Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships

Teaching for social and emotional learning and respectful relationships

Foundation Level

Learning Materials

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education

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Introduction Overview

The Resilience, rights and respectful relationships (RRRR) teaching and learning resource has been designed to support primary and secondary teachers to provide social and emotional learning and respectful relationships education. The RRRR resource includes teaching and learning materials for Foundation to level 11–12.

At level 8-10, teachers and students transition to the Building Respectful Relationships (BRR) resource which focuses specifically on gendered norms, gender and power, consent, and prevention of gender-based violence. The RRRR resource is structured into 8 key topic areas. Each includes a range of learning activities.

Table 1: Topic areas in the RRRR Resource

Topic 1: Emotional literacy	Students develop the ability to be aware of, understand and use information about the emotional states of themselves and others.
Topic 2: Personal and cultural strengths	Students develop a vocabulary to help them recognise and understand strengths and positive qualities in themselves and others. They identify the values and strengths they have learnt from role models within their families and culture to think about how this guidance helps them to treat others with respect. They consider how to draw on these strengths to engage with the challenges and opportunities that life presents.
Topic 3: Positive coping	Students develop language around coping, critically reflect on their coping strategies and extend their repertoire of positive coping strategies.
Topic 4: Problem-solving	Students learn a range of problem-solving techniques to apply when confronting personal, social and ethical dilemmas. They engage in scenario-based learning tasks to practise their problem-solving skills in relevant situations.
Topic 5: Stress management	Students consider the causes of stress and develop a range of self-regulation and coping strategies they can draw on to manage stressful situations.
Topic 6: Help-seeking	Students develop skills and knowledge for peer support, peer referral and help-seeking.
Topic 7: Gender norms and stereotypes	Students consider the influence of gender norms on attitudes, opportunities and behaviour. They learn about gender equality, inclusion, human rights and the importance of relationships that respect people of all genders.
Topic 8: Positive gender relationships	Students develop an understanding that verbal, physical, emotional, financial and sexual forms of violence are harmful, and that these forms of violence can also be gendered. They learn about safe and unsafe behaviours, consent and their rights to bodily autonomy. They practise strategies they can use to assert their rights to bodily autonomy to be free from coercion or violence. They develop self-care, peer support, peer referral and help-seeking skills that they can use in response to situations involving gender-based violence within family, peer, school, community or online relationships.

Using a research-informed approach to wellbeing education

The RRRR resource uses a research-informed approach to provide age-appropriate learning activities. These activities are designed to support students' social and emotional learning so that they can develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for respectful relationships.

The approach is guided by research which shows that a structured curriculum for children and young people which promotes social and emotional skills and positive gender norms leads to improved health-related outcomes and subjective wellbeing. It also reduces antisocial behaviours including gender-based violence.

The wellbeing education research which informs the resource draws from a range of specialist study areas. These include studies in bullying and violence prevention, social and emotional learning, help-seeking, gender education, anti-racism education, human rights education, positive psychology, public health, child abuse prevention and prevention of gender-based violence. Guidance from this body of research is provided throughout the teaching and learning resource. Brief summaries of the evidence base are located at the start of each topic area as well as at the start of each lesson in Topics 7 and 8, where the focus is on gender norms and stereotypes, and prevention of gender-based violence. Some key findings from the research are also included in this introductory section. The resource is also informed by research studies investigating its use in primary and secondary schools. [1-7]

This iteration of the resource was informed by a series of consultations conducted in 2023 with primary and secondary students, teachers, school wellbeing staff, parents and a range of expert stakeholders. Some of these stakeholders included a Koorie working group, the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships and LGBTIQA+ reference groups as well as department advisers with expertise relating to the inclusion of culturally diverse students and students with diverse learning needs.

Advancing learning and wellbeing

The approach in this resource is consistent with the objectives of the Department of Education's research-informed Framework for School Improvement 2.0. This framework places both learning and wellbeing at the centre of school improvement and advocates the use of research to inform practise. The RRRR resource implements the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships initiative, which supports schools to embed a culture of respect and equality across the entire school community. It also supports mental health reform in schools which recognises the important role schools play in supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

- See the Department of Education's website for more information on the Framework for School Improvement 2.0: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/fiso/policy
- See the Victorian Government's website for more information on the Respectful Relationships initiative: https://www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships

Why provide social and emotional learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the term used to describe research-informed teaching and learning which explicitly promotes mental wellbeing by improving students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills. Studies show that well-devised and well-implemented SEL programs help students to develop the relationship skills needed in everyday life, such as emotional awareness, empathy, perspective taking, self-regulation, cooperation, problem-solving, positive coping, responsible decision-making, peer support and help-seeking. [8] SEL initiatives have been found to be most effective when delivered within a broader wellbeing curriculum that incorporates a range of social, physical and mental health issues, when delivered by the classroom teacher, and when provided with fidelity in schools with a positive relational climate. [9]

Research into the effectiveness of SEL education highlights positive impacts in wellbeing, social and academic outcomes. Students who participate in SEL are more likely to relate in positive and inclusive ways with their classmates who experience emotional and behavioural problems. [10] A strong body of evidence demonstrates that well-designed and well-facilitated SEL leads to improved mental and social health for students, and to improved academic outcomes compared to those in similar schools who are not provided this form of education. [9]

A substantial meta-analysis reviewed the findings from school-based SEL interventions provided for students from kindergarten through to Year 12. It reviewed 424 studies from 53 countries, involving over half a million students. [8] Results showed that in comparison with students in control schools, those who participated in the SEL interventions experienced significantly improved relationship skills, attitudes and social behaviours, as well as associated improvements in school climate and safety, peer relationships and academic attainment.

Similarly a meta-analysis of 82 research trials conducted in a range of national contexts found lasting positive effects when students were followed up between 1 to 3 years post SEL intervention, with benefits including improved social and emotional skills, attitudes and indicators of wellbeing evident regardless of students' race, socio-economic background or school location. [11]

Key Points: Social and emotional learning programs (SEL) teach young people the social, emotional, and relationship skills essential to everyday life. They:

- improve mental health
- are most effective when delivered with fidelity by classroom teachers as part of a whole-school approach
- are related to improved academic outcomes and improved social and mental health
- foster respectful and supportive peer relationships
- reduce rates of bullying and sexual and homophobic harassment.

A review of the content and methods used in SEL education has also found that it contributes to the prevention of youth suicide by reducing some of the key risk factors for suicidality. This review found that the 5 key SEL competencies – identified as self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills – reduce some of the major known risk factors for youth suicide, as well as feelings of hopelessness and anxiety. These competencies can also assist those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse to seek help and to use protective behaviours. [12]

The evidence suggests that SEL education fosters respectful and supportive peer relationships. It leads to reduced rates of bullying of students with diverse abilities, LGBTIQ+ students and students from marginalised ethnic and migrant backgrounds. It also reduces rates of sexual harassment and homophobic bullying. [7, 9, 13-15]

SEL can help students returning to school following exposure to emergencies, disasters and armed conflict. A review of SEL research trials conducted in these situations found that those receiving substantial SEL education showed improved psychological wellbeing and lower rates of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder compared to students in control schools. [16]

Figure 1: The high prevalence of mental disorders in young people indicates the importance of providing SEL

- Almost half of females (45.5%) aged 16 to 24 years and a third of males (32.4%) aged 16 to 24 years experienced a mental disorder in the last 12 months.
- 2 in 5 females (40.4%) aged 16 to 24 years experienced an anxiety disorder in the last 12 months.
- 1 in 2 people (50.3%) who described their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian or bisexual, or who used a different term like asexual, pansexual or queer, experienced an anxiety disorder in the last 12 months.
- Females with a mental disorder were more likely to have seen a health professional for their mental health than males (51.1% compared with 36.4%) [19].

What is Respectful Relationships Education?

Respectful relationships education (RRE) describes education which explicitly supports prevention of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is any form of violence targeting a person based on their gender or gender presentation. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, financial, cultural or spiritual harm or suffering to someone. Studies show that those who experience any combination of bullying, racism or gender-based violence are more likely to be anxious, depressed, tired or feel worthless and they can find it difficult to participate fully at school. [20-23] Research shows that gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls and LGBTIQA+ people.

RRE builds awareness of the ways gender norms can limit people's interests, opportunities and life choices and how they can lead to the endorsement of discrimination and violence. Students develop an awareness of what respectful, equal and nonviolent relationships can look or sound like in different contexts. Students learn the skills people need to relate with others in respectful ways, to assert their rights to be respected and to seek help for themselves or others if subjected to discrimination or interpersonal violence. Effective approaches to prevention of gender-based violence teach the social skills needed for respectful relationships and foster awareness of human rights in relation to gender equality and freedom from discrimination and violence. They include a focus on the ways gender norms can lead to limiting and harmful outcomes, including functioning as drivers of gender-based violence. [24-29]

Figure 2: The prevalence of bullying and gender-based violence indicates need for investment in SEL and RRE

- About 56% of Year 4 students and 43% of Year 8 students were bullied monthly or weekly [30].
- On average, those Year 4 and Year 8 students who were bullied achieved lower scores in Trends in International Maths and Science Studies (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Studies (PIRLS) than children who were not. This indicates that there is a relationship between the average score achieved by children and the frequency of bullying [30].
- 54% of 13- to 18-year-old students reported witnessing verbal harassment of gender and sexuality diverse students at school [31].
- 22% of women and 6.1% of men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 [32].
- 11% of women and 3.6% of men experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 [32].
- 1 in 4 women (23%) and 1 in 14 men (7.3%) have experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15 [32].

What is consent education?

