

AFL GOALS

ALL THE FEELS

This module focuses on emotions and feelings: how they can be identified and managed, and how they can impact decisions and relationships.

SECONDARY SCHOOL
MODULE 3
LESSONS 1-4



AFL **PLAY**
Schools

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

Personal and
Social Capability

ELEMENT

Self-Awareness

Social Awareness

SUB-ELEMENT

Emotional Awareness

Empathy

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This module focuses on emotions and feelings: how they can be identified and managed, and how they can impact decisions and relationships. Students will engage in activities that help them to identify a range of emotions they might experience, and what these look like in their bodies and minds. They will be exposed to a range of strategies that can be helpful in managing their emotions, and start to reflect on which of these strategies work more effectively for them, and which work less. These strategies will form the basis for a toolkit that students can draw upon as they need to, both in and outside of class. Students will explore different places and people they can go to for support, and will consider how empathy is important in relationships. Students will also be introduced to the idea of thoughts and emotions being internal processes, separate to the events/situations that cause them. They will learn how through awareness of their thoughts and emotions, combined with using the same strategies they have been practising for managing their emotions, they can begin to control their behaviours and actions. Students will then consolidate this learning in a Physical Education or on-field practical lesson. Suggested activities incorporate AFL-specific skills. If you would like to build your capacity or familiarise yourself with how to teach these skills, you may like to learn more through our professional learning platform [Professional Learning – Play AFL](#). In addition, there is a range of free, downloadable content that supports the teaching of practical skills on the AFL Play/Schools website under [Teacher Resources](#).



LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON 1

Students will be introduced to the terms feelings and emotions and will explore how to identify these in their own bodies. They will learn that it is normal to experience a wide range of emotions and make the link with this being particularly true during puberty. Students will learn about the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and will explore strategies for managing their own emotions and actions. They will practise a breathing and grounding activity and reflect on how useful this strategy might be for them in the future.

LESSON 2

In this lesson students will delve into stress: what can cause it and what it feels like in the body. They will take part in an activity that causes stress in a controlled environment and reflect on how it impacted their ability to perform a simple task and make decisions. Students will reflect on how stress can impact one's decision-making and relationships with those around them, and will learn about resilience and how building it can be a good way to manage stress. They will practise positive self-talk and apply to specific situations.

LESSON 3

Students will explore a range of strategies that can be used to manage challenging times and strong emotions like stress. These include talking to someone about what is stressing them, writing a To-Do List, and various breathing/grounding exercises. They will practise some of these as a group and reflect on the efficacy for them as an individual. Students will also be introduced to empathy and practise responding to their peers in specific scenarios with empathy.

LESSON 4

The final lesson of this module is an on-field activity designed to be run on a field or in a gym. Students will engage in activities that consolidate the learning from the last 3 lessons. In particular, students will explore how their emotions can be impacted by physical activity and how they can be aware of this. They will practise identifying their emotions and reflecting on the ways they can be impacted by external stimuli like winning or losing.

FOR TEACHERS

The **Reflection Journal** has been provided to record student learning. This is an opportunity for students to make notes about their thoughts, feelings and reflections throughout the module.

NSW CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

CURRICULUM AREA

Personal Development,
Health and Physical
Education (PDHPE)
Stage 4

STRAND

Healthy, Safe and
Active Lifestyles

Key Inquiry Questions

- How can I effectively manage my own and support others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?

Outcomes

- examines and demonstrates the role help-seeking strategies and behaviours play in supporting themselves and others **(PD4-2)**
- recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity **(PD4-6)**
- investigates health practices, behaviours and resources to promote health, safety, wellbeing and physically active communities **(PD4-7)**
- demonstrates self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations **(PD4-9)**

Content

- Students propose and develop protective strategies to effectively manage their own personal health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073)
 - recognise the importance of trusting their own feelings, thoughts and reading of different situations
 - analyse how emotions, strengths and decision-making can affect outcomes in different scenarios
 - explore the impact of stress and coping on mental health
 - practise ways to communicate concerns about health, safety and wellbeing to a variety of support people
- Students plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance the health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation of their communities (ACPPS077)
 - investigate different approaches and develop personal plans for promoting their own positive mental health and wellbeing, eg mindfulness, relaxation, healthy eating

NSW CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

CURRICULUM AREA

Personal Development,
Health and Physical
Education (PDHPE)
Stage 4

STRAND

Health, Wellbeing
and Relationships

Key Inquiry Questions

- What skills and strategies can be used to manage change, challenges and seek help?
- What skills and strategies can be used to promote inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships?

