discussion where students can hear other perspectives and relate new knowledge to their own lives and experiences.

C. Review Outcomes of Real-life Application

Final Sense of Humour Session

In a class discussion, review what your students learned from the Real-life Application from the Foundation Session (p.17). This is a valuable opportunity for students to consider the importance of Sense of Humour in their everyday lives.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Chart & Enjoyment Menu

- What conclusions did you draw about the amount of laughter and enjoyment you are having in your life right now? What makes you think that?
- How much of the fun and funniness in your life is planned, and how much happens incidentally? Is that a good balance?
- Do you think you should plan more pleasant events into your life?
- Was it easy or difficult to come up with a menu of pleasant, accessible activities? Why/why not?
- Will your menu prove a useful resource to you in the future?

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS — Laughter Master Class

- Were your preparations for the Master Class easy or difficult? Why?
- What was the response to your class? How did you quantify its success?
- What would you do differently? Why?
- What did the process teach you about your own and others’ Sense of Humour?
- What thinking skills did the activity teach you that you can use in your day-to-day life?
Evaluate whether your students can demonstrate a solid understanding about the importance of Sense of Humour.

Can your students:
1. DEFINE Sense of Humour.
2. UNDERSTAND what a Sense of Humour provides them with.
3. IDENTIFY the key features of Sense of Humour.
4. IDENTIFY aspects of Sense of Humour within themselves and how important the sense is in their own lives.
5. RECOGNISE how strong their own Sense of Humour is, and their capacity to enhance it.
6. UNDERSTAND that their thoughts about events — not the events themselves — affect their feelings and behaviours, and they have the ability to change those thoughts.
7. PRACTISE and APPLY their understanding about Sense of Humour, in real life.

There are many ways you may choose to check your students understanding about Sense of Humour, including:
- short creative essay or quiz
- class discussion
- role-play.

Now is also an excellent time to brainstorm as a class some ways that your students may be able to enhance their own Sense of Humour.

If you feel your students haven’t met one or more of the Module Goals, consider conducting more activities and discussion to help build and reinforce their understanding of Sense of Humour.

### E. Distribute Hand-out

A hand-out summarising Sense of Humour is included as a photocopiable page in the Activities & Resources section (p.57) and in PDF on the SenseAbility CD.

1. Distribute one per student.
2. Consider broader discussion about seeking help including the places where someone struggling with their Sense of Humour might find help (e.g. trusted friends and adults, school counsellor, medical professionals, Kids Helpline, Lifeline).
References
& Guides
### POSSIBLE DISCUSSION POINTS

- **My Big Birkett**
  - How resilient is Gemma at the start of the novel? How resilient is she at the end?
  - What does she do in between to build up her inner strength using her Sense of Humour?
  - How does Gemma deal with having to wear a swan costume to the wedding? What does she say to herself to get through the event?
  - How does Gemma’s self-regard change during the course of the story? Does she take herself less seriously? What changes her attitude?
  - Have you ever been in a humiliating incident where the best way to cope is by using your Sense of Humour?

- **The Importance of Being Earnest**
  - What kinds of humour does Wilde employ (satire, sarcasm, epigrams, etc.)? Which did you enjoy most? Why?
  - Why do puns (like the title, and which feature in Wilde’s writings) make us laugh? Why is seeing things from multiple points of view so important to a Sense of Humour?
  - The play is about dual personalities, and it gets Jack and Algys into trouble. Do you see yourself in more than one way? Are you able to take yourself lightly?
  - Wilde was hugely popular in Victorian England, and used humour in his own life to survive criticism and detraction. Have you ever used humour to help you cope with a difficult situation? How?

- **About a Boy**
  - This book deals with some very serious issues, yet is still very funny. How does humour help us, the reader, cope with the grave subject matter? Does it reduce its relevancy? Why not?
  - Why does Will’s and Marcus’s friendship blossom? How does humour help cement their relationship?
  - Will takes himself very seriously at the start of the book. What happens to help him lighten up? What are the benefits of this?
  - Have you ever formed an unlikely friendship based on shared humour? Why is this so important to our close relationships?

- **The Eye Affair**
  - How would you describe the type/s of humour Fforde uses in the novel? Did it appeal to you? Why/why not?
  - The situations in the book are absurd and unlikely. Does this make the content funnier or less funny? Why might that be?
  - Brainstorm a list of books that use different ‘types’ of humour to excellent effect. What elements of humour are common between all these?
  - Have you ever felt like Tuesday Next? Did your Sense of Humour assist you to cope with the situation? How?

- **Billy**
  - How did Connolly’s Sense of Humour help him not only survive his childhood, but focus productively on the future?
  - Connolly perceived himself as a folk singer. Did that diminish his Sense of Humour?
  - One of Connolly’s first recordings was banned by many radio stations. What does this say about diversity in humour tastes? Did that discourage Connolly?
  - Connolly is acclaimed as a serious character actor. How does this reconcile with his comedic skills?
  - Can you seem serious (or have a serious side) yet still have a good Sense of Humour?
  - What aspects of Connolly’s Sense of Humour do you admire? Why?
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<td>SUITABILITY</td>
<td>(PG) All</td>
<td>(PG) All</td>
<td>(PG) All</td>
<td>(PG) All</td>
<td>Senior (~15–18 y.o.)</td>
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<td>SYNOPSIS</td>
<td>Eleven year-old Doug moves to Blootsburg. He falls in love with Patti Mayonnaise and makes a friend in Skeeter. He is especially keen not to look like a fool in front of others. Doug's stories are told through amusing, imaginative diary entries.</td>
<td>A crazed air force General starts off a nuclear holocaust, and the US President and host of army personnel and politicians try to undo the disaster before humankind is wiped out.</td>
<td>Mid-thirties man Mike O'Donnell is a less-than-great father living in regret. Mike gets a magical chance to become 17 again and go back to high school where he can confront the mistakes he feels he made through his life.</td>
<td>King Arthur enlists a none-too-bright entourage of knights and sets off across Dark Ages England on his quest to find the Holy Grail. The band has to battle evil giants, rude Frenchmen, and killer rabbits.</td>
<td>A documentary crew follows the lives of Ja'mie King, Jonah Takalua and Mr G as they struggle to find a place for themselves in an Australian public high school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSSIBLE DISCUSSION POINTS</td>
<td>• Does Doug take himself seriously? Is this a good thing? In what situations might he have thought about himself more lightly and so been faced with a different outcome? • Doug writes and doodles in his diary. What thinking skills does he use when thinking about events? Which ones help him cope better? • Why does humour play such an important part in Doug’s and Skeeter’s friendship? • Have you ever kept a journal or diary? When thinking about events, do you try to see the humorous or lighter side? How does this assist you? • This film was released in a time when many people in the world were keenly worried about mutually assured destruction by atomic weapons. How could this subject matter have been treated as funny? • What humour tools do Kubrick and Sellers use to counterpoint the serious conversations and actions in the film? Why do these work so well? • Why is it possible for us to be entertained and scared at the same time? What does this say about humour as a coping tool? • Have you ever used humour to defuse a serious situation? Did it work? • Why in our society do jokes often appear after even sad/serious events (e.g. the sudden death of a famous person)? • How does Mike's Sense of Humour reflect his values? Do they change over the course of the film? Does that change show in his Sense of Humour? • How does Mike use humour to reconnect with his children? • How do Mike’s perspective-taking skills grow? Does his self-talk change as that growth occurs? • Have you ever initially regretted a decision, then realised you’d made the right choice after all? How does Sense of Humour help us accept the choices we make, and put events into perspective? • The film makes light of death on a grand scale. How does humour help us deal with difficulties and tragedies? • This is a classic example of absurdist humour. Why do we delight in being surprised by unlikely events? What can we do to bring this levity into our lives regularly? • Arthur takes himself very seriously, yet becomes the butt of much of the film's humour. Would the film have been so funny if he had lightened up? Might people laugh at us when we take ourselves too seriously? • How can a Sense of Humour help us cope on our serious ‘quests’? • The events that occur in this series are often very serious. How are they interpreted by Chris Lilley and made funny? What humour tools does he use? • Mr G takes himself very seriously, and yet is – viewed from without – a very funny character. What does this say about the importance of lightening up? • Ja’mie has trouble coping with some situations. What kind of things does she say to herself? Why is this funny to us? Is it funny to her? • What has this show taught you about perspective-taking?</td>
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<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Research: Laughter in History</td>
<td>Research: Laughter in Other Cultures</td>
<td>Stretching the Comfort Zone</td>
<td>Laugh Chart &amp; Enjoyment Menu</td>
<td>Laughter Master Class</td>
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<td>Small Groups</td>
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<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>Students work in pairs or trios to research humour and history. How has each shaped the other? Has technology changed humour, and vice-versa? How have comedy styles changed down the ages (or have they at all?). Students should aim to look back as far as possible through time, including the ancient Athenians, the Middle Ages, Shakespearean England, and the dramatic 20th Century. What conclusions can students draw from their findings, regarding humour as a social leveller and a coping mechanism?</td>
<td>Students investigate commonalities and differences in styles of humour between various world cultures. You as teacher determine whether students compare two or more cultures, seeking out the things that we all laugh at, and highlighting the things that only peoples within certain societies find amusing. The findings can be presented in any number of forms, including as a project, a class talk, or in role-play.</td>
<td>Students make a list of five readily accessible activities they know that other people often enjoy, but that they don’t believe they will (e.g. attend a football game). Have students rate (1–10) how much they think they’d enjoy each activity. Now have them select one that they will actually go out and do. They may need a friend, relative, or peer to take them. After the event, have students re-rate the experience to see if they enjoyed it more than they thought they would.</td>
<td>Students chart the pleasant events they experience over a week, taking note of which were funny, how long they made them feel good for, and whether they were planned or incidental. At the end of the week, students should assess whether they need to plan more pleasant events. They then create a menu of inexpensive and accessible things they can regularly do in their lives that they can draw upon as a resource. These should NOT just be passive activities.</td>
<td>Students work together in small groups to plan and stage a Laughter Master Class. Students need to decide: • to whom they will deliver the class • whether it focuses on one or all forms of laughing • what format it will be delivered in (e.g. part of orientation for new Junior students). Students are responsible for planning, advertising, and conducting the Master Classes.</td>
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<p>| POSSIBLE DISCUSSION POINTS | • We think of comedy as something very contemporary (e.g. the in-joke that only our generation will understand), yet humour is as old as humanity. How does it change? • How has humour helped change societies? In particular, what purpose has political satire served? • Have historical attempts to suppress humour (e.g. Italy 1350–1750) ever worked? Why/not? • Why is humour important for the wellbeing of societies, as well as individual wellbeing? | • What aspects of humour are universal? What topics are universal? What purpose does joking serve (e.g. broaching taboo subjects in a socially acceptable way)? • How do humour styles differ between cultures? Does the structure of comedy depend on the cultural background of the joke teller and audience? • Is there a gender divide in comedy across cultures? Why are some jokes acceptable in one culture but offensive in another? | • How did you think you would enjoy your chosen event? Why did you think you would not enjoy it? What elements of your usual favoured pastimes did it lack? • How much did you end up enjoying it? Did it surprise you? What elements contributed to your enjoyment? • Was the activity a group event? How did being among others make you feel? • Has the activity altered your attitude to planning enjoyable/pleasant events or trying different things? | • How much laughter and enjoyment do you have in your life right now? Is it enough? • How much of the fun and funniness in your life is planned, and how much happens incidentally? Is that a good balance? • Was it easy or difficult to come up with a menu of pleasant, accessible activities? Why/not? • Were any of the items a pleasant surprise to you? Have you tried them? • Will your menu prove a useful resource to you in the future? | • Were your preparations for the Master Class easy or difficult? Why? • How was the turn-out to your class? • What was the response to your class? How did you quantify its success? • What did the process teach you about your and others’ Sense of Humour? • What thinking skills did the activity teach you that you can use in your day-to-day life? |</p>
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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY NAME</th>
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<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>Teacher to Source</td>
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<td>At Least It’s Not Raining</td>
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<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>5-15 minutes</td>
<td>Scheduling Enjoyable/Pleasant Events</td>
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<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
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<td>None Required</td>
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<td>Day Lubber Lubber</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<td>15+ minutes</td>
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<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
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<td>HAH-GOOO</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>15+ minutes</td>
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<td>Laughter School</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>15+ minutes</td>
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<td>My Duckle Wuckle</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
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<td>None Required</td>
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<td>My Leisure Coordinator</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay, Computer</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Miasma Plasma</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Your Sense of Humour</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underduck Breakout</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where’s My Punchline?</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wrights Have Left</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>For Individuals</td>
<td>15+ minutes</td>
<td>Mood &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>None Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that items common to classrooms (e.g. wall clock, pens, paper, whiteboard) are assumed to be available.
Delivering SenseAbility
Delivering SenseAbility