Consent education combines SEL, RRE and sexuality education. For younger children it includes an age-appropriate focus on what it can look or sound like to ask for permission or consent, to refuse permission or consent and to understand that consent can't be obtained by pressuring people to do something they don't want to do. [33] It also includes learning activities that support prevention of child sexual abuse, via teaching about bodily autonomy, body boundaries, the difference between 'safe' and 'unsafe' secrets and the importance of seeking help from trusted adults if their 'early warning signals' are sending a message that they might not be safe. Research shows significant knowledge gains and improved self-protective behaviours occurs when students are taught their rights to be safe from abuse and their right to say no or to tell, even when someone in authority over them abuses them. A review of 24 child sexual abuse prevention programs showed that they increased the knowledge students have about abuse prevention and improved their skills in protective behaviours. [34] This review of studies found no evidence that the programs increased anxiety or fear in students.

For older students, consent education focuses on 'affirmative consent' within relationships. This includes understanding what is meant by affirmative consent, how to have respectful consent conversations and how to resist, report or seek help if experiencing or witnessing coercion or gender-based violence. [33]

Key Points

- Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) explicitly addresses the prevention of gender-based violence.
- Gender-based violence is any form of violence targeting a person because of their gender or gender presentation.
- Consent education includes a focus on what it can look or sound like to ask for, give, refuse or withdraw consent, and on understanding that consent is permission freely given with full knowledge of a situation and without pressure or manipulation.

Why include a focus on gender norms and stereotypes?

The RRRR resource provides an age-appropriate and research-informed approach to teaching about the ways gender norms can lead to harmful or limiting outcomes. It includes activities which focus on understanding every person's rights to respect, to bodily autonomy and to protection from violence within their relationships with peers, families, schools and society. It teaches them about their rights to be free from discrimination and how to seek help if affected by violence at school, home, online or in the community.

This approach is important because international studies have found that the key drivers of gender-based violence at a population level include gender-inequitable social norms and gender-inequitable, violence-endorsing constructions of masculinity. [35] For example, an international study of the cultural roots of gender-based violence in 12 European countries found that violence and discrimination against women was more common in societies where rigid gender roles were the norm, where male honour was protected and where those who challenged traditional gender roles were punished with violence. [36]. Additionally, an Australian study showed that the strongest predictors of attitudes conducive to violence against women held by young people aged 16 to 24 included:

- holding attitudes that endorse gender inequality
- having a low level of understanding of how violence is enacted upon women
- holding prejudicial attitudes towards others on the basis of their disability, ethnicity, Aboriginality or sexual orientation
- endorsing violence as a practise in other aspects of their lives. [37]

Conforming to gender norms can also have implications for a person's health as behaviours considered to be normative or desirable for a particular gender may be associated with negative health outcomes. For example, gendered beliefs related to masculinity may include the denial of vulnerability or weakness and tolerance of displays of aggressive behaviour. [38] These gender norms can lead to higher rates of violence, engagement in risky behaviour and reluctance to seek help in relation to mental health. [39, 40] Gender norms related to femininity and pressures to meet expected beauty standards can lead to augmented rates of body image distress, [41] and internalisation of the expectation that violence against women is excusable in certain circumstances. Morbidity and mortality data which shows different health and illness patterns for men and women illustrates the harmful impacts of gender norms. [42] Masculinity researchers argue that it is important to normalise positive expressions of masculinity which support young people to challenge micro forms of interpersonal violence, such as name-calling, sexist jokes and homophobic slurs. [43]

Our Watch provides a summary of available evidence about the nature and prevalence of gender-based violence in Australia, along with discussion of effective approaches to prevention. [44] The analysis conducted by Our Watch notes that gendered drivers of violence against women include:

- attitudes condoning violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to independence in public and private life
- rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
- male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.

Their framework for action emphasises the importance of a whole-of-society approach to challenging these negative attitudes and associated behaviours, along with efforts to strengthen positive relationships between men and women. [44]

Positive effects of RRE

Studies show that well-designed and well-implemented school-based classroom interventions addressing violence prevention and respectful relationships can produce change in attitudes and behaviours. [45-47] Providing explicit RRE to all students is a key part of a whole-school approach to preventing gender-based violence. [48]

Research suggests the complexity of gender-based violence requires a significant number of sessions to change behaviour and have lasting effects. [49] Research also shows that 'one-off' sessions are both inappropriate and inadequate. While there is no agreed upon minimum exposure, [50] there is consensus that RRE which provides greater intensity and duration has greater potential to produce behavioural change. [48] Further, the research investigating best practise demonstrates the benefits of a sustained approach across multi-session interventions. [46, 47]

Key Points

- The gendered drivers of violence against women include rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity, men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence, male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression dominance and control, and condoning of violence against women
- Conforming to narrow gender norms can lead to negative health outcomes, including those associated with increased risk-taking and use of violence on the part of men and boys, and increased levels of anxiety about body image for girls and young women.
- School-based interventions addressing violence prevention and respectful relationships can produce change in attitudes and behaviours when taught in a sustained way as part of a whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence.

Why commence RRE in primary school?

Research shows that SEL and RRE must commence from an early age, as children are well aware of gender norms and make efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten. [51] As young children learn about gender, they can acquire and exhibit stereotypical, prejudiced and often negative attitudes towards those that they perceive as 'others'. [51-55] For example, they may insist that some games are for boys while others are for girls, thereby actively rejecting peers from certain games. This means that it is important to commence work on building positive gender relationships within these early years. Classroom activities can be used to help children to explore gender identity, challenge stereotypes, learn to value and show respect for diversity and difference and to learn how to apply these attitudes within respectful relationships.

Why provide RRE across the secondary school years?

The prevention of gender-based violence becomes increasingly important as students enter their high school years. Australian studies have found that around a third of young people aged 14 to 18 years who had been in a relationship had experienced some form of intimate partner abuse, with girls almost three times as likely to report sexual victimisation in their relationships as boys. [56]

Other studies have shown that bullying and harassment becomes a more gendered and sexualised practise among adolescents. [13, 14] Bullying can function as a mechanism through which some boys assert their dominance by policing and punishing those who are deemed to be insufficiently masculine, as well engaging in sexual harassment of girls as a way to establish status in the eyes of other boys. [24] Longitudinal research studies have investigated the pathway from bullying in early adolescence (ages 11 to 13) to perpetration of sexual violence in high school (at ages 14 to 18). Studies in the US context have shown that those who engage in homophobic name-calling in early adolescence were more likely to perpetrate sexual violence in their high school years. Boys who bullied others in early middle school (ages 11 to 12) were more likely to engage in homophobic name-calling in late middle school (ages 12 to 13). Further, boys who reported greater bullying perpetration and higher use of homophobic name-calling were 6 times more likely to engage in sexual violence in high school.

Australian research investigating the use of the RRRR teaching and learning resource also found that those bullying others were also more likely to sexually bully others. [7] Further, this study of Year 7 and 9 students showed that students who engaged in these forms of bullying were more likely to befriend others who also did so and that friendship allegiances may play a role in reinforcing or rewarding such attitudes or behaviour. Additionally, this study showed that compared with boys at Year 7, boys at Year 9 were less likely to intervene if other boys in their class sexually harassed girls. They were less inclined to think this behaviour was unacceptable which indicates that there may be increasing normalisation or pressures to engage in gender-based violence as boys age into mid-adolescence.

This research highlights the importance of providing prevention education in primary school and continuing this investment in prevention education as students age through high school. It also highlights the importance of including a focus on the prevention of homophobic name-calling and bullying as part of this approach. [13]

Why use gender-inclusive approaches?

Along with women and girls, people of diverse gender sexuality experience higher rates of gender-based violence. For example, a study showed 54% of 13- to 18-year-old Australians have witnessed students with diverse experiences of gender and sexuality being harassed at school. [31] An inclusive approach to education for the prevention of gender-based violence includes a focus on challenging forms of discrimination and disadvantage based on the binary nature of gender norms, as well as those generated by dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity. [57]

Teaching protective behaviours to support prevention of child abuse

The term 'protective behaviours' refers to behaviours which enable children to recognise and respond to situations where their personal space and sense of safety might be compromised. Programs that increase awareness, knowledge and protective behaviour skills aim to prevent and reduce child abuse and violence by making children feel safer to disclose inappropriate sexual advances. [58]

Research shows that school based abuse prevention programs for early childhood and primary school children are effective in increasing student knowledge and protective behaviours. [58-60] Components of successful programs include teaching children to identify and resist inappropriate touching, reassuring children that it is not their fault if they experience abuse and learning the proper names of genitals. [58] Research highlights that programs are more likely to be successful if they use behavioural skills training such as active rehearsal through role-play followed by shaping and reinforcement, rather than passive learning (e.g. watching the teacher model skills or viewing a film). [58-60] Programs teaching about gender-based violence should include a focus on protective behaviours and provide developmentally-appropriate information and skill-building activities.

The importance of a whole-school approach

Research investigating school-based wellbeing promotion programs highlights the importance of positioning classroom interventions within a whole-school approach when addressing positive student behaviour, [61] SEL, resilience and mental health, [62-65] bullying prevention [66-69] and RRE [7, 29, 70].

A whole-school approach includes a focus on school policies, practises and partnerships with communities and agencies, as well provision of classroom-based curriculum. It is difficult to effect change in student attitudes or behaviour without use of a classroom intervention within a broader school approach [65, 71]. Stronger outcomes are evident when classroom-focused programs are combined with cross-curricular integration, a focus on classroom and school climate and active engagement of parents and carers, service providers and the local community. [72]

Clear messaging which promotes gender equality and identifies the unacceptability of harassment and perpetration of gender-based violence has been found to reduce rates of sexual harassment in schools. [73] Further, students are more likely to report homophobic harassment of peers to their teachers in schools where students have positive relationships with their teachers. [6] Inclusive and supportive teacher–student relationships play a pivotal role in shaping the school environment for gender-diverse students. [31]

Where does the RRRR resource fit within the school curriculum?