Outcomes

- investigates effective strategies to promote inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships **(PD 4-3)**
- recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity **(PD4-6)**

Content

- Students evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (ACPPS071)
 - analyse how roles and responsibilities change and evaluate skills and strategies for managing these increasing responsibilities, eg time management, study skills
- Students describe how rights and responsibilities contribute to respectful relationships
 - discuss the characteristics of respectful relationships, eg empathy, being inclusive, accepting differences



LESSON 1

RECOGNISING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Year Level

Lower Secondary

Learning Area

Health & Physical
Education

Duration

40–60 minutes



OVERVIEW

This lesson introduces emotions; what they look like in the body, and how to identify and respond to particularly strong emotions. Students will also learn about the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and discuss strategies for managing their own emotions and actions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand a range of emotions and what these can look like
- To understand the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours

RESOURCES

- ▶ Video: [All the Feels: Booksmarts](#)
- ▶ Video: [6 Points With Finn Broadbent](#)
- 📄 Student worksheet: [Thoughts, Emotions and Behaviours](#)

STUDENT SUCCESS CRITERIA

- 1 I can list several different emotions and know what they look like in the body
- 2 I can explain how our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are connected

CURRICULUM LINKS

NSW Curriculum / Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Stage 4

- **Content Strand:** [Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles](#)
- **Key Inquiry Questions:**
 - How can I effectively manage my own and support others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?
- **Outcomes:** recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity (PD4–6)
- **Content:** Students propose and develop protective strategies to effectively manage their own personal health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073)
 - recognise the importance of trusting their own feelings, thoughts and reading of different situations
 - analyse how emotions, strengths and decision-making can affect outcomes in different scenarios

RECOGNISING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

INTRODUCTION

5-10 mins

Start by sharing the learning objectives and student success criteria.

Opening question (individual reflection, group or class):

- Ask the class to brainstorm on post-it notes/pieces of paper all the names of emotions and feelings they can think of. Get those English Brains working – think not just happy and sad but joyful, thrilled, devastated, etc. Stick these on a board/wall where the whole class can see them (can be grouped thematically)

Explain that the following video will talk more about some of the different emotions we feel.

Video

▶ Play [All the Feels: Booksmarts](#)



MAIN LESSON CONTENT

30–40 mins

Activity 1

Ask the class if they think the emotions on the board can be divided – like the host of the video Jazz did – into ‘good stuff’ (like pride, happiness and love) and ‘icky stuff’ (like embarrassment, anger and fear). Move the pieces of paper on the board/wall so that the ‘good’ ones are on one side and the ‘icky’ are on the other. Are there any that sit in the middle? For example stress, which can be good motivation to study for a test, but can also be not so good in large amounts or when it happens all the time?

Discuss these ‘middle’ emotions. In what circumstances can they be good? In what circumstances might they be icky?

Explain to students that in the video the host Jazz mentions that how we respond to and manage our feelings affects our ability to manage life’s problems and connect with other people. To do this it is important to know what emotions look/feel like in the body and mind. Choose an emotion on the board and break down what it looks/feels like, e.g. joyful: smiling, loud voices, bright eyes, butterflies or pain in the stomach, buzzing with energy. Think about what it looks like, sounds like and feels like.

FOR TEACHERS

It is important to emphasise that no emotions are ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’. It is natural to feel a range of emotions, and we shouldn’t feel guilty for feeling them. It is how these emotions cause us to act that we are responsible for – this will be part of Activity 2 in this lesson.



Option 1: Have students individually or in pairs or small groups choose 3–5 emotions and break them down descriptively.

Option 2: Have students create posters of some of these emotions and display around the classroom. Write the emotion in the middle of the page and around it in a mind map detail what it looks, feels and sounds like. Design a cartoon/character that personifies the emotion – you might like to refer to the movie *Inside Out* with its characters like Joy, Sadness etc.

Option 3: Emotional Charades. Have students act out an emotion while a partner/group/the class guesses which emotion they chose. How did they act it out? Body language, facial expressions, etc.

Video

Explain that in the following video Finn Broadbent will share some strong emotions he experiences and how they show up for him, and reflects on what self-talk looks like for him.

 [Play 6 Points With Finn Broadbent](#)

Discussion questions

- What are some of the strong emotions Finn feels, and how do they show up for him?
- What strong emotions have you experienced? How did they show up for you?