Delivering Several Modules Across A Term

If you have decided to deliver more than one SenseAbility module to your students, you may wish to fit those modules into a 10-week term block. There are two recommended models for delivering multiple modules over a term:

**Option 1:** Delivering three Sense modules (e.g. Sense of Belonging, Sense of Control, and Sense of Future) in three x 45 minute (or longer) sessions with a final review session at the end.

**Option 2:** Delivering two Sense modules (e.g. Sense of Belonging and Sense of Control) in five x 45 minute (or longer) sessions.

If you believe your students would benefit from learning about and exercising Essential Skills, then you can replace one of the Sense modules with Units from the Essential Skills Module. If you wish to deliver more than three SenseAbility modules, you can simply run two or more 10-session blocks over two or more terms.

The relevance of the information and skills explored in this and other Sense modules may change for your students depending on their age and on the challenges they are facing at particular times of the school year.

For instance, during transitional periods like moving from primary to secondary school, Senses of Self-worth, Control, and Belonging are especially important. For students midway through secondary school who are faced with having to choose elective subjects, Senses of Purpose, Control, and Future may seem more keenly relevant to their situation.

You are the best judge of which Senses will be of most benefit to your students, bearing in mind considerations like cultural backgrounds, literacy levels and gender. However, here are some suggestions for ordering or prioritising the Sense modules:

**JUNIOR SECONDARY (≈12–14 years)**
- Self-worth; Belonging; Control; Purpose; Future; Humour

**SENIOR SECONDARY (≈15–18 years)**
- Purpose; Future; Control; Humour; Self-worth; Belonging

The Essential Skills Module can fit in with any module/s, and you should evaluate the need for it regularly.

### Delivery Suggestions for a 10-Week / 10-Session Block

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>45+ minute SESSION</th>
<th>Delivery Suggestions for a 10-Week / 10-Session Block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sense One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sense Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sense Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sense One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sense Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities & Resources
Ways to Strengthen Sense of Humour

- Speak to yourself helpfully.
- Schedule regular enjoyable events into your life.
- Don’t take yourself too seriously.
- Understand that other people’s Sense of Humour might be different to yours, but laughing together can be bonding.

Why is Having a Sense of Humour So Important?

- It’s good for your mind, and body.
- It helps you cope with difficult situations.
- It gives you things to look forward to and enjoyable ways to unwind.
- It helps you connect with other people.
- It helps you see events from different perspectives.

Things Worth Knowing About Sense of Humour

- It is very individual.
- It isn’t static, and it changes as you grow older and experience new things.
- It needs to work with other Senses (like Sense of Control and Sense of Belonging). For instance, it is good to laugh with others, not at them.
- It’s a very important coping tool.
- Laughter triggers relaxation and can help release stress-reducing hormones.

Sense of Humour

What is it?

Your Sense of Humour is your ability to understand and enjoy amusement, and to make others smile and laugh. It is also your ability to see the lighter side of situations and of yourself. In short, it’s your ability to experience and share joy and laughter in a positive way.

What if I’m Struggling with My Sense of Humour?

Many people experience times in their lives when things seem hopeless and the future looks tough or empty. In those situations, it can be very helpful to speak with someone. Friends, family, trusted adults, and medical professionals are good places to start. Some other helpful resources include:

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
The Physical Effects of Laughing

What happens when you laugh?

Fifteen facial muscles contract and there is electrical stimulation of the zygomatic major (cheek muscle) in particular. The epiglottis half-closes, interrupting respiration so that the intake of air becomes irregular and gasping. These behaviours are usually accompanied by noises that can range from sedate giggles to boisterous guffaws.

Source http://people.howstuffworks.com/laughter.htm

Humour and physical health

Research shows that:

• Muscles relax more quickly after watching funny cartoons than after looking at beautiful scenery.
• Laughter reduces some of the hormones associated with the stress response.
• Watching 30–60 minutes of comedy results in beneficial changes to the immune system that are still present 12 hours later.
• Humour has been found to reduce pain in some patients.

Laughter is infectious

Humans have a detector in the brain that is specifically devoted to laughter. It responds to laughter by triggering neural circuits that generate more laughter.

Source: McGhee, 1999

Words that describe laughter

Cackle, chortle, chuckle, crack-up, hee-haw, hoot, giggle, guffaw, snigger, snort, titter.

Humour and Emotional Health

How does laughter assist emotional health?

• Seeing a smile and returning it changes our brain chemistry and gives us a natural high. It gives us more pleasure than eating chocolate, shopping, being given money, or drinking coffee.
• Humour helps people cope more effectively with life stressors.
• Laughing promotes feelings of happiness and joy, and under these conditions it is much easier to think creatively around a problem.
• Humour is an easy way to get in touch with your feelings and control them in difficult situations.
• Laughter brings people together and improves interpersonal relationships.
• Regular laughter puts people in a positive frame of mind and gradually makes them positive thinkers.
• Humour makes it easier to challenge negative thoughts.
• Positive thinking and optimism are linked with better health outcomes.

Your Sense of Humour is one of the most powerful tools you have to ensure that your daily mood and emotional state support good health.

Source: McGhee 1999
When an event (A) happens, it is our thoughts and interpretations (B) of the event, and not the event itself, that lead us to experience certain emotions and feelings (C), and to act or react in particular ways (D).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANTECEDENTS</th>
<th>BELIEFS</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event/Situation</td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a party, Joanne has a drink spilled on her new dress.</td>
<td>This is awful! Everyone will think I’m an idiot!</td>
<td>EMBARRASSED</td>
<td>Joanne sneaks out of the party and goes home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a party, Joanne has a drink spilled on her new dress.</td>
<td>My good dress! Still, accidents happen.</td>
<td>SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED</td>
<td>Joanne cleans it as best she can and makes it a funny story to tell others at the party.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-B-C-D Model – Sense of Humour

ACTION
Copy/print onto overhead transparency or use as data file for projection during class discussion.
**ACTION**

Copy/print onto overhead transparency or use as data file for projection during class discussion.

---

**Blank A-B-C-D Model**

When an event (A) happens, it is our thoughts and interpretations (B) of the event, and not the event itself, that lead us to experience certain emotions and feelings (C), and to act or react in particular ways (D).