The teaching and learning activities provided in the RRRR resource align with the Victorian Curriculum. They address content descriptions and aspects of the achievement standards in both Health and Physical Education and Personal and Social Capability.

Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum integration table

The Victorian HPE curriculum [74]

The Health and Physical Education curriculum will support students to:

- access, evaluate and synthesise information so that they can make informed choices and act to enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety, and participation in physical activity across their lifespan
- develop and use physical, social, psychological and cognitive skills and strategies to promote self-identity and wellbeing, and to build and manage respectful relationships
- acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in various physical activity settings
- engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practises and outcomes
- engage in and create opportunities for regular physical activity, as individuals and for the communities to which they belong, which can enhance fitness, movement performance and wellbeing
- analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape both our health and physical activity.

HPE focus areas

Within the HPE curriculum there is a focus on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to promote respectful relationships and safety. These focus areas provide the context for teaching about respectful and safe relationships:

- **Relationships and sexuality (RS)**
  Relationships and sexuality addresses physical, social and emotional changes that occur over time, and the significant role that relationships, identities and sexuality play in these changes. Students learn how to establish and manage respectful relationships, and how to develop positive and respectful practises regarding their reproductive and sexual health. In doing so, students gain an understanding of the contextual factors that influence gender and sexual identities. Students also explore contextual factors that influence relationships and sexuality.
  The focus from Foundation to Level 2 should be on relationships
- **Safety (S)**
  Safety addresses safety issues that students may encounter in their daily lives. Students explore the way contextual factors affect their own safety and that of others. They learn to evaluate their local environments (both physical and social) and develop the understandings and skills needed to navigate these. This includes different settings, including school, home, roads, outdoors, sports clubs, near and in water, parties and online. Students will develop skills in first aid, and in negotiating relationships, personal safety and uncomfortable situations.

HPE strand: Personal, Social and Community Health

The **Personal, Social and Community Health** strand contains the following themes:

- **Identities and change**
  - The development of personal identity, including gender and sexual identity
  - The influence of gender stereotypes on developing respectful relationships
- **Interacting with others**
  - The development of personal and social skills necessary for respectful relationships
  - Exploring emotional responses and how these affect relationships
  - Skills and strategies required to seek, give or deny consent respectfully
- **Contributing to healthy communities**
  - Examining and evaluating health information, services and messaging that influences health and wellbeing decisions and behaviours (including relationships) in the community, and the influence this has on individual attitudes and actions. This includes a focus on physical and social environments and taking action that can help challenge attitudes and behaviours such as homophobia, sexism, prejudice, violence, discrimination and harassment
  - Providing opportunities to practise protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2024 Victorian Curriculum Health and Physical Education accessed from https://f10.vcaa.vic.edu.au/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education/introduction

Personal and Social Capability [75]

The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills which can enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- consider how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2015, Victorian Curriculum: Personal and Social Capability, accessed from http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/personal-and-social-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims

Effective implementation

The RRRR resource uses a range of collaborative learning strategies which provide opportunities for students to develop social skills. These strategies also engage explicitly with the key content areas of emotional literacy, decision-making, problem-solving, positive self-regard, stress management, positive coping, help-seeking and peer support. The lessons incorporate a range of collaborative learning activities such as paired sharing, small group problem-solving discussions, scenario-based discussions, skills-development exercises, role-plays, storytelling, games, experiential activities and class discussions.

Collaborative learning activities are a key tool for engaging students in critical thinking about the ways certain gender norms and power relations work to legitimise violence and discrimination. [76] The collaborative activities also provide students with an opportunity to develop their social skills. A systematic review of 69 other resources further supported this form of peer-to-peer engagement. [42] It found that attitudes were positively influenced by interventions that used collaborative learning to orchestrate peer-to-peer dialogue, positioned peers as contributors, developed skills for peer relationships, invited positive peer role-modelling and used student voice to inform design and content. Despite these findings, the use of collaborative learning is not the norm in many classrooms, [77] with teachers defaulting to more individualised or teacher-centric forms of instruction, including when providing RRE. [7]

Research investigating the use of the RRRR resource showed that teachers may face a number of challenges affecting their capacity to implement with fidelity, including a combination of emotional, political and pedagogical labour. [1] Emotional labour relates to teacher concerns that learning about gender-based violence may be distressing for students and staff who have experienced gender-based violence or family violence. Political labour is the work needed to manage resistance or backlash by students, parents, carers or community members who are opposed to the use of gender-inclusive approaches or approaches that challenge traditional patriarchal norms. Pedagogical labour is the work associated with facilitating collaborative learning activities, with some teachers citing lack of confidence in managing student behaviour during peer-to-peer tasks.

The research also identified the need for 'structures for care', which are the kinds of structures that supported effective implementation of the RRRR resource. [2] These included providing a designated space in the school timetable, strong leadership support, opportunities to participate in professional learning and to work in school-based teams that provide collegial support and guidance. Teachers also validated the importance of proactive wellbeing and curriculum policy within the education system and their access to the research-informed teaching resources used to guide their approach.

Key Points

- The RRRR resource aligns with the Victorian Curriculum.
- Effecting change in student attitudes or behaviour requires dedicated RRE as part of a whole-school approach.
- A whole-school approach includes a focus on school policies, practises and partnerships with communities and agencies, as well provision of classroom-based curriculum.
- Collaborative learning activities are essential for engaging students in critical thinking and for the development of social skills.

Teacher professional preparedness and support

Teachers who are new to leadership or delivering RRE may benefit from engaging in professional learning and working with colleagues to consider their approach to using the resource. Some schools may elect to use a co-delivery or co-teaching model.

For some teachers, leading activities which include discussions about gender-based violence and discrimination may trigger memories of personal experience. It is advised that teachers consider whether they need wellbeing support before using the resource and whether they would benefit from discussing their needs directly with a trusted senior colleague, counsellor or the principal. Teachers may also find it helpful to work with colleagues to prepare and rehearse delivery of the program, to co-teach with a colleague or to have a colleague lead particular sessions.

There are a range of counselling and help services available for teachers who want to access support in relation to issues associated with mental wellbeing, family violence or experiences of gender-based violence. The following Department of Education resources are available to school staff:

- Family Violence Support resources: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/family-violence-support/resources
- LGBTIQA+ section of the Inclusive Workplaces policy and guidelines page: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/inclusive-workplaces/policy-and-guidelines/lgbtiq
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – Employees policy: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mental-health-and-wellbeing-employees/policy

All department staff – including school, regional and corporate staff and their immediate family members (aged 18 years and over) – can also access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This free, confidential counselling service, provided by mental health professionals, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The EAP also offers access to specialist counsellors for Aboriginal, LGBTIQA+ and family violence matters.

- To access the EAP, call 1300 361 008 or use the link to the live chat function on the Mental Health and Wellbeing – Employees resources page to make a booking: https://wellbeing.lifeworks.com/au/

Setting up a safe social space

It is important for teachers to work with students to set up a 'safe social space' for participation and learning. This means establishing a friendly and respectful atmosphere where students and teachers feel safe to share their views without fear of judgement or silencing. It is important to set out the expectations that groups will work together, mix with each other and encourage each other to participate. It is important to make these expectations clear so that everybody is aware of them and then involve students in building class agreements. Some classes will have pre-established ground rules or agreements for a respectful learning environment. However, other groups may be together for the first time. If this is the case, it is important to establish classroom agreements around behaviour because they provide a structure that helps students and staff to feel safe and supported, facilitate classroom management and ensure the class works effectively. Within the resource, there are specific introductory activities provided that suggest approaches to involving students in rule making and setting up a safe learning space.

If a comment is made that leaves other students feeling targeted, angry or offended, it is important that these comments are not ignored. Ignoring sexist or other inappropriate comments can have the effect of communicating implicit teacher approval. Name the inappropriate behaviour and request what is expected in its place, modelling the sort of behaviour that is required. Arrange a follow-up conversation with students who repeatedly engage in this behaviour to support them to develop their interpersonal skills.

Providing a safe social space also involves setting standards about privacy. This includes being clear about what is appropriate to share in the group space and what should be disclosed in a more private setting, such as between a student and a teacher or wellbeing leader (further coaching on this is provided below). The lessons and activities do not require students or staff to disclose their own experiences, which may not be appropriate in the public space of the classroom. Rather it uses the notion of protective distancing, providing generic examples and scenarios as the focus for the learning activities. There may be times when the teacher needs to remind students about privacy, or to use the technique of 'protective interrupting' if they think a student is about to make an inappropriately timed disclosure. The teacher can then follow up with the student to discuss the issue and to arrange for further support if appropriate.

It is recommended that teachers notify the relevant wellbeing staff prior to delivering these lessons, as there may be an increase in help-seeking or peer referral as students engage with the content. The symbol and text on the following page will accompany classes that may prompt help-seeking and require further action from teachers.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance https://www.vic.gov.au/protect and Four Critical Actions https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

Lessons within the resource that address content that relates directly or indirectly to harm or abuse are identified with the icon above.

Teaching sensitive material

Some of the learning activities in this resource deal with sensitive topics like violence, racism, discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. Some students may have direct experience of these issues. Content advice should be provided to support the wellbeing of those students prior to and within lessons identified by these icons:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Parents and carers should also be informed in advance that students will be exploring sensitive content, and contacted where appropriate if their child has sought wellbeing support.

Teachers should advise students that in an upcoming session they will focus on sensitive content, being specific about what that means. For example, by saying, 'In an upcoming session we will be considering/exploring/discussing bullying or sexual violence.' Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Let students know that it's okay to feel uncomfortable and that if they think they'll find any of the content distressing, they can read the lesson content in advance, choose not to participate in activities or leave the room as appropriate.