LESSON
1

RECOGNISING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Activity 2

Emphasise to students that it is normal to feel a range of emotions throughout a day, week, month or year. For students, because they're going through puberty, sometimes it can be even harder to manage and respond to those emotions. Make the connection with the previous module on brain development and how the brain is still developing its prefrontal cortex, which can make rational thought and reason more challenging. This means teens are more likely to react emotionally and in the moment without thinking about the consequences.

On the board write: **Stimulus. Thought. Feelings. Behaviour.**

Explain to the class that while our thoughts and feelings may come quickly and be hard to manage, the main thing we do have control over – and responsibility for – is our behaviour. Use the following scenarios or create your own to explain this:

Stimulus	A dog starts running towards you in the park
Thought	'Ooh, what a cute dog! It's coming to me for pats!'
Feelings	Happiness, joy, excitement
Behaviour	Pats the dog, smiles, says hello to the owner

In this case, the stimulus (a dog running towards you) resulted in a positive thought (ooh it's cute and wants pats) which resulted in positive emotions and behaviours. What about if we flip this?

Stimulus	A dog starts running towards you in the park
Thought	'EEK! That dog is running towards me, what if it bites me?!'
Feelings	Fear, panic, anxiety, worry. You may enter Fight, Flight or Freeze.
Behaviour	Runs away, screams, yells at the dog owner, kicks the dog

In this case, the same stimulus (dog running towards you) resulted in a negative thought (what if it bites me?), which resulted in negative feelings and behaviours.

Optional extra
Make the connection with Fight, Flight or Freeze from Module 2 Lesson 2, and go through what each of these responses looks like in this scenario.



MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Using the student worksheet: Thoughts, Emotions and Behaviours have students create their own Stimulus, Thought, Feelings, Behaviour charts for various scenarios, for example:

- The principal calls you to their office
- Your footy coach asks you to take a free kick
- An alien spaceship appears over the school
- Your teacher asks you to get your parent/ caregiver to come in to chat with them after school tonight
- You see on TikTok that your two best friends went to the movies without you
- Everyone in the class gets invited to a birthday party and you don't

Finish by emphasising again that while our thoughts and feelings will often happen quickly and with little rational thought from us, they are powerful and impact our behaviours – what we do. This in turn can impact our relationships with the people around us. If we get upset every time something unexpected happens, this can negatively impact our friendships and relationships with family. The good news is, we can control what we do – it just takes a little practice! The first step is to identify what we are thinking and feeling, so that we can start to manage it. Explain to students that there are lots of strategies we can use to help us identify and manage our feelings, and we will be looking at these over the next couple of lessons.

Today we'll try one simple strategy: mindfulness. This means focusing on what is happening right here, right now. It's also about letting your thoughts and worries come and go without judgement. Try a mindfulness activity as a class. Ask students to check in with themselves before they start and see if they can identify how they're feeling. Explain that mindfulness doesn't work for everyone; if it doesn't work for your students, tell them you'll learn other strategies that might suit them better in the following lessons.

Reflect:

- How are you feeling now?
- How challenging was the activity?

Reflection (5–10 mins)

Support students to think reflectively about whether they've met the lesson's success criteria.

- Come back to the list of emotions from the start of the lesson. Do you still agree with your initial answer about whether or not emotions can be divided into 'good stuff' and 'icky stuff'? Why/why not?

Reflection could be written, verbal, in class or set as homework.

Classroom Integration

Try the mindfulness exercise above again throughout the week. Reflect – does it get easier each time or not? Why might this be?



LESSON 2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Year Level

Lower Secondary

Learning Area

Health & Physical
Education

Duration

40–60 minutes



OVERVIEW

This lesson explores some of the causes of stress and what stress looks like in the body. Students will learn ways to manage stress and develop resilience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn about stress and its symptoms
- To learn what resilience is and how to build it

RESOURCES

- ▶ Video: [All the Feels: IRL](#)
- ▶ Video: [Ask Me Anything with Finn Broadbent](#)

STUDENT SUCCESS CRITERIA

- 1 I can describe stress and its symptoms
- 2 I can describe resilience and have at least one strategy I can use to develop it

CURRICULUM LINKS

NSW Curriculum / Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Stage 4

- **Content Strand:** [Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles](#)
- **Key Inquiry Questions:**
 - How can I effectively manage my own and support others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?
- **Outcomes:** recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity (PD4–6)
- **Content:** Students propose and develop protective strategies to effectively manage their own personal health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPSO73)
 - recognise the importance of trusting their own feelings, thoughts and reading of different situations
 - analyse how emotions, strengths and decision-making can affect outcomes in different scenarios
 - explore the impact of stress and coping on mental health