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event/Situation</td>
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<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**TABLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANTECEDENTS</th>
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<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event/Situation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A-Ha-Ha

ACTIVITY: ‘A-HA-HA’

TIME: 5–10 minutes
SIZE: For small groups
SPACE: Clear room to lie down
RESOURCES: Checkerboard and checkers (optional)

NB: This activity is best for girls. Be sensitive to issues like personal proximity and body self-consciousness.

The aim is for students to participate in an activity where laughter is likely.

The result should be class discussion about the physiological benefits of laughter.

1. Set a serious mood and explain that this is an activity focusing on self-control.
2. Break the class into small groups of three to five students. Have these groups lay in circles on their backs, so each student has his/her head on the tummy of another student in the group.*
3. Eyes closed (optional).
4. Explain that the challenge here is not to laugh.
5. Nominate a ‘first person’ in each group. That student is to say a loud, ‘Ha!’ Going clockwise, the next student must say, ‘Ha-Ha!’ The third student must then say, ‘Ha-Ha-Ha!’ and so-forth, continuing around the group until it breaks down with laughter.
6. To vary: create a race between groups. Each time a group successfully completes a ‘Ha-Ha’ cycle of the circle without breaking into uncontrollable laughter, one member gets to his/her feet and runs to a checkerboard to advance a checker one row forward. Any group failing a cycle must retreat a row. The first group to ‘cross’ the checkerboard wins.
7. Commence class discussion.

*If you think this close contact might be too confronting, consider having students stand in a circle with linked arms.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you thinking and feeling when the rules of the activity were explained? Were you excited? Anxious? Annoyed? What were you saying to yourself?
• What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? Were these different to your thoughts and feelings before the activity started?
• What were your physical symptoms during the activity? How do you feel physically now?
• What were people who remained serious longest saying to themselves during the activity? Did this change? What were you thinking when other members of your group were unable to control themselves?
• What situations in real life might be similar to this activity? Why is it so important to put events into perspective and find ways to discover their enjoyable aspects?
Adiaphoretic

ACTIVITY: ‘ADIAPHORETIC’

TIME: 10+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to sit
RESOURCES: Dictionaries, pens, paper

The aim is to have students use flexible thinking to create amusement for themselves and others.
The result should be an understanding that a strong Sense of Humour relies on our looking at events in creative, open-minded ways and from different perspectives.

1. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.
2. One at a time, every student in each group will flick through the dictionary and find a word that they believe their group mates will not know the meaning of (e.g. Adiaphoretic: preventing or reducing perspiration). (NB: The student doesn’t reveal the meaning of the word yet.)
3. The other members of the group must now come up with entertaining and at least slightly plausible definitions for the mysterious word. Write down the definitions that result in the most laughter.
4. When everyone in the group has had the chance to find a word, and a list of the funniest definitions has been written, come together as a class and have each group share it’s funniest definitions with the wider class. They should conclude with reading the correct dictionary definitions.
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• Were the correct dictionary definitions ever funny?
• Why did the made-up definitions make people laugh? Was it because of surprising associations? Absurdity? Witty rhymings?
• What thinking skills did creators of funny definitions employ?
• Everyone in the group had the same word to work with, yet everyone came up with different interpretations. How is this like the application of the A-B-C-D Model to life events?
• Discuss how none of this activity’s laughter could have occurred if students simply took words at face value. Having a Sense of Humour sometimes requires effort and the application of thinking skills including perspective-taking.
**ACTIVITY: ‘AT LEAST IT’S NOT RAINING’** (Option 1)

**TIME:** 10+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Individuals  
**SPACE:** No Special Requirements  
**RESOURCES:** Blank Cartoons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 (pp.64–69 or SenseAbility CD), pens

The aim is to have students consider situations in a light-hearted manner.  
The result should be practical exercising of helpful and flexible thinking skills that are important to a strong Sense of Humour.

1. Give students a copy of each of the six blank cartoons (if time is limited, give students only three each).
2. Students are to supply two captions for each of their cartoons: one that they think is funny, and one that is not.
3. Allow around 90 seconds per cartoon.
4. Project each of the blank cartoons one by one and ask willing students to read aloud their two captions for that cartoon.
5. Rate the most amusing caption by class applause.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

• For students who developed captions that drew strong applause: How did you come up with the ideas? What thinking skills did you use?

• Why were the funny captions amusing? What qualities went toward making a funny caption?

• Why were the unfunny captions unamusing? Were any of these amusing to select people? If so, why?

• Flexible thinking is very important to building and maintaining a healthy Sense of Humour. Why might this be?

• How can flexible thinking and a Sense of Humour help you weather difficult events in day-to-day life? (Brainstorm some examples from students’ lives.) What did you think? How did helpful/flexible thinking make you feel in those situations? How might you have felt differently if you’d thought differently?
At Least It’s Not Raining

ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 1
ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 2
At Least It’s Not Raining

ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 3
At Least It’s Not Raining

ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 4
At Least It’s Not Raining

ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 5
At Least It’s Not Raining

ACTION
Copy/print one copy per student, and copy/print once onto overhead transparency for projection.

BLANK CARTOON 6
DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• How did you feel wondering if the next person you bump into would be a vampire?
• How did vampires feel knowing they could transform another person?
• How would you describe the sensation of anticipation?
• Why is it that we enjoy safe-but-scary activities (e.g. roller coasters, horror movies)?
• Why is anticipation of a fun event almost as enjoyable as the event itself?
• Why is it important to have fun, enjoyable events in our lives to look forward to? Do they have to be ‘big’ events to be fun?
• Discuss ways students can schedule pleasant events into their weekly plans.
ACTIVITY: ‘DAY LUBBER LUBBER’

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to sit in circles
RESOURCES: Word Cards and Action Cards (pp.72–73 or SenseAbility CD), two hats or buckets

The aim is for students to experience a situation where it is difficult for them to take themselves too seriously.
The result should be discussion about the benefits of lightening up and looking at events from multiple perspectives.

1. Break the class into small groups of five to seven students and have each group form a seated circle.
2. Put the Word Cards in one bucket and the Action Cards in another. Word Cards have single, common words such as ‘Out’, ‘Go’, and ‘Morning’. Action Cards have funny tasks such as ‘Stand up and do a little dance’, and ‘Pretend your hands are puppets having an argument’.
3. Have every student pick one word from each bucket. They are allowed to read their cards, but not to reveal their contents to others.
4. Explain the activity: each group is going to begin an amiable conversation about a topic of your (the teacher’s) choice (e.g. the price of concert tickets, favourite holiday destinations). But as soon as any student hears the word on his/her Word Card, they must instantly perform the task on their Action Card. For example, when Jane hears someone say the word ‘Day’ she must make a face and loudly say ‘Lubber Lubber’.
5. Laughter will make the job difficult, but make sure people perform their actions while the others stay on topic with the themed conversation.
6. It is up to you whether they need to obey their Action Card every time or only the first time they hear their word.
7. When you feel the activity is running out of puff, bring the class together for a discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you thinking and feeling when you read your Action Card and realised what you had to do in front of others?
• Would you still feel that way if you had to do the activity again? Why/why not?
• What did you think of others who were performing in your group?
• What are the general differences between the way people thought about themselves and thought about others?
• What are some negative implications of taking yourself too seriously?
• How do you strike a balance between behaving with dignity and taking yourself too seriously? What thinking tools can help you ‘lighten up’?
OTHER MATERIALS
Envelopes

ACTION
Copy/print this sheet then, using scissors or guillotine, cut along the dotted lines to separate cards. Place cards in an envelope marked ‘Word Cards’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVERY</th>
<th>HOME</th>
<th>WANT</th>
<th>DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>WEEKEND</td>
<td>SOON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>LISTEN</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>FUN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAT</td>
<td>LATER</td>
<td>OUT</td>
<td>WEAR/ WHERE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>BAD</td>
<td>SAVE</td>
<td>GO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGHT</td>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>SISTER/S</td>
<td>BROTHER/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRIVE</td>
<td>PAY</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>MORNING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OTHER MATERIALS

Envelopes

### ACTION

Copy/print this sheet then safely cut along the dotted lines using scissors or guillotine to separate cards. Place cards in an envelope marked ‘Action Cards’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make a face and say, ‘Lubber Lubber’</th>
<th>Cheerfully say the alphabet backwards</th>
<th>Twist your ear lobes and whistle as if you're tuning in a radio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brush your teeth with an invisible tooth brush</td>
<td>Quickly make up nicknames for everyone in the group</td>
<td>Strike a pose and say in an accent, ‘You cannot be serious!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a robot voice say, ‘Negative’ to every comment for 20 seconds</td>
<td>Pretend your hands are puppets having an argument</td>
<td>Loudly give someone in the group a compliment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to the sky and loudly name three planets</td>
<td>Laugh brightly, wave your hand and say, ‘Oh, you …’</td>
<td>Widen your eyes, hands on cheeks and say, ‘No!!!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravely shake hands with everyone in the group</td>
<td>Say in a Scottish accent, ‘She’ll not take it Captain’</td>
<td>Whisper loudly to the person next to you, ‘Boooring …’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nod wisely and start typing on an invisible computer</td>
<td>Put your hand in the air and state your favourite sweets</td>
<td>Quietly stand and mime cutting your neighbour’s hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start making car noises and mime driving on a speedway</td>
<td>Look excited, nod your head and say, ‘I’d like to see that!’</td>
<td>Put both hands in the air and shout, ‘I’m so ticklish!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamp your foot, pout, and say, ‘I want my lollipop!’</td>
<td>Clap your hands and whistle ‘Three Blind Mice’</td>
<td>Make monkey noises and pick invisible nits off your neighbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close your eyes, hold your breath and say ‘I love you’</td>
<td>Quietly and seriously cluck like a chicken</td>
<td>Clap your hands wildly and shout, ‘Bravo! Bravo!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand up and do a little dance</td>
<td>Point dramatically at someone and order a pizza</td>
<td>Whisper loudly to the person next to you, ‘Boooring …’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravely shake hands with everyone in the group</td>
<td>Say in a Scottish accent, ‘She’ll not take it Captain’</td>
<td>Whisper loudly to the person next to you, ‘Boooring …’</td>
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<td>Stamp your foot, pout, and say, ‘I want my lollipop!’</td>
<td>Make monkey noises and pick invisible nits off your neighbour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funnier Than I Thought

ACTIVITY: ‘FUNNIER THAN I THOUGHT’

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Pairs
SPACE: Room for pairs to sit opposite
RESOURCES: Joke Sheets (pp. 75–76 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is for students to monitor how amusement affects their mood.
The result should be practical understanding that pleasant events – laughing in particular – is a very important tool for reducing stress and improving moods.