Be proactive about having conversations with students prior to the class and facilitate student choices in an inconspicuous manner. Support students to make choices about their participation during the lesson. Consider using a 'Talk to a teacher' slip for classes with sensitive content, which gives students the opportunity to anticipate their preferences before a class begins. If used, care should be taken to ensure that the slips are protected from misuse, loss and unauthorised disclosure.

Key Points

It's important to:

- Establish classroom agreements that help students and staff feel to safe and respected.
- Notice, name and address sexist or inappropriate behaviour, utilising classroom agreements and school codes of conduct.
- Be clear about what is appropriate to share in a group space and what is better suited to a private setting
- Provide content advice and help-seeking reminders to support the wellbeing of students when engaging with sensitive material prior to and at the beginning of lessons.

Teachers should also be aware of and follow their school's policy on yard duty and the supervision of students. Teachers can access the Department of Education's resource on these policies and review their duty of care obligations when considering alternative participation arrangements for students. See the Department of Education's website for more information on:

- Supervision of Students: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supervision-students/policy
- Duty of Care: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/duty-of-care/policy

Students who exit the classroom must be referred to school wellbeing support. Once the lesson has concluded, follow your school's wellbeing processes to check in with students who have modified their participation to ensure they have access to support if required.

For further information on department polices relating to the care, health, safety and wellbeing of students visit the Department of Education's duty of care resource listed above.

Note that the learning activities which engage with sensitive material do not invite students to share their own stories in front of their peers. Rather, these are structured around scenarios which provide a focus on what affected parties can do to seek help and what concerned others can do to provide peer support or peer referral. Teachers are advised to observe, enquire, support, monitor, follow up and refer if they notice signs that a student may be finding the material distressing or unsettling.

Some teachers may worry that talking about violence could have negative effects for those who have experienced violence. [1] However, teachers can use strategies to make discussions about violence prevention protective and productive. In addition to carefully constructed learning activities and the use of scenarios rather than personal stories, teachers can also shift the focus by using more celebratory or playful learning activities when required. These more playful activities can re-introduce a positive mood and create a sense of inclusion and connectedness to others. These activities are designed to assist students to explore the issues in a blame-free environment. They support students to question harmful attitudes and practises without resorting to blaming or naming and without needing to call on their personal stories. [28] Nonetheless, some of the material in the resource may trigger sad or angry emotions in students or teachers themselves. Some students may react defensively and show discomfort by laughing, joking, accusing or denying the existence or effects of gender-based violence. In this case teachers can use a combination of positive classroom management practises to deal with any potentially unruly or belittling behaviour and provide additional support or referral for those finding the material difficult.

Disclosure of bullying, family violence and sexual abuse can increase during or following provision of SEL and RRE, with some disclosures or help-seeking requests made to educators and other students turning to helplines. [78] Given this likelihood, is important that protocols and pathways for teacher response are clearly established in advance, that wellbeing staff are made aware of the timing of delivery and that students are also provided with information about school supports and trusted external help-sources that they may access by phone or online.

Supporting the Child Safe Standards

Victoria's Child Safe Standards were introduced to further strengthen child safe environments and better protect children from abuse. The Child Safe Standards make sure children and young people in organisations including schools and early childhood settings feel safe and are safe.

The Department of Education's PROTECT guidance helps schools and early childhood services implement the Child Safe Standards. The website includes guidance, policies and templates to support schools to revise their child safety policies and practises to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Standards. For further information on PROTECT guidance visit:

- PROTECT guidance: https://www.vic.gov.au/protect

Delivering the lessons in the RRRR resource sequentially, with fidelity and as part of a whole-school approach to RRE contributes to schools' implementation of the Child Safe Standards. For further information about the Child Safe Standards visit:

- Schools – guidance page: https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-guidance

Teacher-initiated conversations following possible signs of distress

Research shows that young people can find it difficult to seek help, particularly if experiencing mental health problems or exposure to violence. [79-81] Given this, it is important that staff initiate follow-up conversations with students who are expressing or showing signs of distress.

A follow-up conversation is best conducted in a safe environment, to avoid stigmatising or embarrassing students. In addition, it's important to:

- remain calm during a follow-up conversation
- let the student know you want to check in on how they are
- use active listening skills and open questions to allow the student to tell their story
- listen attentively, without interrupting or making judgement
- thank them for trusting you with their disclosure, reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do and that they will be believed and taken seriously
- validate and believe the student and don't interrogate their experience or behaviour
- remind the student that you need to make sure they are safe and that they receive the help they need. This might involve you talking to others to help get the right people involved to give this help and expertise
- reassure the student that there are things that can be done to help in situations like theirs and that you will arrange to follow up so a plan can be made. Let students know the next set of actions.

Key Points

- It's important to initiate follow-up conversations with students expressing or showing signs of distress.
- The Department of Education's PROTECT guidance includes strategies for managing a disclosure. School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions where there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.

Teachers can respect students' needs for privacy and protection by referring matters to the wellbeing leader or school principal in ways that are discreet. However, teachers may be required to share information with others if they believe a student is at risk of harm. Some disclosures will require a mandatory reporting response. This should be done in a way that ensures protection of the child during and after the notification process. For further guidance on helping students to understand that you may need to seek assistance for them and cannot keep a discussion or disclosure confidential, visit:

- Report child abuse in schools: https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools#disclosures-from-a-student

The PROTECT guidance includes strategies for managing a disclosure. School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions where there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. These actions outline who an incident, disclosure or suspicion should be reported to. When dealing with an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, staff should ensure that the principal and school leadership team is made aware of the concern and are involved in providing ongoing appropriate support. For more information about the Four Critical Actions, visit:

- Four Critical Actions: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx

Dealing with resistance and backlash

Schools may encounter some resistance or backlash in response to teaching about gender equality and gender diversity. The terms 'resistance' and 'backlash' are sometimes used interchangeably to describe a commonly occurring response where members of advantaged groups push back against social justice initiatives which they perceive to threaten their privileged position, beliefs or world view. [82]

Resistance is a response to actual or perceived challenges to existing hierarchies of power. It is a reaction against progressive social change that seeks to prevent further change from happening and reverse those changes already achieved. A typical feature of backlash is the desire by some proponents to return to aspects of an idealised past in which structural inequality was normalised. [82]

Alongside and in response to advances in global and national efforts to address gender equality and prevent gender-based against women, girls and LGBTIQA+ people, there has been ongoing backlash and resistance. Some who oppose this form of education have been influenced by misinformation and false claims about the aims, methods and content of teaching and learning resources. [83] Consequently, they may hold fears about supposed negative outcomes and fear that this will distract from more 'academic' subjects. Additionally, they may be unaware of the research that shows that education addressing social and emotional learning, human rights, violence prevention, gender equality and inclusion is associated with positive outcomes in students' attitudes and behaviour as well as advances in their academic attainment. Effective communication about the objectives and methods of SEL and RRE may help to allay such concerns. [83]

Australian teachers also observed that some students have adopted standpoints held by prominent social media influencers [1] who have actively argued the legitimacy of misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic and racist views. [7] A survey conducted with over 1,300 young men in Australia in late 2022 investigated the influence of one prominent influencer [84] The 1,374 respondents were chiefly students from years 8 to 10 who participated in a survey following a masculinity workshop conducted by external providers at their school. The researchers found that 92% of respondents were familiar with the influencer's content and 25% of these respondents looked up to him as a role model. Of the other students surveyed, 31% were neutral and 44% disagreed that they look up to him as a role model. Some described him as a confident, hardworking and successful inspiration or noted that they agreed with his opinions such as, 'He tells men that they matter and women are only trying to put you down to be stronger than you.' Those who did not look up to the influencer as a role model tended to describe him using terms like 'arrogant' and 'misogynist'.

1 At the time this research was undertaken, Andrew Tate was one example of a widely followed social media influencer who combined motivational and lifestyle videos with strongly misogynistic and homophobic views. Source: 84. The Man Cave, Who is Andrew Tate and why do young men relate to him?, in What's really going on with young men? Edition 3. 2023, The Man Cave: Melbourne..

Understanding the ways resistance and backlash can present in schools

Resistance and backlash to gender equality can be expressed in a number of ways, including denial of the problem, disavowal of responsibility, inaction, appeasement, cooption and repression. Resistance may be individual or collective, formal or informal [82, 85, 86]. In schools, these forms of response may be expressed by students, staff, parents and carers or community members.

Resistance and backlash examples

Resistance and backlash in the classroom may sound like:
• **Rejecting** the underpinning human rights principles by refuting notions of gender equality and inclusion, endorsing discrimination and violence or advocating racist, misogynistic, homophobic or transphobic viewpoints.
• **Offending** via use of discriminatory gestures or nicknames, deadnaming, posting offensive images or statements, making sexist/homophobic/transphobic remarks, engaging in forms of sexual harassment.
• **Condoning** forms of discrimination by laughing along when others make sexist/misogynistic/homophobic/transphobic remarks.
• **Excusing** the discriminatory behaviour as natural, harmless, friendly or as a right to free speech, with phrases like, 'they're only joking', 'it's harmless flirting', 'everyone says it', 'they know we don't mean it', 'they do it too', 'they're entitled to their beliefs about women/gay/transgender people' and so on.
• **Denying** that the problem exists by minimising its extent, significance and impact and claiming victimisation is equal for all parties, with phrases like 'we all get along here', 'men are victims too', 'that data is old', 'it's not like that now', 'it doesn't happen around here, so it is not relevant for us' and so on.
• **Reversing** the story by denying privilege and adopting a victim position, claiming reverse discrimination.
• **Blaming** the problem on those who are victimised, with phrases like 'she was asking for it', 'they can't take a joke', 'they deserve it', 'they bring it on themselves' and with the endorsement of date rape myths.
• **Blocking** the learning activities by interrupting, talking over, refusing to participate in activities or with certain students, denigrating the contributions of other students.
• **Undermining** the credibility of the teacher or demeaning their approach, with phrases like 'they can't control the class', or 'she is always blaming the guys' and so on.