LESSON
2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

- **Content Strand:** Health, Wellbeing and Relationships
- **Key Inquiry Questions:**
 - What skills and strategies can be used to manage change, challenges and seek help?
- **Outcomes:** recognises how contextual factors influence attitudes and behaviours and proposes strategies to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity (PD4-6)
- **Content:** Students evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (ACPPS071)
 - analyse how roles and responsibilities change and evaluate skills and strategies for managing these increasing responsibilities, eg time management, study skills



LESSON
2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

INTRODUCTION

5-10 mins

Start by sharing the learning objectives and student success criteria.

- Opening question (individual reflection, group or class):
 - What is stress? What does it look like?
 - What are some of the things that can cause stress?
- Write students' ideas on the board so that they can be referred back to throughout the lesson.

Explain to students that the following video will go through some of the symptoms of stress in the body, and some of its common causes for teenagers.

Video

 Play [All the Feels: IRL](#)

After the video, compare its symptoms of stress and common causes with the list on the board. How many did you come up with?



**LESSON
2****BUILDING RESILIENCE****MAIN LESSON CONTENT****30–40 mins****Activity 1**

Ask students to think of a time they have been stressed. Make sure they think about what caused the stress, and what this stress looked like for them in their body and their thinking.

For some students this may need to be a private reflection and they might prefer not to share. Encourage volunteers to share their experiences, or have students write a private reflection in their workbooks or turn and share with a partner, depending on the needs of your cohort.

Have students stand in circles of 4–6 students, and give one student a ball.

FOR TEACHERS

The next activity will be best run outside and will require several soft balls. The idea of this activity is to generate some stress for students while throwing the ball. Stress can impact our ability to make decisions (who to throw the ball to) and our relationships (with the people around us).

Round 1: Have students throw the ball at random to other members of the circle. You can pass to any member of the group except the person who threw the ball to you. Do this for 1 minute or so.

Round 2: Repeat this activity, but this time students have to say their times tables together as they throw the ball e.g. '1x5 is 5, 2x5 is 10, 3x5 is 15.' Begin with an easy times table like 2s, 5s or 10s. Which group can get the highest before making a mistake? Then repeat with a trickier times table like 7 or 8. Challenge students to try to handpass instead of throw. If this is easy, ask them to alternate between preferred and non-preferred hand.

Round 3: Repeat the activity from Round 1 but this time the teacher calls out trivia questions while students throw or handpass. These can be random trivia questions, or questions related to current learning/content the class is studying. Alternatively it could be spelling words out loud using relevant vocabulary from this unit. Either the person with the ball can try to answer/spell, or the group can try to call out/spell the answer together.

Example vocabulary to spell out loud:

- Thoughts
- Behaviours
- Stimulus
- Any emotion – joy, fear, anxiety, etc.

Return to the classroom and reflect:

- Which round was the easiest? Which was the hardest?
- During rounds 2 and 3 we introduced an element of stress with times tables/trivia/spelling. How did this impact your ability to throw the ball and choose who to throw it to? Did you hesitate at all?
- How did it impact the group dynamic and relationships? Was there yelling, or laughing together when someone hesitated?



LESSON
2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Explain to students that the game gave them a taster of what it's like to be under stress. As we talked about last lesson, while stress can sometimes be good or useful, e.g. motivating you to study for a test, stress can also impact our ability to make decisions and our relationships with the people around us. How might stress during the following situation impact a person's relationships with their friends and family? How might it impact their ability to make decisions?

- Kai has been stressed about maths lately. They have a big test coming up and they are supposed to have been studying for weeks but Kai has kind of been ignoring it. Now the test is in a week and all the stress is mounting.
- Possible answers: Kai might be short-tempered and start to snap at family and friends. They might find it really hard to make decisions because all they can think about is the test.

Ask students to think back to the personal example of stress they came up with at the start of the lesson. How might this impact their relationships and decision-making? Share with a partner or add to the reflection in their workbook.

Extension

Ask students if they have ever had someone around them who is really stressed, like an older sibling with big exams, parents/ carers being stressed from work, or a friend being really stressed about school work or a friendship issue. How has this person's stress impacted you?