1. Have students quickly write down their current mood. This might be a one-word description, or (better yet) rated on a scale of 1–10, where 1 is lousy and 10 fabulous.
2. Break the class into pairs, and have those pairs sit opposite one another.
3. Distribute the joke sheets to the students: give Joke Sheet 1 to one partner in each pair, Joke Sheet 2 to the other. Don’t let students read each other’s sheets!
4. Explain that the pairs are going to tell each other jokes from the sheets, alternating turns to tell and hear jokes.
5. After a few minutes, when the joke-telling is done, have students quickly rate their individual moods again.
6. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What did you, as teacher, note in the class as a whole?
• Did anyone note a change in your mood?
• What might have caused those changes?
• Discuss how giving amusement can be almost as pleasurable as receiving it, i.e. making someone else laugh is almost as gratifying as laughing yourself.
• Is laughter infectious? Are moods infectious? Why might that be?
• Why is putting in the effort to lift moods important in interpersonal relationships?
• How can you apply what you gained from this activity in your day-to-day life?
• Discuss the need to make time to de-stress and improve your own mood daily by listening to, reading, watching, or thinking about something funny or enjoyable.
Paul received a parrot for his birthday. This parrot, however, had a very bad attitude and worse vocabulary. Every second word it said was an expletive and the rest of them were plain rude. Paul tried to change the bird’s attitude by saying nice words and playing gentle music ... but nothing worked. The filthy language became so frustrating that Paul yelled at the bird, but the bird just got worse. Paul shook the parrot, but that just made it madder and more rude. Finally, driven to despair, Paul shoved the parrot in the freezer. For a few moments he heard the bird squawking and swearing, flapping and kicking and then, suddenly, there was absolute, blissful silence. Paul was afraid he’d hurt the bird, and opened the freezer door. The parrot stepped out onto Paul’s arm and softly said, ‘I’m sorry that I offended you with my terrible language, and I beg your forgiveness. I’ll try hard to be a better bird.’ Paul was astounded and was about to ask what had changed him, when the parrot continued, ‘May I ask what the chicken did?’

A new manager was on his first week in his new job, and spent it with the manager he was replacing. On the Friday afternoon, the departing manager pulled the new manager aside. ‘I have left three numbered envelopes in the desk drawer. Open one envelope each time you strike a crisis you can’t fix.’

Three months later there was indeed a major drama and everything went wrong. The new manager didn’t know what to do until he remembered the parting words of his predecessor, and opened the first envelope. The note inside said ‘Blame your predecessor!’ The new manager did just that, and so got off the hook.

Six months later, the company suffered a sharp dip in sales combined with serious product problems. The new manager opened the second envelope. The message read, ‘Reorganise!’ He did and, mercifully, the company rebounded.

Three months later, at the next crisis, he opened the third envelope. The message inside said, ‘Prepare three envelopes …’

A man was driving down the highway doing well over the speed limit. But he felt pretty secure because he was in the middle of a group of cars all travelling at the same excessive speed.

However, the cars passed a speed trap, and the man found himself being waved over by a police officer with a speed gun. The policeman took the man’s licence details and wrote him up a ticket. But just as he was about to drive off, the man leaned out the window.

‘Constable, I know I was speeding, but I don’t think it’s fair that I got a ticket. I mean, there were lots of other cars around me who were going just as fast as me. Why did I get the ticket?’

‘Have you ever gone fishing?’ asked the policeman.

‘Um,’ said the man. ‘Yes ...’

The policeman shrugged, “Did you ever catch all the fish?”

A man ran into the vet’s office carrying his beloved dog. The vet examined the still, limp body, and told the man that his pet was dead.

The man was not willing to accept this and demanded a second opinion. So, the vet went into a back room and returned with a cat. The cat walked from head to tail poking and sniffing the dog’s body and finally looked at the vet and meowed. The vet said to the man, ‘I’m sorry, but the cat thinks that your dog is dead, too.’

The man was still unwilling to accept that his beloved dog was dead. So the vet brought in a black labrador. The lab sniffed the body, walked from head to tail, and finally looked at the vet and barked.

The vet said, ‘I’m sorry, but the lab thinks your dog is dead, too.’

The man, finally accepting the truth, nodded sadly and asked how much he owed.

The vet replied, ‘$650.’

‘$650! Just to tell me my dog is dead!!’

‘I would only have charged you $50 for my initial diagnosis. The extra $600 was for the cat scan and lab tests.’
A man is driving across the country and comes upon a pig with a wooden leg. Curious, he found the pig’s owner and asked, ‘How’d your pig get a wooden leg?’

The farmer said, ‘This pig is a ripper. One day, I got trapped under my tractor and this little fella went to the neighbours, and got them to come over and free me. This amazing pig saved my life!’

The traveller said, ‘That is amazing! But how’d he end up with a wooden leg?’

The farmer went on, ‘And another time, my house caught fire and I was trapped inside, unconscious. This darling pig ran through the flames, grabbed my arm in his mouth and dragged me to safety. He saved my life again!’

The traveller was stunned. ‘That is incredible, but how’d your pig get a wooden leg?’

The farmer said, ‘And last week I fell in the dam! I can’t swim and started drowning. But this beautiful creature dived in, and pulled me out to safety. He’d saved my life again!’

The traveller was truly amazed. ‘Wow! But still, how’d he get the wooden leg?’

The farmer replied, ‘A unique creature. Can’t eat a pig like that. At least … not all at once.’

A vampire bat flapped in from the night covered in fresh blood. He flew slowly to the roof of the cave, grabbed hold with his feet, and closed his eyes to get some sleep.

But all the other vampire bats in the cave could smell the fresh blood, and soon began hassling the tired bat about where he got it.

‘Go away,’ he muttered. ‘Let me sleep.’

But the other bats bothered and pestered him until finally he gave in.

‘Fine,’ he said. ‘I’ll show you. Follow me.’

He flapped out of the cave with hundreds of other bats behind him. They winged down through a dark valley, across a glistening river and into a dim forest filled with trees.

Finally, the tired bat slowed down and all the other bats excitedly gathered around him.

‘Now, do you see that tall tree over there?’ he asked.

‘Yes, yes, yes!’ screamed the other bats in a starving frenzy.

‘Good,’ said the first bat. ‘Because I didn’t.’
The aim is to allow students to experience a situation where their thoughts about an event affect their feelings. (see A-B-C-D Model p.59)

The result should be that students understand that they can control the way they think about events and so exercise control over their emotional responses. The activity should also highlight the link between thoughts and feelings, and show how our thoughts have the power to increase or decrease our personal stress.

1. Tell your students that, in keeping with the topic of humour you are going to randomly pick four people from the class to stand up and tell the other students a joke.*

2. Explain that everyone has five minutes to make up the joke they are going to tell using three elements that you choose (e.g. an elephant, a tissue, and a sports car), and that the jokes will be rated by class laughter. Students are NOT to talk with their classmates in this time.

3. Pretend to be busy with notes/work but try to observe your students’ reactions.

4. After one minute has elapsed, commence class discussion using the tables below (no one will be telling any jokes – this was just an experiment to gauge various reactions but do not tell the class this yet).

5. Commence class discussion using the tables below.

LIST STUDENTS’ RESPONSES

6. On the board draw up a five-column table. Label the first column ‘A: Event’ and write beneath it the only entry for that column: ‘Asked to tell a joke in front of the class’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASKED TO TELL A JOKE IN FRONT OF THE CLASS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Label the third and fourth columns ‘Emotions’ and ‘Bodily Symptoms’, respectively, under the broader title ‘C: Feelings’. Ask students: What were you feeling during the activity minute (e.g. anxious, excited, angry, unconcerned)? What was happening to your body (e.g. increased heart rate, sweaty palms, tense muscles)? Write the various answers in columns three and four.

8. Label the fifth column ‘D: Behaviour’ and ask those same students: What were you doing during the minute (e.g. fidgeting, looking around at friends/others, avoiding eye contact with the teacher)? Write responses in column five.

9. Label the second column ‘B: Thoughts’ and ask the same students: What was going through your mind when you were told that you might have to stand up and share a joke? (e.g. ‘I’ll make a fool of myself’, ‘This is unfair’, ‘I like telling jokes!’, ‘I’ll die of embarrassment’). Write responses in column two.