Forms of backlash that may be expressed by adults (as parents or carers or in the broader community):

Attacking the morality of RRE on the basis that the approach is supposedly immoral, untruthful or harmful.

Misrepresenting RRE by actively spreading misinformation or disinformation about its objectives or methods.

Proclaiming they have rights to endorse or perpetuate discriminatory treatment.

Accusing the school of harmful treatment, demeaning the moral character of the staff.

Threatening or berating staff, students, other parents and carers, advocacy groups or service providers.

For more detailed discussion on resistance and backlash see:

Flood, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Pease, B. (2021). Resistance and backlash to gender equality. The Australian journal of social issues, 52, 593–408. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.137

Our Watch (2022) Understanding, monitoring and responding to resistance and backlash. Melbourne, Respect Victoria and Our Watch. https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/understanding-backlash-and-resistance

VicHealth 2018, (En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne. https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Encountering-Resistance-Gender-Equality.pdf

Responding to student expressions of hate speech

Research shows that there is a close association between witnessing hate speech and using hate speech. A school-based study showed that negative peer modelling is associated with the use of hate speech, with students who are encouraged by peers to participate in such practises being more likely to do so. The study also found that in contrast, students are less likely to use hate speech if their peers or teachers call it out as unacceptable. [87] It is important therefore that educators respond to hate speech by making it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable and that no one should be harassed at school, online or anywhere else.

Key Points

Resistance and backlash to gender equality can be expressed in a number of ways, including victim blaming, denial of the problem, disavowal of responsibility, inaction, excusing or condoning discriminatory behaviour, citing myths as facts, and verbal or physical aggression.

In schools, resistance and backlash may be expressed by students, staff, parents, carers or community members.

Effective communication about the objectives and methods of SEL and RRE, and the research demonstrating its positive impact on student wellbeing and behaviour, may help to support understanding of its positive outcomes for students.

Don't ignore the behaviour, even if the student claims they are only joking or if a member of the target group is not present. Other students may interpret a teacher's choice to ignore this behaviour to mean that the teacher doesn't think it's serious enough to warrant a response, or that staff members will not defend the right all students have to be treated with respect.

Useful steps when teachers respond to behaviours of this nature include:

1. Interrupt the student/s to stop the behaviour.
2. Name the behaviour (for example, 'That is a racist/homophobic/sexist statement').
3. State that it is against the school rules and/or against the law (for example, 'That is against the right to respect rule we have at this school').
4. State that it is a behaviour that has harmful effects (for example, 'That kind of racist/sexist/homophobic talk has harmful effects. It is not to happen again').
5. Identify the follow-up actions (for example, 'I will talk with you further about this after class/ You will sit over here, and write an account of what you did, which rule it breaks and what you will do differently next time').
6. Work with students who have experienced hate speech to investigate further and ensure appropriate supports are in place.

Further investigation and comprehensive follow up is required to address continuing, serious, repeated or habitual behaviours.

For advice on use of strategies to support school-wide approaches positive behaviour see the student behaviour resources on the Department of Education's website.

- Student behaviour policy: https:/www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/policy
- Student behaviour guidance: https:/www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/guidance/5-school-wide-positive-behaviour-support-swpbs-framework

See also the Department of Education's guidance on responding to racist bullying, advice for supporting the inclusion of LGBTIQA+ students and the policy informing support for students with disability.

- Racist bullying: https://www.vic.gov.au/racist-bullying
- Support for LGBTIQA+ students: https:/www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy
- Support for students with a disability: https:/www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy

Parents and carers as partners

Parents and carers are a child's first and most important teachers, particularly in relation to teaching core values and key social and emotional skills. The RRRR resource encourages students to talk with parents, carers, Elders and family members about what they are learning within, with 'talking further' tasks at the end of each topic area to suggest ways that teachers can encourage this communication.

Parents and carers also appreciate knowing about the strategies schools are using to foster respectful relationships and development of the personal and social capabilities. Schools can assist by sharing the learning intentions from the lessons and providing examples of the kinds of activities that students are engaging with. Student contributions to the design and co-delivery of parent workshops and presentations can be used to foster a dynamic exchange. Schools may also find it effective to share information via newsletters, displays and open days.

For further guidance on frameworks and tools to inform effective partnerships between families, school and community refer to:

- Respectful Relationships: A Resource Kit for Victorian Schools: https://fusecontent.education.vic.gov.au/cfee82ef-67f8-488c-a167-52759afda882/respectfulrelationshipsresourceakitforvictorianschools.pdf
- Child Safe Standard 4: Families and Communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing: https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards
- Supporting Family-School-Community partnerships for Learning: https://www.education.gov.au/supporting-family-school-community-partnerships-learning

Foundation Level Resource

Introductory activities

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to learn simple rules and agreements they need to support a safe and friendly learning environment in their class.

Informed by the evidence base

Building a shared set of expectations and protective routines can contribute to the social wellbeing of the class. Healthy groups develop common understandings about how to work well with each other. Involving students in naming the actions they can take to help create a safe and happy class can help build a shared sense of responsibility for the social wellbeing of the class. A strong sense of connectedness or belonging to school is a protective factor for children and young people.[1, 2] Students also benefit from activities which help them to develop friendships, as forming and maintaining positive relationships with peers can be one of the most challenging aspects of school life.[3]

Equipment

- Room to move

Activity 1: The Stop and Listen Game

Method

1. Sit students in a circle on the mat.
2. Explain that in class you will use signs or actions to show that you want everyone to stop what they are doing and listen to you. Demonstrate the clapping technique, where you clap and students repeat the sound by clapping the same rhythm as you. Start with a single clap and ask students to copy the movement. Next, use a double clap and ask students to copy the movement.
3. Practise this a few times. Let them know that this is one way you will signal that it is time for everyone to give their attention to you.
4. Challenge students to see if they can manage this while they are moving around. Ask students to walk slowly around the space without touching each other and without bumping into each other. When you clap, they stop and repeat the clapping pattern you provide.

Coaching point:
Gamification. Using a playful or game-based format to practise skills can help to develop students' sense of pride and efficacy in their capacity to respond. Use your preferred 'attention, please' rituals, like simple clap signals or a hands-up signal.

Activity 2: A name game

Method

1. Ask students to sit in a circle. Explain that they will play a game where they practise each other's names. Go around the circle and ask everyone to say their name, 'I am [name].' When each person says their name, everyone will respond by saying the name together with a greeting, 'Hello, [name].' Demonstrate this with the class, using your own name first. If some students find it difficult to introduce themselves, you might assist by saying: 'This is [name].'
2. Reinforce the importance of using friendly ways to greet each other, like saying hello and using someone's name.
3. The following are optional extras to assist with learning names and practising welcoming routines:
   - Use a soft toy to pass around the circle. Students will say their name when they receive the toy. Everyone repeats this name together with a welcoming phrase like 'Good morning, [name]' or 'Hello, [name].' The person with the toy will then pass it to someone else in the class.
   - Add a simple physical activity to the naming ritual – for example, students stand in the circle and lift their arms high as they say their name. Then everyone echoes their name while also raising their arms high as if in a big cheer.

Coaching point
Welcoming routines. Simple and joyful welcoming routines can help students to feel connected to the class. Students benefit from feeling that not only their teacher but also their peers are pleased to see them.

Activity 3: A getting-to-know-you game

Method

1. Explain that they will play a talking game to help us get to know someone a little bit better. In this game we might find some ways we are the same and some ways we are different.
2. Explain that students will work in pairs. They will talk to each other to find out a food that their partner likes. When they have done that, they will ask about a game they like to play. Provide a visual reminder of the 2 tasks, via a picture of a food or a picture of a game.
3. Demonstrate the task with a volunteer. Coach the volunteer to ask you about a food you like. Offer an answer, then ask them about a food they like. Repeat the process by coaching them to ask you about a game you like to play. Offer an answer, then ask them about a game they like.
4. Pair students around the circle and invite them to exchange this information.
5. Ask one person in each pair to report back the name of their partner, and one thing they learnt about either a game or a food that their partner likes.
6. Ask who has discovered they share some similar likes to those of their partner. Ask for hands up to show who found some differences. Point out that we are the same in some ways, and we are also different. Difference is a good thing and can make life fun.

Coaching point

Developing a safe social space. Activities in Parts 4 and 5 can be used to build a shared understanding of rules and expectations. Healthy groups develop common understandings about how to work well with each other. Invite students to suggest what will help everyone to feel safe and welcome in the classroom. Co-create class agreements that help to build a sense of respect and responsibility for the social wellbeing of everyone. Your classroom or school may already have rules like this in place as part of their approach to school-wide positive behaviour. Adapt the activities to suit your setting.

Activity 4: We help to keep our bodies safe

Method

1. Sit students in a circle. Explain that there are lots of things we can do to help everyone to feel safe in the classroom. Provide an example of an action, for example, saying hello. Invite students to add some suggestions. Acknowledge and reinforce students' contributions and invite or provide examples of how the suggestion might work as an action.
2. Point out, 'Because there are a lot of people in the one room, we need ways to make sure that we help to keep our bodies safe. To help us think about that, we are going to play a game.' Say to students, 'Imagine we are each sitting inside a bubble. Our own bubble is the little bit of space all around each of us. We are going to practise walking around, very carefully, so we don't bump into anyone and burst their bubble.'
3. Arrange for students to practise this. Ask students to stand up and walk slowly making sure they protect their bubble and other students' bubbles by looking carefully to avoid bumping. Consider asking students to start in slow motion if they are finding this challenging.
4. Once students are seated again, ask them what they did to make sure they did not burst anyone's bubble. Provide positive feedback on the actions they took, for example, looking around, noticing other people, being careful about what they did with their own body, and not moving so fast that they could not manage this.