Remind students that it is normal for everyone to feel intense emotions like stress at times in their lives. It's good to recognise stress, but we also need to have some tools in our toolkit to manage it too. In the following video Finn Broadbent shares a time he was stressed in high school and how he worked through it.

Video

- ▶ [Play Ask Me Anything with Finn Broadbent](#)

Discussion questions

- What situation caused Finn stress? Why?
- What steps did Finn take to work through his stress?



LESSON 2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Activity 2

Ask students if they have heard of resilience before, and what they think it means.

For teachers: Resilience is the ability to bounce back from tough times.

Ask students to imagine a time they have been really down, e.g. losing a big sports game, a friend moving away, or a family issue at home. What did students do to get through it? Whatever they did – or didn't – do, chances are they came out the other side and demonstrated resilience. They made it through!

Remember. You've made it through 100% of your toughest days!

Explain to students that one key factor in resilience is positive self-talk. This is the way we speak to ourselves inside our minds. Most people have this inner dialogue occurring all the time, and it is important to know that the words we use are powerful. If we are constantly talking down to ourselves and being negative this will make us feel like we aren't good enough. On the flip side, embracing positive self-talk and being kind to ourselves even in our minds can lead to increased resilience. Sometimes, especially as teens, we can be pretty harsh to ourselves. Like building a muscle in the body by lifting weights, the only way we can get better at positive self-talk is to practise.

Share the following example with the class:

- You study all week for a maths test and try your absolute best. You spend hours studying both independently and with friends and you even give up TikTok to help you focus. You get the test back and you get 14 out of 20. The average class mark was 11.

Negative self-talk: 14! That's terrible. I really wanted top marks. I must be awful at maths. What's the point in even trying, I'm just bad at it. I'm never going to be any good.

Positive self-talk: 14! That's a great effort! The average mark was 11 so I must be doing pretty well. Plus I gave up TikTok and spent hours studying, so I'm really proud of myself for that too.

Using the following examples, ask students to construct two responses to each scenario – one demonstrating negative self-talk, the other demonstrating positive self-talk.

- Your footy team is up 18-10 at the end of the first half, but loses the game 34-31 by the end.
- You are told your family is moving house and will be 60 minutes away from the school and all your friends who you hang out with regularly on the weekend.
- You are scrolling through social media and it feels like all you see are photos of beautiful people in beautiful places doing really fun things.
- You find out your friends were hanging out on the weekend together without you.
- You completely forget you promised your parents you'd clean your room before you went out.

LESSON 2

BUILDING RESILIENCE

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Extension

For each scenario come up with how you would then behave based on your thinking. Link this back with Lesson 1 of this module and the learning around **Stimulus, Thought, Feeling, Behaviour**.

FOR TEACHERS

You may like to make the connection with a growth mindset and positive self-talk, and a fixed mindset and negative self-talk.

Reflection (5–10 mins)

Support students to think reflectively about whether they've met the lesson's criteria.

- How can stress impact your relationships and decision-making?
- How can you build resilience and make it through stressful/tough times?

Reflection can be written, verbal or set as homework.



LESSON 3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

Year Level

Lower Secondary

Learning Area

Health & Physical
Education

Duration

40–60 minutes



OVERVIEW

This lesson explores a range of strategies for managing challenging times and strong emotions like stress. Students will also be introduced to empathy and how this can be developed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explore a range of strategies that can be used to manage stress
- To understand empathy and how it can be developed

RESOURCES

- ▶ Video: [All the Feels: Gameplan](#)
- ▶ Video: [Drills with Finn Broadbent](#)

STUDENT SUCCESS CRITERIA

- 1 I have a range of strategies I can draw upon when I am feeling stressed
- 2 I can explain empathy and know how to develop this

CURRICULUM LINKS

NSW Curriculum / Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Stage 4

- **Content Strand:** [Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles](#)
- **Key Inquiry Questions:** How can I effectively manage my own and support others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?
- **Outcomes:**
 - examines and demonstrates the role help-seeking strategies and behaviours play in supporting themselves and others (PD4-2)
 - investigates health practices, behaviours and resources to promote health, safety, wellbeing and physically active communities (PD4-7)
- **Content:**
 - Students propose and develop protective strategies to effectively manage their own personal health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073)
 - practise ways to communicate concerns about health, safety and wellbeing to a variety of support people
 - plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance the health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity participation of their communities (ACPPS077)

LESSON
3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

- investigate different approaches and develop personal plans for promoting their own positive mental health and wellbeing, eg mindfulness, relaxation, healthy eating

• **Content:**

- Students describe how rights and responsibilities contribute to respectful relationships
- discuss the characteristics of respectful relationships, eg empathy, being inclusive, accepting differences

• **Content Strand:** Health, Wellbeing and Relationships

- **Key Inquiry Questions:** What skills and strategies can be used to promote inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships?