*You can substitute another activity for this, so long as it is likely to evoke a wide range of reactions in your students.
### EXAMPLE RESPONSES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: Event</th>
<th>B: Thoughts</th>
<th>C: Feelings</th>
<th>D: Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asking to tell a joke in front of the class</strong></td>
<td><strong>I’ll make a fool of myself</strong></td>
<td><strong>Anxious, Embarrassed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Look to friends, fidget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Don’t pick me!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Apprehensive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Look down, avoid teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>This is stupid/unfair</strong></td>
<td><strong>Angry, Mourned</strong></td>
<td><strong>Glare at teacher, protest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I quite like telling jokes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Calm, A bit excited</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decide on the joke you want to tell</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sweaty, Churning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pale, Knotted stomach</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Flushed, Clenched jaw</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Alert muscles, Heart rate up</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The table now completed, discuss how there were some very different reactions among the class to the **same** event.

11. You can now explain this was an experiment to gauge student’s responses to a specific event.

12. Project the A-B-C-D Model (p.59 or SenseAbility CD) and explain how people can think differently about the same event and consequently have different feelings and actions. In other words, it is not the event but your interpretation of the event that leads to emotions and behaviours; you can change your feelings by changing your thinking. Therefore, challenging unhelpful thoughts and generating alternative, helpful ways to think, is an important way to help manage stress and curb unhelpful emotional reactions.

### DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Highlight that a whole raft of different responses – anger, nervousness, excitement – all resulted from the one common event. What caused you all to feel and act in different ways.

- Brainstorm some thoughts that might challenge unhelpful self-talk for this activity (e.g. ‘Maybe I’ll actually come up with something good’ or ‘At least I’m not the only one, we’re all in the same boat’). What feelings might these more helpful thoughts have resulted in?

- Brainstorm some other real life instances where people might have a variety of reactions to the same event. Try to predict the likely feelings and actions that result from various ways of thinking. Which thoughts would be helpful, and which would be unhelpful to the situation? Which thoughts would be most beneficial to the person’s overall goal (e.g. to be happy, to do a good job)?

- Brainstorm a list of events that have the potential for you to feel self-conscious or to dwell on the serious side of things (e.g. stumbling in front of peers, asking someone for a date, trying out for a sports team). But remember the amount of stress and anxiety you **feel** is linked directly to how you **think** about the event. This is because unhelpful thoughts have the potential to exacerbate feelings of self-consciousness and to allow us to dwell on the negative aspects of events. So, changing the way you think is the most effective way to control your feelings and actions, and to reduce stress and anxiety, and to strengthen your Sense of Humour.

- If any student has a joke they would like to share, now is a good time to do so.
ACTIVITY: ‘HAH-GOOO’

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Clear room, sports hall
RESOURCES: Nil

The aim is to involve students in an activity likely to draw laughter, but which demands some emotional regulation. The result should be discussion about the need to share laughter in positive, respectful ways.

1. Break the class into two teams of even numbers (odd ones out can be moderators).
2. Allow each team to give itself a silly name and incorporate it in a funny war cry.
3. Have the teams form two parallel lines approx. 2 m apart, facing each other – let them sound off their war cries.
4. Now commence the activity proper: one player from opposing ends of each team step out into ‘no man’s land’ and face one another down the row. They must greet each other in a serious voice, saying ‘Hah-gooo’, and then bow/curtsy with a deep flourish. Then, they must strut toward and past each other – eyes locked – without smiling or laughing and get to the end of the line. If they break, and smile or laugh, they must go join the opposing team.
5. The activity continues until one team has all the players, or the game runs out of puff. Don’t let it go on too long!
6. You decide whether to allow teammates to (good naturedly) taunt the opposition’s ‘Hah-goooers’.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Was it easy or difficult for you not to laugh? Why?
- What techniques did the most successful Hah-gooers employ to keep a straight face?
- If this happened to you on the streets (a stranger came up to you, bowed and said ‘Hah-gooo’) what would you do? Would that be different to your behaviour in this activity? Why?
- When is it okay to laugh in social situations, and when is laughter unacceptable?
- Why is it important to consider the effects – good and bad, respectively – of laughing with or at others?
Laughter School

ACTIVITY: ‘LAUGHTER SCHOOL’

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to move around in and make noise
RESOURCES: Laughter Style Cards (p.81 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is to involve students in an activity that causes laughter. The result should be an understanding that the positive emotions that result from laughing are important to wellbeing.

1. Conduct a quick class discussion about the nature of laughter. Why can it sometimes be infectious? Why do we all enjoy it?
2. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.
3. Give each group a Laughter Style Card – each describes a different way to laugh (e.g. the Milkshake Laugh, the Horse Laugh, the Lawnmower Laugh).
4. Give each group a few minutes to learn and practise their new laugh style. NB: this is a loud activity!
5. Have the class come together. Have each group demonstrate the new laughter style just learned, and teach the style to the wider class.
6. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What thoughts went through your mind when the activity was announced? How would you describe how you felt? What was your mood like?

• How do you feel now after the activity? Is there a difference to how you felt before? If so, why might that be?

• What physical things seemed to happen to you during the activity (e.g. diaphragm spasmed, face muscles worked, sound came out, heart rate changed, tears of laughter)?

• What was happening in your group before the activity (e.g. cynical looks, eye rolls, sighs, excited comments, grinning)? What was different in your group when the teacher called for the activity to stop?

• How can humour bring groups together? How can having a healthy Sense of Humour improve interpersonal relationships?

• Why is laughter such an effective way to reduce stress and help us ‘reset’ ourselves in stressful times?
ACTION
Copy/print this sheet and separate the cards using scissors or guillotine.

LAWN MOWER LAUGH
Imagine a lawn mower that chugs as you pull the cord, but has trouble starting. That’s what this laugh is like! Begin with a hesitant ‘Ha–’, gradually increasing the number of ‘Ha’s’ like the mower trying to start: ‘Ha-ha... Ha-ha-ha... Ha-ha-ha-ha...’ Eventually your laugh-mower will start and keep running! Miming the actions may help.

HANDSHAKE LAUGH
Everyone in the group should find a partner. Now each pair should shake hands — as you do, each partner should let out a big, hearty laugh. It doesn’t matter if it sounds forced or fake at first — it will soon become real! Once the laughter starts, swap partners and aim for even bigger, heartier laughs as you shake hands.

KOOKABURRA LAUGH
Has everyone heard a kookaburra laugh? ‘Kook-kook-kook-kah-kah-kah-kook-kook...’ etc. Everyone in the group should try to sound like one. Now think about how kookaburras respond to one another, then all join in to make one loud crescendo of laughter! One person starts, another joins, then another till everyone’s laughing.

MILKSHAKE LAUGH
Put your hands out in front as if you are holding two large invisible glasses. Now mime pouring drink from one glass to the other — as you do, say ‘mix’ in a loud, sing-song voice, eg ‘Miiii-illiiiliix!’ then raise the glass to your lips, throw your head back and let out a loud laugh as you ‘drink’. You can then practise ‘mixing’ drinks with others!

HYENA LAUGH
Anyone who’s seen The Lion King or watched an African nature doco knows how distinctive a hyena’s laugh is. In fact, the collective noun for hyenas is ‘cackle’! The sound is a high-pitched, almost hysterical kind of laugh. Your job isn’t to replicate it, but use this mad giddily laugh as a guide. You can even scream, giggle, growl and snarl.

SNORTING LAUGH
One if not all of you know someone who snorts when they laugh. The exhaling laugh might be a normal chuckle, but the breath in is a definite piggy snort. Practice it! It is truly infectious. It can be fun to have one person in the group start and to see how long the other members can keep a straight face!

HORSE LAUGH
This laugh aims to sound like a horse’s whinny (though it will eventually turn into unbridled laughter, no pun intended!). A horse’s whinny is easier to try if you throw your head back. It can be even more fun if you ham it up and try stamping and prancing, snorting and blowing through your lips. When you teach the class, try and coordinate your laughs!

WICKED LAUGH
This is a ghoulish, halloween laugh of your own choice! It might be gloating laugh like Dr Evil’s, or a high-pitched witchy cackle, a deep monstrous boom or a snickering goblin giggle. Have everyone choose a different laugh style, then unleash them as a group! When you teach the class, divide the room into groups of goblins, witches and monsters.

GOOFY LAUGH
This is a cartoon-style laugh that you can make your own. It might start as a snicker, as a ‘hyuck-hyuck, hyuck’ or a slow ‘a-haaah, a-haaah, a-haaah’, but it will soon dissolve into real laughter. It helps if you think of a head movement to complement your laugh: forwards and backwards like a duck, or rapid-fire nodding, or a ding-dong side-to-side motion like a bell clapper.
The aim is for students to participate in an amusing activity that makes its players look a little ridiculous. The result should be discussion about healthy perspective-taking and lightening up, and that a healthy Sense of Humour can involve both giving and taking amusement.

1. Form a circle of chairs with a seat for every student minus one.
2. The person without a chair stands in the middle. The aim of that person is to find a seat by making a seated person laugh. If the standing person succeeds in making a seated person laugh, that person must surrender their seat, become the new person in the middle, and must seek to unseat another player.
3. Nominate a person to be the first person in the middle. Everyone else sits. The person in the middle chooses someone seated, goes up as close to them as they like, and asks, ‘Will you buy my Duckle Wuckle?’ The respondent must reply: ‘No. I will not buy your Duckle Wuckle’ without smiling or laughing. The person in the middle can continue the pitch, e.g. ‘But Duckle Wuckle can do things like (e.g. cook pancakes, dance the Tango, whistle ‘Waltzing Matilda’). If the respondent replies a second time: ‘No. I will not buy your Duckle Wuckle’ with a straight face, the person in the middle must find a new person to peddle Duckle Wuckle to.
4. You must ensure the dialogues take place without intimidation or innuendo, and ensure that the same ‘easy laughs’ are not chosen too regularly.
5. Continue the activity until everyone gets a go, or the activity starts to lag.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you saying to yourself when the activity rules were announced? Was this self-talk helpful during the activity? Did it change? Why/why not?

