

Prevention Activities

AIM: As our society races ahead in leaps and bounds, it can become very confusing for young people who are trying to interpret the world and develop skills to grow into healthy functional adults. With bullying having an effect on a student's mental health, skills and awareness are needed to minimise the impact of such events and reduce the potential bullying from occurring. Students need effective communication skills, problem solving skills, self discipline and connectedness to act as a buffer and help build resilience.

Level A – Prep to Grade 3

Post a Letter

This activity is designed to help students gain a common awareness of what is expected from them as a class group and what to expect from each other. As the student gains an understanding on what is expected of them, the more confident the student becomes. Knowing what to expect from others also helps a student to decipher situations that might just be a simple misunderstanding or when it might be more of a bullying problem. For this activity, students identify behaviours and place them into either the important letterbox or the not very important letter box.

Taking time to think.

This activity uses some principles from mindfulness by having students begin to focus on their thinking and breathing as a strategy; a tool to help them with their thoughts. This will assist the students on a psychological level if they are involved in a bullying incident as well as assisting the student to think before a potential incident, thereby preventing a potential bullying incident or a misunderstanding. The activity demonstrates clarity through an experiment conducted by the teacher and then has the students complete an exercise where they hop on the spot and recite a nursery rhyme.

Level B – Grade 4 to Grade 6/7

Close your eyes and hold tight

Students are to choose an activity they would like to do on the weekend and devise the steps they will need to take to make it happen. Students also need to identify obstacles to achieving the activity and finding solutions around these obstacles. This activity is to help students identify and define what they have some control and influence over and what they can't change. Separating the control allows students to differentiate between what is their responsibility and what is not. The activity also provides for shared experiences of problem solving in small groups.

I am not alone

This activity provides students with a concrete visualisation of the support networks in the student's lives.

This is done to reinforce to students the fact that they are not alone and have people around to assist them when they are troubled by events in their lives. In this activity, students draw a picture of themselves and either record or draw people who are important to them into three separate circles. These circles represent the different levels of intimacy or closeness they have with the people selected. Students then cut out these circles and glue the circles onto the picture of themselves.

Prevention Activities

Level C – Grade 6/7 to Grade 9

Pull me ups and put me downs

This activity helps students separate their thoughts into those that are helpful and those that are unhelpful. The activity highlights to students the power of positive thinking. In small groups, students select a particular event or situation and then devise three (3) helpful and three (3) unhelpful thoughts about it. A whole class group discussion is held at the end.

Tower of Strength

The aim of this activity is to show students that while negative events can happen to them, there are also many positive events that can happen as well. Students record on the handout sheet, positive events that have occurred over their 9/10 years of schooling and 1 negative event. This handout sheet is then folded in half and placed on the desk. The students then have a race to see who can be the fastest at blowing over the folded handout sheet to knock over the bad situation/circumstance.

Level D – Grade 10 to Grade 12

Pieces of the Pie

The aim behind this activity is: 1) to increase students' awareness of possible alternatives to their initial thought processes, and 2) for students to reframe events from a negative interpretation to a positive interpretation. Students are provided with three scenarios from which they must identify five (5) possible interpretations of the events. Students discuss in small groups the range of possibilities which are then presented to the larger class group.

Getting through the hard times

This activity is designed to highlight the importance of having support from others and how such support makes adversity more tolerable and easier to cope with. Trying to decipher the best course of action requires much thought and discussion. The activity involves small group work with students being stranded at sea and having to prioritise salvaged items that are critical for their survival.

Level B - Grade 4 to Grade 6/7 | Activity 1

Close your eyes and hold tight

Students are to choose an activity they would like to do on the weekend and devise the steps they will need to take to make it happen. Students also need to identify obstacles to achieving the activity and finding solutions around these obstacles. This activity is to help students identify and define what they have some control and influence over and what they can't change. Separating the control allows students to differentiate between what is their responsibility and what is not. The activity also provides for shared experiences of problem solving in small groups.

Material Required

Nil

Step One

Divide students into small groups of 3 or 4. Ask each student to think of three things they would like to do on the weekend. Have the groups discuss each of the students' ideas then ask the groups to select the top idea of what to do on the weekend.

Step Two

Ask each group to stand up and voice the activity they would like to do. (Keep a mental note of what each group suggests as their activity). When all students are seated, ask the students to close their eyes and picture themselves doing their activity. After a few seconds ask the students to open their eyes.

Step Three

Ask the students did they really do the activity. The answer being, it was imagined not real. To make it real, involve more than closing your eyes and wishing it will happen. There are certain things students will need to do to make this happen.

Step Four

As a small group ask the students to list the things they will need to do to make it happen. See if they can do this in at least three steps. For example if the activity was going to the beach. Step One: ask parents if they can go to the beach on the weekend, Step Two: pack towels and swimming costume, Step Three: drive/walk to the beach. Give the students time to discuss this then ask a representative from each group to present to the class their activity and the steps they need to take.

Step Five

Ask the students to think of an obstacle that might get in the way of them doing their activity. Is this something they can change themselves or is it something they have no control over? For example, Obstacle One: The weather forecast might predict thunderstorms and dangerous seas. They cannot change the weather. Obstacle Two: Some jobs /chores need to be done around the house.

They change this by doing the jobs each afternoon after school so they are all done by the weekend. Again have the groups discuss this and then present to the class.

Step Six

Talk to the students about what things they can have some control over in their life and what things they don't have control over. Sometimes we can be very hard on ourselves trying to change something we have no control over. For example we can't change the weather. Rather than getting upset and angry over not going to the beach that weekend, we can plan alternatives, for example: what to take and do next time you are able to go to the beach, what inside activities to do instead of going to the beach.

Level B - Grade 4 to Grade 6/7 | Activity 2

I am not alone

This activity provides students with a concrete visualisation of the support networks in the student's lives. This is done to reinforce to students the fact that they are not alone and have people around to assist them when they are troubled by events in their lives. In this activity, students draw a picture of themselves and either record or draw people who are important to them into three separate circles. These circles represent the different levels of intimacy or closeness they have with the people selected. Students then cut out these circles and glue the circles onto the picture of themselves.

Material Required

Large sheets of butchers paper, paints, paint brushes, scissors, pens, marking pens

Step One

Provide each of the students with a large piece of butchers paper, paints, coloured sheets of paper, scissors and pens/markers. Ask the students to write their name on the top of the butchers paper then draw a picture of themselves in the middle of the butchers paper.

Step Two

Ask the students to think about all the people in their lives. This is friends, family, teachers, neighbours etc. Ask the students to take three different pieces of paper and draw a large circle on each sheet of paper. For the first sheet, in the circle ask students to write (or draw pictures if they are having difficulties spelling) all the people who are really close to them. On the second sheet, have the students write down or draw the people who are close but not as close as the people in the first circle and on the third sheet record the people who are important in their life but they are not as close.

Give an example to the students. I would put my partner, my children, my best friend, my parents in the first circle for people who are really close to me. These are people I see or talk to a lot. In the second circle I might put people who are important but I don't see or talk to as much. This might be cousins, friends from where I used to work, people at church, etc. On the third sheet are people who I care about but are not as close to me. For example, Mr Jones who works at the corner shop that I have been going to for years, relatives I have not seen or spoken to for a long time. Explain to students, there is no right or wrong circle people should be placed into. They just need to work out for themselves depending on the level of closeness, in which circle to write or draw the people.

Step Three

Ask students to cut out the circles from the 3 sheets of paper and glue them onto the butchers paper. Suggest to the students if they are having difficulties with another student at school, or they are not feeling happy, they have all these people in their world that they can talk to.