• **Outcomes:**

- investigates effective strategies to promote inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships (PD 4-3)



LESSON
3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

INTRODUCTION

5-10 mins

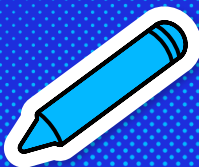
Start by sharing the learning objectives and student success criteria.

- How can we manage stress? Over the past two lessons we have learnt about various emotions, including stress, and what it can look like. We have also touched on some strategies for dealing with stress – how many can you think of?

Explain that the following video will offer some more ideas on how to manage stress, with a focus on breathing exercises.

Video

▶ Play [All the Feels: Gameplan](#)



**LESSON
3****MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS****MAIN LESSON CONTENT****30–40 mins****Activity 1**

In the video, Liv offered 3 pieces of advice for dealing with stress and getting through hard times – can students remember these?

1. Take a step back
2. Talk to people
3. Write a To-Do List

Which one most appeals to you? Why?

Explain to students that there is no one ‘right’ way to deal with stress, and that no two people will manage it in precisely the same way. We have learnt some strategies including writing a to-do list, practising mindfulness, and talking to people around us. Explain that today we will try some different strategies to add to the students’ stress toolkit.

Below are 4 possible exercises that can be run with the class. You might like to run all 4, or just a couple. If there are different spaces you can use you might like to divide students into groups and have them move to different stations to practise each one in a smaller group. Ask students to check in with themselves before they start – how are they feeling in their mind and body?

1. Try a breathing exercise like this one here. After the exercise ask students to reflect on how they feel:
 - How does your body feel?
 - How does your mind feel? How about compared to before the exercise?
2. Try a mindfulness activity as a class
 - How does your body feel afterwards?
 - How does your mind feel?
 - If you completed this as part of Lesson 1 of this module, how was doing it a second time? Was it easier? Why/why not?
3. Try a grounding exercise
 - How does your body feel?
 - How does your mind feel? How about compared to before the exercise?
4. Practise positive thinking
 - How easy is this to do?
 - Do you think we acknowledge the good things in our lives often enough? Why/why not?

After practising a range of activities, bring students back together as a group. Remind them that each of these is a tool to add to their toolkit to help deal with stress. Not all of them will work for everyone.

- Did you have a favourite exercise? What did you like about it?
- Did you have a least favourite, or one that just didn’t work for you? Why do you think this was?

LESSON
3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Extension 1

Divide the class into groups. Assign them one exercise; give them time to research and practise; then ask them to lead their activity with the class or another class/group.

Extension 2

Give students time to learn Liv's TikTok dance (play the video a few times over) or create their own TikTok dance using the class's ideas for dealing with stress.

Extension 3

Ask students how they are feeling at the moment - what's stressing them out? E.g. homework/school, friendships. Remind them of Liv Archer's tip to make a To-Do List. Putting things down on paper (and getting them out of your head) can really help reduce stress. Ask all students to create a To-Do List - this might be homework and school stuff, or it might include chores around the house and things to do at home. Even if the To-Do List doesn't directly address the thing that is causing stress, it can be a really valuable tool

to reduce stress generally. Feeling like you can control some areas of your life can help give new perspective to the thing causing stress.

Classroom Integration

Begin each day or lesson this week with one of the stress-reduction exercises. As a class reflect: does it get easier each time you do it? Why might this be?



Remind students that another key factor in managing tough times and stress is developing resilience. In the following video Finn Broadbent shares his best drills for building resilience.

Video

 Play [Drills with Finn Broadbent](#)

Discussion questions

- How does Finn build his own resilience?
- What could you do to build your resilience?



LESSON 3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Activity 2

Remind students that in the first video they watched, one of guest Liv's tips for dealing with stress was talking to people about what you are going through. As a class brainstorm the various people around you who you could talk to when you are having a tough time (e.g. friends, family, school counsellor or trusted adult).

Ask students if any of the people on that list have ever come to them because they are feeling stressed or going through a tough time. Talking to people is a two-way street - if you feel comfortable going to a person for support, then they probably feel the same way about you! Ask students to think of a specific example of a time someone came to them for support. What did they do? How did they handle it?