• For those who played the person in the middle: Was your thinking different when you were trying to sell Duckle Wuckle compared with when you were sitting in the circle trying not to laugh? In what ways?

• When is it appropriate to laugh at someone, and when is it not? Brainstorm various circumstances.

• What is the difference between laughing with someone, and laughing at them?

• When is it appropriate to laugh at yourself? When is it not? What is the difference between making fun of yourself lightly and speaking to yourself unhelpfully?
**ACTIVITY: ‘MY LEISURE COORDINATOR’**

**TIME:**  15+ minutes  
**SIZE:**  Pairs  
**SPACE:**  Room for pairs to work  
**RESOURCES:**  Blank Schedule (p.84 or SenseAbility CD), pencils, erasers, paper

*The aim* is for students to create a fortnightly schedule that includes pleasant events.  
*The result* should be an understanding that pleasant/enjoyable events can be incorporated into even very busy lives.

1. Break the class into pairs.  
2. Give each student a copy of the Blank Schedule.  
3. Have students brainstorm a short list of things they enjoy doing for fun/leisure. Allow a few minutes for this.  
4. Pairs swap lists, and commence working up a schedule that incorporates those events. Pairs go through each other’s pleasant/enjoyable events one by one, and ask when the other might find time to do each of the events in the fortnight. If lists of pleasant events are too sparse, encourage students to quiz their partners to come up with some options, even small ones (e.g. walking the family dog; finding a funny clip on YouTube).  
5. The process of creating the schedules might take some tweaking and erasing as commitments and obligations are remembered.  
6. Circulate among the class, giving assistance where necessary. The aim is for every student to walk away with a workable schedule that includes several pleasant events each week.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

- Was it easy or difficult to come up with your list of enjoyable events?  
- Did talking with someone else make it easier to determine things you enjoy doing?  
- Are you doing enough of these pleasant activities every week? If not, why not?  
- Was it easier to be objective and create a timetable for someone else? Why is it sometimes easier to offer advice than to take it?  
- Are you happy with your new schedule? Is it affordable and achievable?  
- Why is it so important to schedule fun things into our lives, and let ourselves smile, laugh, and unwind?
# My Leisure Co-ordinator

**Blank Schedule**

**ACTION**

Copy/print this sheet, one per participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MIDNIGHT</th>
<th>6AM</th>
<th>NOON</th>
<th>6PM</th>
<th>MIDNIGHT</th>
<th>6AM</th>
<th>NOON</th>
<th>6PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FRIDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SATURDAY</strong></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Noise in the Night

**ACTIVITY: ‘NOISE IN THE NIGHT’**

**TIME:** 15+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Whole of class  
**SPACE:** No special requirements  
**RESOURCES:** Whiteboard

The aim is to revisit the A-B-C-D Model in a different way. NB: An alternative is to select Helpful Thinking & Self-talk, Unit 1, from the Essential Skills Module, where this activity is supported by a DVD clip.

The result should be a firmer understanding that while we cannot control all events, we can control the way we think about them, and consequently how we feel about them and what we do as a result.

1. Draw up a blank table including the column headings (see example below).
2. Explain the scenario: you are home alone in bed. It is dark and quiet. Suddenly, you hear a loud, unexpected noise.
3. Under ‘Event’ write in ‘Strange noise in the night.’
4. Ask questions in the following order, writing responses in the table:
   - I. How do you feel?
   - II. What are your physical symptoms?
   - III. What do you do?
   - IV. Why did you do that (i.e. what were you thinking)?

**EXAMPLE RESPONSES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>THOUGHTS?</th>
<th>FEELINGS</th>
<th>DO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strange noise in the night</td>
<td>I hate being alone</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Clammy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is dangerous</td>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>Heart pounding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m all alone!</td>
<td>Apprehensive</td>
<td>Pale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surely it’s nothing</td>
<td>Silly</td>
<td>Flushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It might be a burglar</td>
<td>Curious, angry</td>
<td>Alert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** This represents an ideal example where responses about feelings and actions are lined up to be consistent with relevant thoughts (e.g. apprehensive and pale, and listening intently, are results of the thought, I’m all alone!). Since your students will generate responses in a more haphazard fashion, you may not be able to ‘line up’ associated thoughts, feelings, and actions so neatly. Don’t be concerned; what is important is that students understand, and you emphasise, the thoughts–feelings–actions link.

Draw up a second blank table with the same headings.
5. Explain that NOW you hear the same noise, but this time you know it is the neighbour’s dog that often comes out this time each night to rummage in the garbage bin.
6. Ask the same questions in the same order, writing sample responses in the columns, e.g. Feel? Annoyed. Symptoms? Slight flush. What do you do? Fume about the neighbour. Why did you do that (i.e. what were you thinking)? For example ‘I’m sick of that dog and I must talk to my neighbour about it.’
7. Highlight that a whole raft of different responses – nervousness, anger, excitement, etc. – all resulted from the one common event. Emphasise again the thoughts–feelings–actions link.

**DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS**

- Take on the thought ‘There’s a burglar in my house!’ and consider how that thought makes you feel; now challenge that thought, changing it to ‘I’m sure it’s just that rotten dog.’ Does this second thought result in different feelings?
- Brainstorm some other real-life instances where people might have a variety of reactions to the same event.
- Brainstorm a list of events that have the potential to cause stress and anxiety (e.g. sudden illness, exams, asking someone for a date, auditions or sports tryouts). But remember the amount of stress and anxiety you feel is linked directly to how you think about the event. So changing the way you think is the most effective way to control your feelings and actions, and thus reduce stress and anxiety. If time permits, brainstorm some potentially helpful self-talk for some of these generated events.
ACTIVITY: ‘OKAY, COMPUTER’

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to work
RESOURCES: Cardboard boxes, scissors, slips of paper, paper cups/envelopes, pens

The aim is for students to enjoy an activity based on unlikely associations.
The result should be practical understanding that, when we open ourselves to it, humour can be found in the absurd and the unexpected.

1. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.
2. Divide the groups into halves. Have one half each write five random questions on slips of paper (one question per slip), e.g. ‘What is the natural food of the flamingo?’ Make sure these questions are not personal or offensive! Have the other half each write five random answers/statements (one per slip) e.g. ‘Miley Cyrus’.
3. Have each group put their 10–15 question slips in one paper cup/envelope, and the 10–15 answer slips in another cup/envelope.
4. Give each group a cardboard box. It should be big enough to fit over a student’s head and shoulders. This will become the group’s ‘brainiac computer’. Cut a hole or holes in the ‘screen’ so the wearer can see out and speak from within. If time permits, groups can decorate their brainiac.
5. A volunteer from each group wears the computer and takes the answer cup/envelope.
6. One by one, other group members randomly ask the brainiac questions from their question cup/envelope. The computer (in a computer voice!) randomly picks answers from the cup and reads them aloud.
7. The arbitrary pairing of odd questions and unlikely answers can be very funny.
8. If the activity is humming well, have groups share question/answer slips.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were some standout questions and answers?
• Why were these funny? Was it the unlikeliness of the pairings? Strange mental images? Innuendo?
• How can random events in life also be funny? Have you ever had something unlikely or coincidental prove to be very amusing?
• What do our minds need in place to find these unexpected things funny? What can we do to make ourselves more open to appreciating funny things in life?
• How important is your attitude to this kind of humour? Do you have control over that attitude?
The aim is to place students in a pressured situation fraught with challenge where they can choose to become stressed or to treat the situation lightly.

The result should be class discussion about emotional regulation, lightening up, and helpful self-talk.

1. Have every student take a Wild Card from the bucket. They can read it (taking note of the symbol on their card) but must put it in their pocket without sharing its contents with anyone else.
2. Break class into equally sized teams of six to nine students.
3. Choose sports mats of a size that will barely take that number of students if they squish ‘aboard’, allowing two mats per team.
4. For each group allow four skittles, witches hats, balls, etc, and scatter these across the playing area. Delineate a safe ‘start zone’ at one end and a safe ‘finish zone’ at the far end.
5. The scenario: the playing area between the safe zones is a sludge pool of toxic waste. Each team must use their mats as rafts to cross the sludge pool to the far side without falling in (i.e. touching the floor). If one team member falls in, that player must retire from the game and their team must start again. Also, each team must collect four ‘keys’ (witches hats, skittles, etc.) that will allow them to activate a transporter beam on the far side that will take them to safety. The teams must alternate mats, dragging the spare with them and using them as stepping-stones as they navigate the sludge. You can add pressure by running teams against each other and/or against the clock.
6. Commence the game.
7. At your discretion, have players pull out and obey their Wild Card instructions (e.g. must stand on one leg for one minute). The Wild Cards are marked with three different symbols (circles, squares, triangles), so you can get students to obey their Wild Card instructions at different points at the game by saying, for instance, ‘Students with Triangle Wild Cards, obey them now!’.
8. The first team to get its four keys to the transporter beam wins.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What strategies did the successful team/s employ? Did they have a laugh or did they treat the activity seriously?
- Did laughter help or hinder the activity? Did it help bind the group as a team?
- Which team enjoyed the activity most (use applause to evaluate)? How seriously did they treat the activity?
- What did you think and feel when you read your Wild Card? How did you react? In retrospect, were your thoughts helpful or constructive, or not? Why/why not?
- Reflect that this is like the A-B-C-D Model, and everyone was responding to the same event (i.e. had the same goal) and very similar challenges, but different people thought and felt about it in different ways.
- How is this activity analogous to real life situations? What would the sludge represent? What would the keys represent? What would the Wild Cards represent? How would a strong Sense of Humour assist you in situations like that?
- Did you receive good help from your teammates? Did their Senses of Humour affect your own? In what ways?
Operation Miasma Plasma

Wild Cards

ACTION

Copy/print on to paper and refer to cards by their symbols (i.e. circle cards, square cards, triangle cards).