Reinforce the idea that each student's bubble can be a safe space for their body. Ask, 'How can we make sure we look after our own or someone else's bubble when we are sitting on the mat, at tables and in the playground?' Examples include sitting still, keeping our hands to ourselves, taking turns on the play equipment, waiting in line and taking turns to move through the doorway.

Activity 5: We help to make a safe and happy class

Method

1. Sit students in a circle. Explain that there are lots of things we can do to help everyone to feel happy in the classroom and help them to work well. Provide an example of an action you have seen students take, for example, 'I saw you taking turns with the paints today, and I heard you inviting someone to join in.'
2. Encourage students to name some actions that people can take to help make others feel happy to be in the class. Acknowledge their contributions and invite or provide examples of how the suggestion might work as an action. Examples include being kind, encouraging others to join in and taking turns.
3. Ask students to name some actions that help people to try their best and to learn well in class. An example action is 'The class starts listening when I ask.' Encourage students to name some actions they can take to help the class learn well together. Examples include waiting your turn, putting your hand up and asking for help when you are not sure about something.
4. Aim to positively frame suggestions made in the negative. For example, illustrate that 'not being mean' could look and sound like being kind, taking turns or sharing.
5. Sum up the activity by naming a small set of positive actions that everyone can take to make a safe and happy class. Aim to keep the list short and positive. For example:
   - We listen.
   - We are kind.
   - We try hard.
   - We take turns.
   - We help each other.
   - We encourage people to join in.
   - We check in by asking, 'Can you please explain that again?', 'Are you okay?', 'Can I help?' or 'May I borrow this please?'
   - We let the teacher know if we are not feeling okay.
6. Seek agreement from the class to do their best to use these actions.
7. Following the class, make a display or visual reminder of the key actions. Reinforce these expectations regularly, both in the positive mode of 'catching their success' by providing positive feedback when you observe students undertaking an action, and by revisiting expectations with 'rule reminders' prior to engaging in activity which might call for effort to work towards these expectations.

Coaching point

Revisiting class agreements before teaching sensitive topics. It will be important to reconnect with class agreements and norms prior to delivery of more sensitive topics across the year. For further suggestions about strategies to support students to let you know when they are feeling distressed, see the guidance on content advice provided in the Introduction.

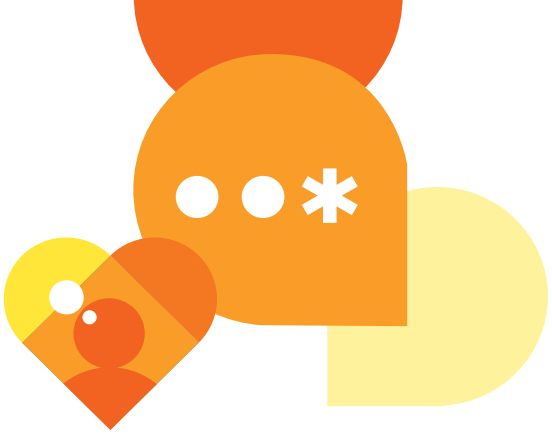
Review

Invite students to remind each other of some of the ideas they had about how to help make the class a safe and happy place for everyone.

Examples of simple, positive agreements

How we help to make our class a safe and happy place	
We try our best	We listen to each other
We are kind	We take turns
We ask if we are not sure	We keep our bodies to ourselves
We help each other	We let the teacher know if we are not okay
We encourage people to join in	We look after our things

Topic 01 Emotional literacy



Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- recognise and identify their own emotions
- describe situations that may evoke these emotions.

Informed by the evidence base

Research shows that students who participate in rigorously designed and well-taught Social and Emotional Learning programs (SELs) demonstrate improved mental and social health, have improved relationships with peers, are less likely to engage in risky and disruptive behaviour, show improved academic outcomes and have improved capacity for help-seeking.[4-7] Participation in SELs also reduces rates of sexual harassment and homophobic bullying, and lead to reduced rates of bullying of LGBTIQ+ students, students from marginalised ethnic and migrant backgrounds and students with disability.[8-10]

A meta-analysis of 82 research trials conducted in a range of national contexts found lasting positive effects of social and emotional learning programs when students were followed up between one and 3 years post intervention, regardless of students' race, socio-economic background or school location.[7]

Social and Emotional Learning programs (SELs) have also been found to make a significant contribution in students returning to school after exposure to emergencies, disasters or armed conflict. Those receiving a substantial social and emotional learning program showed improved psychological wellbeing and lower rates of depression, anxiety and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) compared with students in control schools.[11] The collaborative learning activities within these programs help students to build their social skills.[11]

Development of emotional literacy is an important foundation block of SELs. Building a large vocabulary for emotions helps to increase emotional literacy, promotes self-awareness and encourages empathy for others. Developing empathy has been found to be an effective tool in reducing bullying.[12] A study conducted with children who had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder found that the process of matching images of facial expressions showing key emotions to pictures of situations which might elicit such an emotion led to improved understanding of their own and others' emotions, along with improved capacity to match their own emotions to certain situations.[13]

Coaching point

Checking in with students about their emotional states. Aim to set up some daily routines for checking in with students about how they are feeling. Consider starting each day with a regular and predictable welcoming ritual or process. For example, a regular 'How do you feel right now?' game or ritual might include strategies suggested below. Teach the strategies by modelling them to students.

- Ask students to use their bodies to show a statue that represents how they feel right now, and acknowledge that they may be feeling a mix of emotions.
- Ask students to put up their hands somewhere from high above their heads to down low beside their hips, to show where they are on the range from:
  - happy (high) to sad (low)
  - full of energy (high) to tired (low)
  - calm (high) to worried or bothered (low)
  - ready to learn (high) to not quite ready to learn (low).
- Ask for hands up as to who thinks they need a calming activity, and who thinks they need something to help them be cheerful or energetic.

You may wish to follow the feedback with a short and fun song or game, when you see that there is a need for a cheerful start, or with a short mindfulness or calming song or game, when you see that the class would benefit from a settling phase.

Topic 01

Activity 1: The Emotions Echo Game

Learning intentions

- Students will name some emotions that they experience.
- Students will show how they express emotions through their body language.

Coaching point

Sharing learning intentions. Explicitly sharing the learning intentions will help you and students to intentionally practise these skills during an activity and allow you to review the effectiveness of the lesson at its conclusion. This can assist students to understand the purpose behind the learning activities and how this learning can contribute to their life.

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Introduce how to play the Emotions Echo Game. Explain that you will be the leader, and the class will work together to be the echo of the emotions you describe. That means, when you say something, they will 'echo' back in unison, copying you as closely as they can. You will also create a simple movement or pose to suggest what it feels like to experience an emotion, which they will copy as well.
2. Play a few rounds of the game to introduce the key emotional vocabulary that you want to use in the lesson. Use opposite pairs in sequence to build the context of positive and negative emotions that will be relevant in the lesson, for example, happy and sad, confident and nervous, excited and bored, and pleased and disappointed.
3. Invite some of the students to have a turn at saying the word and creating a pose for their peers to echo.

Ask, 'How do you work out what emotions other people are feeling?' Introduce the term 'body language' to describe the way emotions can be expressed through the body and how we might guess what other people might be feeling.

Review

Review the learning intentions with students by asking them to recall some of the words that they used for different emotions in the activity. Ask some students to give examples of how emotions are reflected in people's body language.

Coaching point

Developing emotional literacy. Students will have different capabilities and competencies in emotional literacy. This is sometimes due to neurodiversity or to variations in vocabulary development, difficulty with empathising or picking up on the bodily cues of others, or expressing emotions if English is an additional language. It is important to point out that not only do people find it hard to think of words for some emotions, but they also find it hard to figure out what others are feeling and may not be able to guess correctly. Reassure students who find it difficult to identify emotions that it's okay to get confused or not to know, and provide positive feedback on participation. Suggest one strategy might be to ask people how they feel and check your guess with them.

Use teachable moments to make regular use of language for emotions and to show the ways people can empathise with others (for example,' I'm guessing from that frown that you are feeling a bit frustrated', 'That big smile tells me that you might be excited about trying this' or 'The sound of that big sigh has me guessing you're really disappointed.') Provide visual cues to help students understand and remember the words for emotions. Display the images for reference, along with the matching word for the emotion. Visual cues can be particularly useful to support the engagement of diverse learners. As part of your use of interactive read-aloud strategies, continue to build emotional literacy when reading class texts or engaging with other visual material by asking students to guess and name emotions that characters might be experiencing. For guidance on using this strategy, refer to the Department of Education **Literacy Teaching Toolkit:** https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/Pages/default.aspx

For guidance on the use of visual supports, see **An introduction to visual supports:** https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/resources/practical-tools-information-sheets/visual-supports on the Australian Department of Education's Positive Partnerships website and access the **emotion card set:** https://allplaylearn.org.au/resource/emotion-cards/ on the AllPlay Learn website.

Topic 01

Activity 2: We can notice emotions

Learning intentions

- Students will name some emotions experienced by characters in a story.

Equipment

- A storybook that discusses feelings (see suggestions below)

Coaching point

Using circle time for peer-supported learning. Sharing in circle time can help to build students' skills in listening respectfully and supportively to each other. It also provides opportunities for them to contribute to each other's learning. If people are taking turns to speak, invite the previous person to call on the classmate next to them by name to speak next. Encourage students to thank each other for their contributions.