FOR TEACHERS

Try to steer students away from deeply personal or potentially triggering topics like death, divorce, disordered eating, etc. Use your knowledge of your cohort to determine what will be appropriate to share. Lower-stakes examples like having a bad day, losing a sports match or generally feeling sad/anxious/stressed are more than sufficient for reflection.

Ask students if they have heard of empathy, and if they can define it.

FOR TEACHERS

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes; to be able to understand what another person is going through. Be mindful that students on the autism spectrum may not necessarily understand or express empathy in a typical way. More information on autism, communication and relationships can be found here.

You can learn more about autism and how to adapt your teaching to ensure players who are on the autism spectrum can join in the fun at footy.

Explain to students that empathy is a really important skill in life for teens and adults. Why might empathy be such a valuable skill? Answers include:

- Building friendships
- Settling arguments or finding solutions
- Understanding why people behave in certain ways
- Respecting other people's feelings and views

Tell students that like resilience, empathy is a skill that can be strengthened over time. Sometimes this might be as simple as saying, 'Wow, that sounds really tough. I feel for you.' It certainly doesn't mean you can solve all their problems. Explain to students that another important part of empathy is our communication - not just what we say, but how we say it. This includes our tone of voice and facial expressions, as well as our body language.

LESSON 3

MANAGING UPS AND DOWNS

MAIN LESSON CONTENT

Give students the following low-stakes scenario: Anna and Kojan are ordering a pizza. Anna says that she loves pineapple on pizza and asks if they can order that. Kojan:

- Immediately agrees despite the fact that he loathes pineapple and is secretly annoyed at Anna for putting him in this position.
- Tells Anna he hates pineapple, and can't be friends with anyone who likes pineapple.
- Tells Anna he's not so into pineapple but asks if they can order it half with pineapple and half without?

In which response did Kojan demonstrate the most empathy? (**Answer: C is the most typically empathetic response.**)

Now divide students into pairs and have them practise responding with empathy to the following scenarios. Make sure they think about what they say, and how they say it (tone of voice, facial expressions, body language):

- Student A approaches student B and says they found out their parents are splitting up.
- Student A tells student B they have been feeling really sad and lonely for a long time now.

- Student A's pet just died and they have come to Student B for comfort.
- Student A has to move school next term and they are really sad and nervous.

Extension 1

Have students also act out non-empathetic responses to the above scenarios, then discuss the key differences between the two. It's important to note that non-empathetic responses are not 'wrong'. Which response would students be most likely to use? Which would they prefer to hear?

Extension 2

Teach students about active listening and have them practise responses using this.

Reflection (5–10 mins)

Support your students to think reflectively about whether they've met the lesson's success criteria.

- How confident do you feel trying some of the strategies you have learnt next time you are feeling stressed? Why/why not?
- How important do you think empathy is in your relationships with friends and family?

In-class Module Reflection

This reflection can be completed at the end of this third lesson or after completing the on-field activity.

The Reflection Journal has been provided to record student learning. This is an opportunity for students to make notes about their thoughts, feelings and reflections throughout the module.

- What have you learnt about emotions and empathy over the last few lessons?
- What are some of the ways you can manage your own emotions? (breathing, positive thinking, reflecting, practising empathy)
- How can you build empathy and resilience?

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY

Year Level

Lower Secondary

Learning Area

Health & Physical Education

Duration

40–60 minutes



OVERVIEW

This on-field activity is designed to be used as part of a Physical Education class to reinforce learnings in this module. Students will explore how physical activity can result in a range of emotions, and how with practice we can get better at identifying and managing these.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn that physical activity can produce a range of emotions
- To practise identifying emotions in real time

SKILL FOCUS

- Reflecting
- Critical Thinking

EQUIPMENT

- Required equipment for obstacle course
- Optional screen/laptop for playing videos

📄 Student worksheet: [Quiz Questions](#)

📄 Student worksheet: [Quiz Answers](#)

STUDENT SUCCESS CRITERIA

- 1 I can explain some of the emotions that physical activity can produce
- 2 I can pause and identify my own emotions at any given time during a physical activity

CURRICULUM LINKS

NSW Curriculum / Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Stage 4

- **Content Strand:** [Healthy, Safe and Active Lifestyles](#)
- **Key Inquiry Questions:** How can I effectively manage my own and support others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?
- **Outcomes:** demonstrates self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations (PD4-9)
- **Content:** Students propose and develop protective strategies to effectively manage their own personal health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073)
 - analyse how emotions, strengths and decision-making can affect outcomes in different scenarios

ON-FIELD ACTIVITY

PRE-LESSON/WARM-UP ACTIVITY

10 mins

Explain to students that this lesson will help consolidate what they have learnt in the last few lessons about mental health: how to identify and manage our emotions and how to build resilience.