Then use scissors or guillotine to cut along the dotted lines to separate each card. Tell users only they follow their instructions, and they are not to show their card to others.

- You slowly collapse as if unconscious. Remain so for a slow count of 20.
- For the next minute, you must respond to any question with ‘You bet!’
- Announce loudly that you wish to be leader of the group!
- Have a leadership vote. If there is a tie, paper-scissors-rock for winner.
- Stop whatever you are doing and SLOWLY remove your shoes.
- You must screw your eyes shut and keep them shut for a slow count of 20.
- You lose the use of your LEFT arm for the rest of the activity.
- You lose the use of your RIGHT arm for the rest of the activity.
- Your legs become like jelly: they cannot support you for one minute.
- You lose the power of speech for the next minute.
- You must vigorously shake hands with every team member.
- For one minute, follow any team mate’s statement by saying: ‘I don’t get it.’
- Loudly announce your favourite food then ask your teammates theirs.
- For the next minute, you can only speak in gobbledegook.
- Insist loudly that everyone refer to you as ‘Your Highness’.
- For one minute your hands are ‘glued’ to a team mate’s shoulders.
- For the next 30 seconds, whistle ‘Greensleeves’ or ‘Three Blind Mice’.
- Every time someone says the word “what”, cough and shake your head.
- For the next minute when someone in your team speaks, roll your eyes and sigh.
- Make up nicknames for your teammates and stick with them.
- Completely ignore the tallest member of your team for one minute.
- Refuse to move a muscle until a teammate makes you laugh or shouts.
- You must avoid making any references to colours (e.g. cannot say ‘green’).
- For 30 seconds you lose the use of your LEFT leg and must stand/hop on your RIGHT.
- You can only walk BACKWARDS for the next minute.
- Over the next minute, every 10 seconds you must shout ‘Oogah!’ at one of your teammates.
- For one minute, avoid eye contact with your teammates at all costs.
ACTIVITY: ‘RATE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR’

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Individuals
SPACE: No special requirements
RESOURCES: Quiz and Quiz Results (pp.90–91 or SenseAbility CD), pens

The aim is for students to consider what amuses them and why.
The result should be an understanding that people have diverse tastes in comedy, but that does not mean they have a better or worse Sense of Humour than others.

1. Set the tone with a brief class discussion about favourite comedy films. This will demonstrate that people have quite different ideas about what is funny.
2. Distribute the Quiz (one per student). This is a multiple-choice quiz.
3. Allow students around five minutes to complete the Quiz.
4. Once done, project the Quiz Results. Students can add their score to gain an interpretation of their humour type (e.g. absurd, slapstick, sarcastic) – these ratings are up for debate!
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• Did your quiz result accurately reflect the way you regard your own Sense of Humour? If not, why not?
• What do you think about people who received the same rating as you? What do you think about students who received different ratings to you? Why?
• How would you describe your mood when you commenced the Quiz? If you did this Quiz on a different day, in a different mood, would you get the same result? Why/why not?
• Why do Senses of Humour differ from person to person? Why might they change as we get older, and we experience new things and meet new people?
• Does it matter how other people regard your humour type? Why/why not?
• Discuss how having a healthy Sense of Humour does not depend on the kinds of things you find most amusing. It depends on your ability to employ it regularly to think helpfully about life events, to share fun with others, and to keep your own emotions positive and hopeful so that you enjoy life.
Rate Your Sense of Humour

Quiz

ACTION

Copy/print one sheet per participant.

HUMOUR QUIZ

1  Do you ever forward funny emails?
A  Always
B  Never
C  Only to select friends
D  Only to the computer illiterate

2  Do you ever giggle when you see somebody trip?
A  Do I ever!
B  No
C  Only if I know they’re not hurt
D  I’m too busy taking a bow

3  Which is the funniest item?
A  A whoopee cushion
B  A good clean joke
C  A used band-aid inscribed ‘ripped off’
D  An anvil labelled ‘External use only’

4  Which is the funniest scenario?
A  A woman wins the lottery but dies of excitement
B  A man wins the lottery but can’t claim it because a dog ate his ID
C  A duck wins the lottery and buys a restaurant and the recipe for Human a l’orange
D  A lottery ticket attacks a newsagent with a metre-high coin

5  Which person is funniest?
A  Hamish Blake
B  Ellen DeGeneres
C  That weird guy at the bus stop ...
D  Johnny Knoxville

6  Which movie was funniest?
A  Kung Fu Panda
B  Up
C  Juno
D  Avatar

7  Complete: You can lead a horse to water, but ...
A  Mine prefers beer
B  You can’t make him smell good
C  Why would you?
D  That is not water ...

8  What might you name a friend’s pet spider?
A  Cuddles
B  Webster
C  Nine
D  The Scorpion Lost

9  Which is the best Superhero name?
A  The Scarlet Appendage
B  Captain Pow!
C  The Green Aviophobic
D  The Ladle (Soup-er? Geddit?)

10 Complete: The only thing worse than a jockey with Bird Flu is a bird with —
A  A hoarse throat. Geddit? Hoarse, horse ...
B  Fluoro jockies
C  Saddlebags
D  A Scottish accent
Rate Your Sense of Humour

Quiz Results

ACTION
Copy/print as OHT and project after every participant has completed the quiz.

HUMOUR QUIZ

ADD UP YOUR SCORE ACCORDING TO THESE VALUES:

A = 10
B = 6
C = 4
D = 1

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

80-100 You enjoy silly, uncomplicated humour, and can get a good belly laugh from almost anything.

55-79 You prefer your humour sharp and clean. You aren’t impressed by jokes that could be hurtful to others.

30-54 You enjoy the absurd, and like your laughs to come from ‘left field.’

10-29 You prefer dark comedy, and don’t mind if you’re the only one in the room who gets the joke.

How accurate is this assessment?
How would you sum up your preferred comedy style?
ACTIVITY: ‘THE WRIGHTS HAVE LEFT’

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Clear room to move around
RESOURCES: Story Sheet (p.93 or SenseAbility CD)

The aim is for students to experience a situation where the group has an enjoyable experience and laughter is likely to be infectious.

The result should be engaging discussion about the physical, emotional, and bonding benefits of laughter.

1. Have the class/group form a large standing circle, everyone facing inwards.
2. Choose a confident reader to be the storyteller and give that student the Story Sheet. It is a simple tale about a family named the Wrights who leave home to go on a holiday.
3. Explain the rules: when students hear the word ‘right’ (but not ‘Wright!’) they must take one step clockwise, to the left. When they hear the word ‘left’ they must take one step counter-clockwise to the right.
4. Have the storyteller commence. Reacting to all the ‘lefts’ and ‘rights’ will soon have the class laughing.
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you thinking and feeling when the activity was explained? E.g. you thought, ‘This will be fun’ and felt excited, or you thought, ‘This sounds like a kids’ game’ and felt bored.

• What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? Were these different to your thoughts and feelings before the activity started?


• Who laughed during the activity? Were you planning on laughing? Why did you?

• Brainstorm reasons you enjoy being with your friends. Is sharing laughter one of them? Why is that so important?

• Why is laughter so important for all of us, both as individuals and as members of close groups? E.g. it helps us feel better, combats symptoms of stress, and also bonds us together.
The Wrights Have Left

The Wright family had been waiting for weeks to go on their holiday. Mr Wright, Mrs Wright and their children Tom Wright and Julia Wright jumped in the car and were ready to go.

‘Right, let’s go!’ shouted Mr Wright.

‘Wait,’ said Tom. ‘We’ve left Lefty behind.’

Lefty was the Wright’s parrot, which had lost its right wing when it was caught in a lift door.

‘Righto, go get Lefty. But be right back!’ said Mr Wright.

Tom Wright left the car door open and ran inside to get Lefty.

‘We nearly left you behind!’ said Tom Wright to Lefty as he put her in the back.

‘Let’s hurry then,’ said Mrs Wright. ‘We’ll be in a right pickle if we’re not there by dark.’

Mr Wright turned left on the highway. They’d travelled only minutes when Mrs Wright said,

‘Oh. I think I left the iron on.’

‘You’re kidding,’ moaned Mr Wright. ‘I’ll turn right around.’

‘It’s okay, Mum,’ said Julia Wright. ‘It wasn’t left on. I put it away.’

‘Right!’ said Mr Wright. ‘No more distractions!’

‘Wait!’ said Tom Wright. ‘I have an assignment to do by Monday.’

‘So?’ asked Julia Wright.

‘I left my pencil case in my right-hand desk drawer. What am I going to write with?’

‘Write with this!’ said Mrs Wright, pulling a pen from her purse.

She tried the pen on a docket, but it didn’t work.

‘We’ll have to stop at a service station,’ she said to Mr Wright.

‘There’s one coming right up on our left.’

‘This is a right fine way to start a holiday,’ grumbled Mr Wright, putting on his left blinker.

Mr Wright peered between the bowsers for the right way to the parking bay, and pulled up.

‘I’ll be right back,’ said Tom Right as he jumped out.

‘I’m going to the toilets,’ said Julia Wright, and she left, too.

‘I think I’ll see if there are any newspapers left,’ said Mrs Wright, and she got out.