Method

1. Bring the class together for a circle time session. Explain that while you read this story, you want them to notice all the different feelings or emotions that the characters are experiencing. For example, they might notice if a character is sad, or if a character is angry.
2. Read a story that illustrates different emotions through the storyline and the illustrations. As you read each page (or as frequently as appropriate to the text) stop and ask, 'Can you guess the emotion that the person or character is feeling? How did you guess? What do you think might cause them to have this emotion? What are the signs that tell us what they are feeling?' Elicit comments about events or experiences that the character encounters, as well as facial expressions or other body language. Encourage students to guess what a character might be feeling based on how they might feel in a similar situation. Conclude by naming the different emotions that students found in the story. Suggest others yourself as needed.

Coaching point

Using interactive read aloud strategies. Consider using an interactive readaloud approach to exploring the text. For guidance on the use of this strategy refer to **Interactive read alouds** https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/speakinglistening/Pages/examplereadalouds.aspx in the Department of Education's Literacy Teaching Toolkit.

3. Explain that it is very helpful to know the names of lots of different emotions. This can help us to explain to other people how we are feeling and to understand ourselves. Sometimes we need to be able to tell other people how we feel.

Review

Ask, 'What emotions words did we use today? Did we identify how emotions can be seen in people's facial expressions and other body language? What are some examples of how we did this?'

Coaching point

Expanding recognition of emotions. Make a note about which feelings students didn't discuss or had difficulty identifying. You can then choose picture books that focus on those particular feelings for future story times. You could also add a set of 'guessing' questions to use in response to experiences that characters encounter in any of the stories you read to the class. For example, 'I wonder what the characters might have felt when that happened?', 'Who would like to suggest some emotions they might be feeling?', 'Let's look back at our list of words for emotions and see which ones we guess these characters might be feeling.', 'What do you think might be causing them to feel that way?'

Aim to use a wide range of texts to provide good representation of diversity and to expose students to worlds they might not ordinarily encounter. Consider ways to strengthen appreciation of diversity via your text selection by favouring texts that show characters from diverse families, cultures, religions, abilities, genders and countries as well as texts written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Topic 01

Activity 3: Mirror, mirror on the wall, how are you feeling overall?

Learning intentions

- Students will name emotions.
- Students will practise ways to show what they are feeling with their bodies and faces.
- Students will name emotions they can see in other people's faces and bodies.

Equipment

- Camera or iPad (optional)
- Mirror (optional)

Method

Bring the class together for a mat session. Ask students to work in pairs, take turns to make a happy face and see what this looks like in the mirror (or reflected in the face of their partner).

1. As you do this activity, ask students to look at their face and body, or that of their partner. Ask questions about how their body language matches the emotion.
2. Ask:
   - 'What does your partner's face look like?'
   - 'What do your partner's eyes look like?'
   - 'What does your partner's mouth do?'
   - 'What do they do with their hands?'
   - 'What do their shoulders do?'
   - 'What do their legs and feet do?'
   - 'If you had this feeling, how might your tummy feel?'
3. Repeat the process with different emotions like 'sad', 'angry', 'proud', 'frustrated', 'excited' and 'afraid'.

Review

Conclude by inviting students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions by asking, 'Have we practised naming emotions or feelings we can see in other people? What are some of the ways emotions or feelings can be expressed in someone's body language?'

Coaching point

Using images. If you take photographs during this activity, you can print the pictures so students can create 'Emotions' cards that they can keep with them and use when they find it difficult to verbalise their feelings. Additionally, the class could create a class 'Emotions' book or wall display that they can use to talk about what might cause different feelings.

Topic 01

Activity 4: What do emotions sound like?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify the kinds of sounds that go with different emotions.

Equipment

- Room to move
- The song 'If you're happy and you know it'*

Method

1. Ask students to stand up and form a circle. Demonstrate for them how you will be the conductor and they will be the orchestra. You move your hands one way to ask them to start and you have a different hand signal for stop. Show them also how you can ask them to increase or decrease the volume (move hands up or down). Practise with some easy sounds.
2. Explain that they will become an 'emotions orchestra'. You will name an emotion, and they will make up the sort of sound someone might make when they feel that emotion.
3. Explore each of the following emotions: 'happy', 'sad', 'angry', 'afraid', 'excited', 'frustrated' and 'proud'.
4. Once you have completed a round of this game, repeat, and experiment with 'conducting' to change volume, tempo, sequence or duration.
5. Sit students down for some discussion. Ask:
   - 'How might you feel when you hear people sounding angry?'
   - 'How might you feel when you hear people sounding happy?'
   - 'How might you feel when you hear people sounding sad?'

   This activity can open conversations about how one person's emotions can affect others.
6. To lift the mood, ask students to become a choir. Introduce the song 'If you're happy and you know it'* (see below), singing it with the students. Repeat the song, working again as a conductor and challenging them to respond as a group to your volume signals. You might want to co-create some new verses to include other emotions and modify the line 'then you really want to show it' as appropriate to the emotion. For example, for 'if you're angry and you know it', you might choose a statement like 'then you choose how to show it', which emphasises the option of self-management in the way we express or share emotions.
7. Acknowledge the team skills students used to respond to your conductor signals. Remind them about how much you value their willingness to pay attention, manage noise levels and stop and start when you ask them to. These are important team skills to make the classroom a good place for everyone to learn.

Review

Conclude by inviting students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions by asking, 'Have we learnt what kinds of sounds might go with different emotions?' Invite some students to give examples.

If you're happy and you know it

You can create your own verses using additional emotions and body movements. (Verses 2 and 3 are examples)

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap hands)
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap hands)
If you're happy and you know it, then you really want to show it
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. (Clap hands)

If you are sad and you know it give a frown (frown)
If you are sad and you know it give a frown (frown)
If you are sad and you know it, then you really want to show it
If you are sad and you know it give a frown. (frown)

If you are frustrated and you know it give a sigh (sigh)
If you are frustrated and you know it give a sigh (sigh)
If you are frustrated and you know it, then you really want to show it
If you are frustrated and you know it give a sigh. (sigh)

* 'If you're happy and you know it' is believed to originate from a Latvian folk song. The tune resembles the song 'Molodejnaya', written for the Soviet film Volga-Volga(1938) by Isaak Dunayevsky.

Topic 01

Activity 5: What causes these emotions?

Learning intentions

- Students will match emotions with experiences that can cause those emotions.

Equipment

- Paper, pencils and paints

Method

1. Choose an emotion. Ask students what sorts of experiences can lead to them to feel each of these emotions. Write the words for emotions on the board with simple faces next to them as visual reminders.
2. Repeat the process with additional emotions, for example, 'sad', 'angry', 'proud', 'frustrated', 'excited', 'afraid', 'pleased', 'delighted', 'disappointed', 'relieved', 'nervous' and 'confused'.
3. Ask students to choose one of these emotions. Ask them to draw a picture that shows a situation that can lead to a person feeling this emotion.
4. When the class has completed the task, invite students to come together to share their drawings. Ask each student to name the emotion and explain their drawing of the situation that has led to this emotion.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions by asking, 'What have we learnt today about the kinds of experiences that can lead people to feel certain emotions?'

Topic 01

Activity 6: It feels good when people like us just the way we are

Learning intentions

- Students will learn that people feel good when others like them just the way they are.
- Students will learn ways to show respect for others regardless of whether they are similar or different from them.
- Students will learn ways to show respect for trans and gender-diverse people.
- Students will share experiences that make them feel proud to be who they are.

Equipment

- Drawing materials

Coaching point

Supporting students' contributions. Use active listening skills to paraphrase what you have heard a student contribute to a discussion or activity. Active listening involves paraphrasing (rather than assessing the merits of the contribution). It is a useful way to check for meaning, to add clarity or to introduce or reinforce key terms. Invite the student who has made a contribution or their classmates to build on the ideas. Redirect, deflect and/or use additional questions to steer the conversation, elicit ideas and advance engagement with the learning intentions.

Method

1. Introduce the idea that people feel happy when they know that people like them just for being who they are. They don't have to be just like a sibling, or just like a friend or classmate. They can be just who they are.
2. People around us can show they like us just the way we are. For example, they might smile at what we do, or encourage us to play the games we like. Ask, 'Who can think of some other ways we do that? What can happen to our feelings if people say something that means they don't like the way we are, for example, if someone teases us or says something mean about how we look, or what we like doing?'
3. Ask people to look around the class and see that every person is different. It is wonderful that everyone is different.
4. Explain to students that as they grow up, they will meet more and more people, each of whom is different. We all need to be good at being kind to people, or respecting them, even if they are different from us.
5. Point out that one difference between people that gets noticed a lot is their gender, like when we notice someone may be a girl or a boy. But there are quite a few differences to do with gender.
6. Explain to students:

   Some people are born with boy body parts, some people are born with girl body parts and some people have differences in these body parts – this is called being intersex.

   Some people feel it is just right for them to be called a boy, and that this matches with their boy body parts. Some people feel it is just right for them to be called a girl, and that this matches with their girl body parts.

   Some people feel they did not get a good match for their body parts, and they do not want to be called a boy or a girl, but rather something that is right for them. Other people feel that the label 'boy' or 'girl' is not the right label for them, and they want to tell us the right word and name to use for them. Sometimes people use the words 'transgender', 'gender diverse' and 'non-binary'. These are words that some people feel more comfortable using for themselves.

   The important thing to remember is that it is good to show respect for difference. One way we can do that is to ask people about which name they want us to use, and then we call them by that name. For example, 'Hello. I am [name] and I like to be called "she". What is your name? And what do you like to be called?'

   We can be friends with anyone. It does not depend on whether they are a boy, a girl or gender diverse.

   The important thing to remember is that it makes people feel good when others like them or respect them just the way they are. This can make us all feel proud and happy.