Ask students if they have ever seen a professional sports player get emotional during or after a game. Have students share examples of who they have seen, where, and what they saw. If you have access to a screen you might like to share some [AFL videos](#) of sportspeople experiencing heightened emotions (both positive and negative). Explain to students that it is common to see sports players get excited, or frustrated, or sometimes angry. We can notice this in their body language (throwing their hands in the air, stomping their feet), their facial expressions (smiling, frowning, crying), what they are saying, and how they interact with others (hugging, yelling at someone).

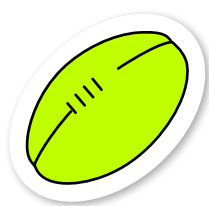
Tell students that it is normal for our emotions to change as a direct result of what we experience during physical activity. The good thing is that physical activity in general provides a boost to our mood – though sometimes losing a match can result in some pretty strong negative emotions. This lesson, we will be looking at how to stay in touch with our own emotions, identify what we are feeling, and notice how this can change.

Have the class spread out randomly over a certain area e.g. field or court. Tell students to walk around randomly and when the teacher blows the whistle they stop and turn to someone they are standing near. Tell that person one word that describes how you are feeling, and why. Positive and negative responses should be encouraged. For example, 'Excited – PE is my favourite lesson', 'Nervous – I don't know how to play footy' etc.

Option

Instead of walking around the field/court have students practise certain movements e.g. skipping, running, jumping or hopping. Alternatively have AFL club songs playing and students can dance around the area and stop when the music stops.

This process gives the teacher a platform to drive empathy and understanding among the group, encourages positive and open mindsets and enables students to think about 'how they show up'.



ON-FIELD ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 1: SHORT CIRCUIT

20 mins

An obstacle course where students progress through each station by answering questions and participating in challenges.

The activity is an engaging and fun way to help students understand how to manage emotions, build positive interactions and show kindness to one another.

Create a circuit course consisting of 10–12 stations. Every second station will be a Q&A station with pens for writing rather than a physical activity. Print the student worksheet: Quiz Questions and place one question at each Q&A station. The 5–6 physical activity stations might include:

- A series of hoops to jump through
- Hurdles/boxes to jump over and climb under
- Skip rope for 30 seconds
- Kick a footy through two cones
- Run a shuttle course while bouncing a footy

If you would like to build your capacity or familiarise yourself with how to teach these skills, you may like to learn more through our professional learning platform Professional Learning – Play AFL. In addition, there is a range of free, downloadable content that supports the teaching of practical skills on the AFL Play/Schools website under Teacher Resources.

Make sure students understand the requirements of each station, and have them line up at the start in pairs/groups of 3. Each pair/group will need a copy of the student worksheet: Quiz Answers and a pen/pencil to carry throughout the obstacle course.

Pairs/groups begin the obstacle course at staggered intervals. They need to complete the physical activity stations and write answers to the questions at the Q&A stations.

Once everyone has completed the course, share and reflect on the written answers.



ON-FIELD ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 2

up to 15 mins

Play a game like [Foosball from the AFL website](#) or [AFL 9s](#). Before, during and after the game ask students to freeze when you blow the whistle and check in with themselves: how are they feeling right now? What emotions is the game creating in them? Why?

At the end of the game ask if anyone started to feel frustrated or angry if they were losing or not doing so well. Emphasise that this is normal, but that it's important to consider our behaviour so that we don't do something we regret. What strategies can students come up with to calm themselves down if they start to feel like this? (E.g. take a breath, draw on a mindfulness or breathing exercise, remember that it is just a game, etc).

COOL DOWN/REFLECTION

5 mins

Ask students to share some of the emotions they experienced during today's lesson. The chances are they experienced a range of them – this is normal! They might have experienced excitement, joy, anger or frustration, all as a result of what they were doing during the lesson. Practising being able to identify and manage emotions gets easier with time, and can be a really helpful strategy for dealing with puberty and strong emotions.



Disclaimer

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Credits



MATTERWORKS

This program is produced by Matterworks and has been developed with research from



with contribution from the Raising Children Network.