Now Mr Wright was left alone in the Wright family car with Lefty the parrot who lost her right wing.

‘Lefty,’ said Mr Wright. ‘I am not sure we’ve done the right thing going on a Wright family holiday.’

‘You’re right!’ squawked Lefty.
ACTIVITY: ‘UNDERDUCK BREAKOUT’

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Clear space to form a large circle
RESOURCES: Deck of playing cards (optional)

NB: This activity involves bodily contact, so be mindful to read the instructions before deciding whether or not it is suitable for your students.

The aim is for students to participate in an amusing activity that makes its players look a little ridiculous.
The result should be discussion about healthy perspective-taking and lightening up, and that a healthy Sense of Humour can involve both giving and taking amusement.

1. Using the playing cards (or another method of your choosing) divide the class so that one-third is separated from the remaining two-thirds. Have the one-third stand in the middle and the two-thirds form a circle around them, with hands on their neighbour’s shoulders.

2. Those in the middle are ‘underducks’. The surrounding circle is the human ‘pen’.

3. Explain that underducks are nocturnal and short, so those playing underducks must keep their eyes closed at all times, and must squat and grasp their calves or ankles. They can only walk backwards (i.e. leading with their bottoms) and, in captivity, can only quack softly.

4. The underducks crave freedom, and have learned of a gap in the pen. Ensuring the underducks have their eyes closed, have two students in the outer circle silently step apart to form a metre-wide gap.

5. The blind underducks now must waddle around trying to find the gap and freedom. When they do make it ‘out’ they are free to quack more loudly and so inform their kin of the escape route.

6. The game finishes when all the ducks have escaped (or you run out of time).

7. The students playing the pen can make it harder by constantly moving clockwise or counter-clockwise so the gap is never in the same place for long.

8. Have a few rounds so that everyone gets a chance to play as underducks.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• What were you saying to yourself when the activity rules were announced? Was this self-talk helpful during the activity? Did it change? Why/why not?

• How do you feel about the activity now that it’s done? Was it fun?

• Have you ever refused to do something because you thought it would be dull or stupid, only to attempt it and find it was, in fact, quite enjoyable?

• What is the difference between laughing with someone, and laughing at them?

• When is it appropriate to laugh at yourself? When is it not? What is the difference between lightly laughing at yourself and speaking harshly to yourself?

• Why is it important to try new things and keep growing your Sense of Humour?
ACTIVITY: ‘WHERE’S MY PUNCHLINE?’

TIME: 10–15 minutes
SIZE: Large groups
SPACE: Clear room to mingle
RESOURCES: Jokes and Punchline Cards 1 & 2 (pp.96–97 or SenseAbility CD), hat/bucket

The aim is to allow students to enjoy searching for a funny moment.

The result should be an understanding that anticipating pleasant events is very important, and enjoyable activities should be scheduled into everyone’s life.

1. Prior to commencing, ensure you have one divided Joke and Punchline set for every two students (i.e. if you have 24 students, you’ll need 12 Joke and Punchline Cards).
2. Put the divided cards into a hat/bucket, and have every student draw out a card. Therefore, every student will have either the start or the end of a joke.
3. Students mingle and try to find the person with the missing half of their joke.
4. When everyone seems to have paired up, have partners read their jokes to the wider class.
5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

• Which was more enjoyable: the jokes or the journey trying to find your partner?
• Were there any unlikely pairings of lead-lines and punchlines that were funnier than the jokes proper?
• What were you thinking and feeling about the activity when you heard the rules explained? Did those thoughts and feelings change? If so, in what way?
• In what ways does this activity bear similarities to day-to-day life?
• Why is anticipation of a pleasant event almost as important as the pleasant event itself? Why do we need to have good things to look forward to? Why is it so important to have laughter and fun times when we can relax and de-stress?
Where’s My Punchline?

Joke & Punchline Cards 1

ACTION

Copy/print this sheet then, using scissors or guillotine, cut along the dotted lines to separate cards. Keep an uncut copy of both sheets on hand for reference during the activity.

| IF YOU LEND SOMEONE $20 AND NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN | MAYBE IT WAS WORTH IT |
| WHY IS ‘ABBREVIATED’ | SUCH A LONG WORD? |
| WHY COULDN’T DRACULA’S WIFE GET TO SLEEP? | BECAUSE OF HIS COFFIN |
| WHY IS THE THIRD HAND ON A WATCH | CALLED THE SECOND HAND? |
| DOCTOR, I THINK I SWALLOWED A BONE | ARE YOU CHOKING? |
| NO, I REALLY THINK I DID! |
| THE WARDEN ASKED A CONVICTED MURDERER SITTING IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR IF HE HAD ANY LAST REQUESTS | ‘YES’, HE REPLIED. ‘CAN YOU HOLD MY HAND?’ |
| WHY DON'T CANNIBALS EAT CLOWNS? | THEY TASTE FUNNY |
| RICE IS GREAT IF YOU'RE HUNGRY | AND WANT TO EAT TWO THOUSAND OF SOMETHING |
| WHY DID THE MONKEY CHASE THE AMBULANCE? | BECAUSE IT WENT ‘NA NA, NA NA!’ |
### Where’s My Punchline?

#### Joke & Punchline Cards 2

**ACTION**

Copy/print this sheet then, using scissors or guillotine, cut along the dotted lines to separate cards. Keep an uncut copy of both sheets on hand for reference during the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why didn’t the skeleton cross the road?</th>
<th>He didn’t have the guts</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>What did the fish say when it hit the concrete wall?</td>
<td>Dam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are there no aspirin in the jungle?</td>
<td>Parrots ate em all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear about the new restaurant on the moon?</td>
<td>Great food, lousy atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two diners waved the waiter over. ‘I’ll have a tea,’ said one. ‘And I’ll have a tea, too’, said the other, ‘but make sure the cup is clean’</td>
<td>The waiter returned. ‘Two teas. Now, who asked for the clean cup?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you hear when you drop a grand piano down a mine shaft?</td>
<td>A Flat Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did the bald guy tattoo rabbits on his head?</td>
<td>He hoped they’d look like hares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you call a fish that’s lost an eye?</td>
<td>FSH</td>
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Research Support

for SenseAbility and Sense of Humour

The SenseAbility Suite takes a positive skill-building approach which aims to enhance or encourage good mental health, emotional wellbeing, and resilience in young people. The program is grounded in evidence-based cognitive-behavioural principles that regard thoughts as central in influencing our feelings and consequent behaviour. Assisting young people to develop skills in monitoring and challenging unhelpful thoughts is, therefore, a core component of the program. In addition, the series draws on the positive psychology literature and takes a strength-based approach that removes the focus from ‘defects’ and ‘deficits’ and focuses instead on the inherent qualities and skills that can be capitalised on. To read more about the research evidence for the importance of cognitive elements and positive psychology in mental health and emotional wellbeing see the references listed below.

SenseAbility is also supported by a range of literature and research that attests to the role of the six Senses – Self-worth, Control, Belonging, Purpose, Future and Humour – as fundamental to building emotional wellbeing and resilience. Supporting young people to build or enhance these senses may be more important now than ever before. As Eckersley recently wrote, ‘while young people are materially better off . . . social and cultural changes have made it harder for them to develop a strong sense of identity, purpose, belonging and security: in short, to feel life is deeply meaningful and worthwhile’ (Eckersley, 2008, p.5).

Like the other Senses, Sense of Humour plays an important role in good mental health and wellbeing. A strong Sense of Humour has been associated with lower levels of anxiety (Henderson & Rosario, 2008, Houston, McKee, Carroll, & Marsh, 1998) and depression (Götestam, Svebak, & Jensen, 2008; Houston et al., 1998), social cohesion and group resilience (Lefcourt, 2001), and is a protective factor against the effects of workplace stress (Moran & Hughes, 2006). A small sample of research articles supporting the importance of Sense of Humour is listed below. For those who would like to read more on the evidence supporting the other Senses, please see the individual Sense modules.

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<td>Use of sense of humour by teachers has been associated with more supportive learning environments, enhanced attention and pleasure in learning in students, an increase in divergent thinking skills, and better exam scores.</td>
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<td>Undergraduate university students who scored high on sense of humour reported less worry than those with lower sense of humour.</td>
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<td>In a comprehensive examination of humour, Lefcourt reports that: humour lessens the effects of stressful life events reducing the likelihood of depressive mood states; humour was found to increase social cohesion and build resilience in groups facing life-threatening situations (e.g. hostage situations and military occupation); and humour is linked to the reduction of the physiological effects of stress (e.g. autonomic nervous system activation and immunosuppression).</td>
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<td>Children who scored higher on measures of humour were rated by their teachers as more productive, cooperative, responsive, attentive, and generally more effective in the classroom.</td>
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<td>In a study of social work students, humour was found to be a protective factor against workplace stress.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of sense of humour by teachers has been associated with more supportive learning environments, enhanced attention and pleasure in learning in students, an increase in divergent thinking skills, and better exam scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate university students who scored high on sense of humour reported less worry than those with lower sense of humour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a comprehensive examination of humour, Lefcourt reports that: humour lessens the effects of stressful life events reducing the likelihood of depressive mood states; humour was found to increase social cohesion and build resilience in groups facing life-threatening situations (e.g. hostage situations and military occupation); and humour is linked to the reduction of the physiological effects of stress (e.g. autonomic nervous system activation and immunosuppression).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who scored higher on measures of humour were rated by their teachers as more productive, cooperative, responsive, attentive, and generally more effective in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a study of social work students, humour was found to be a protective factor against workplace stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference List