7. Point out to students that they now have a chance to draw a picture about something that makes them feel proud to be who they are. Invite some examples of things that can make them feel proud (for example, 'proud of my smile', 'proud of my brown eyes', 'proud I can run fast', 'proud of the way I play with others', 'proud of the way I help at home' and so on). Share some examples of when you feel proud of them (for example, when they are on time, when they welcome others, when they are kind, when they tidy up, when they try hard, when they help others and when they join in).
8. Provide time for them to draw a picture showing a proud moment, or a time when they think they would get a proud feeling.
9. Arrange opportunities for students to share their pictures with the class, or with a small group. An option is to create an 'I am proud to be me' display gallery of the student drawings.

Coaching point:

Relevance of teaching about gender diversity to young children. Research conducted in Australia has found that half of young people who are same-sex attracted will know before age 12.[14] Gender-diverse young people are also likely to know from a young age that their gender is different from what has been presumed for them, even though they may not communicate this to others until late adolescence or adulthood.[15] A national study conducted into the wellbeing of trans young people in Australia found that more than half of trans young people were aged 13 or younger when their parents realised they were trans, or when the young person came out to their parents.[15] Additionally, children who have family members who have a diverse gender or sexuality can find it particularly distressing if they hear sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments. It is important that teachers provide support to non-binary or gender diverse students, as well as those students whose parents or carers or other family members are gender diverse. This not only supports the student themselves, but also provides positive role modelling for other students.

Review

To review the learning intentions, ask students to name some reasons people might feel proud about themselves. Ask, 'How can we show other people that we respect or like them just the way they are?' Invite them to name some different ways to do this.

Coaching point

Modelling the use of inclusive language. Where gender need not be a main identifier, refer to 'siblings' rather than 'brothers and sisters' and 'students' rather than 'boys and girls'. Avoid positioning gender as a binary by introducing your pronouns and checking which pronouns students use for themselves. A binary' consists of 2 things, or can refer to one in a pair of things. When talking about genders, binary genders are 'man and woman' or 'boy and girl'. Nonbinary people might feel that they have a mix of genders, or that they have no gender at all. Nonbinary is an umbrella term for gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the 'man/woman' or 'boy/girl' binaries. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine or could be agender (without a feeling of having any gender or having neutral feelings about gender) [16].

Reflecting on everyday practise

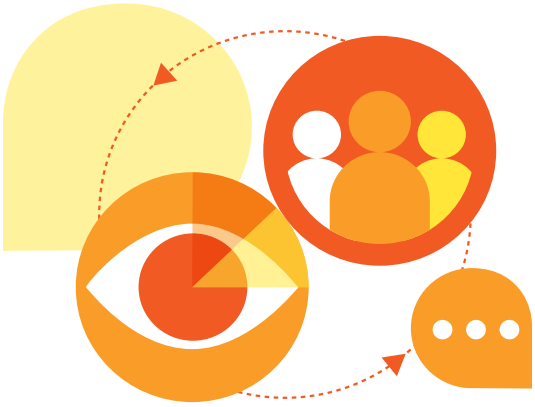
- Which emotions were students easily able to express?
- Which emotions were harder for students to express? Why might this be the case?
- How do you express your emotions in the classroom?
- What is the effect on students?

Extension activities

- Use a digital camera to take pictures of the 'emotions' statues.
- Create an 'emotions' class book that they can use to help them talk about their feelings.
- Display the pictures that portray what causes students to feel a particular emotion.
- Interview students and write 'I feel [...] when [...]' captions to put with their picture.

Talking further

- Give students a turn to take the emotions class book home to read with parents.
- Work with students to create a classroom newsletter explaining the work you have done to help students in your classroom learn about emotions.



Topic 02 Personal and cultural strengths

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- identify and describe personal and cultural strengths
- explain how these personal and cultural strengths help them to contribute to family and school life
- identify ways to use their strengths to care for others, including ways of making and keeping friends
- connect their use of strengths to acts of respect that demonstrate care for self, others and the environment.

Informed by the evidence base

Social and emotional learning programs that use strengths-based approaches promote student wellbeing, positive behaviour and academic achievement [17-20]. Research in the field of positive psychology emphasises the importance of identifying and using individual strengths. Research with neurodiverse adults found that the character strengths they most commonly acknowledged and valued in themselves included honesty, appreciation of beauty and excellence, love of learning, and fairness and kindness. Those who identified themselves as having the character strengths of gratitude, hope and honesty were more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction.[21] An intervention using a focus on character strengths with neurodiverse students in the early years of primary school led to improvement in executive functioning and friendship skills. [22] Research in the area of culturally inclusive pedagogy demonstrates the importance of approaches that are informed and enriched by the cultural heritages and strengths of the communities represented in the school [21, 22].

Children raised within collectivist cultures may have been provided with more opportunities to value interdependence, responsibility and cooperation, while those raised within individualistic cultures may have been encouraged to value personhood, rights, initiative and independence. Teachers should seek ways to recognise and embrace the strengths across both types of traditions.[23]

Strategies to advance cultural inclusion include use of examples and case studies that illustrate the richness and contribution of various cultural heritages. This could include celebrating special days and festivals in the calendars of different religions and cultures that are represented in the school, as well as choosing stories that are set in different lands and cultures.

Coaching point:

Creating culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Being able to express culture makes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students feel stronger and safer. Providing safe environments for learning has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal students. Young people who don't feel safe about being themselves and expressing their needs and concerns may be less willing to report abuse.

There are many resources available to support teachers to establish a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal students. It's recommended that teachers familiarise themselves with the Department of Education guidance on implementing **Child Safe Standard 1** https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-culturally-safe-environments-guidance. Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued, as well as the **Koorie cultural inclusion practise notes** https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/koorie-education/resources.

Teachers can establish a safe cultural space with actions like:

- beginning classes by **acknowledging Traditional Owners** https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome_acknowledgement-country
- supporting Aboriginal students to feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems (being aware that some Aboriginal students may be unsure themselves about what it means to be Aboriginal, especially if they are still learning about their Aboriginal family, culture or Country)
- ensuring Aboriginal support services are available to students
- establishing a relationship with the school's Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- addressing instances of racism within the classroom directly and with appropriate consequences.

Topic 02

Activity 1: Building strengths through cooperative games

Learning intentions

- Students will identify strengths they use to help them play well with others.
- Students will describe strengths that help them to work well as a team.

Equipment

- Objects for the Magpie Game

Method

Part 1: The 'Sam Says' Game

1. Introduce how to play the 'Sam Says' Game. Explain that you will be the leader and the class will listen for instructions. That means when you say something, they will perform the action. Explain to students that they need to listen carefully, because your actions might be different from your words. The instructions can incorporate large body movements, for example, 'Sam says, "Jump for joy"'. Include instructions that refer to emotions, like 'Give a big smile', 'Shiver with fear', 'Give a frown' or 'Laugh out loud'.
2. After the game, ask:
   - 'What did you have to do to play this game well?' Examples include using listening skills, quick thinking, concentrating or having another try after getting it wrong.
   - 'Was it easy to listen?'
   - 'When was it hard to listen?'
   - 'What helps you to listen to your friends when you are playing?'
   - 'What helps you to listen well in class?'

Coaching point

Encourage students to name the strengths they might use to help them manage a challenging situation. Name some of the strengths you see students use to play well together in class games. Encourage students to name some of the strengths they can use to help them manage a challenging situation and provide positive feedback on their contributions. Provide positive recognition when you see them display this strength in action. Consider use of visual displays to remind them of key strengths. It may be helpful to have some 'Strengths' cards that students can choose to display on their desk when they have nominated it is time for them to call on a particular strength.

Part 2: The Magpie Game

1. Explain that magpies notice things as they fly from space to space. This game is about working with a partner to notice objects. Explain that everyone will have to listen carefully for instructions.
2. Arrange students into pairs. Explain that you will call out the name of an object. When you say 'Go' they will walk together with their partner to find and touch or point to the object you have identified before you finish counting to 20. Remind students that they need to walk, and they must not leave their partner. Make sure there are enough of each object for each pair to find without undue crowding (for example, a crayon or something blue).
3. When students return, ask them to comment on what they did to work well as a pair. Acknowledge skills like cooperating or not moving too fast for their partner.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions by asking, 'What skills did you use in that game? What skills helped to make a good working partnership? When do you use these same skills in the classroom, the playground and at home?'

Coaching point

Games are beneficial. When effectively and purposefully facilitated, collaborative games can help students to mix and to strengthen social connectedness, which is a protective factor for mental wellbeing. Structured play can assist those who are anxious in social situations to participate with their peers. Games can also be used to advance social and emotional skills.[24] Following participation in a game, ask students to identify the skills they used which can also be used in other life situations. Encourage them to find key messages in the games about how to conduct respectful relationships. Games can also be helpful to lift the mood after engaging with sensitive material, to engage or re-energise the class, and to bring a spirit of fun and joy into the class.

Topic 02

Activity 2: Learning about sharing and caring from Aboriginal perspectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students are advised that materials used in these lessons could contain images, voices or names of deceased people in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

Learning intentions

- Students will listen to a story about sharing written by Aboriginal people.
- Students will learn about sharing from Aboriginal perspectives.
- Students will give some examples of what sharing looks like.

Equipment

- *Sharing*, written by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson, and illustrated by Leanne Mulgo Watson, or a thematically suitable alternative text created by Aboriginal author(s) and artist(s)
- Drawing materials

Coaching point

Learning from Aboriginal perspectives. Books and resources authored by Aboriginal authors and artists provide opportunities for children to learn from Aboriginal perspectives. Research shows that teachers can be anxious about addressing the 'Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' **cross-curriculum priority** https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/cross-curriculum-priorities and can worry about how to introduce appropriate materials in the classroom. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership discussion paper *Indigenous cultural competency in the Australian teaching workforce* (2020) found that many teachers were anxious about being culturally insensitive as a result of their lack of knowledge. [25] However, there are many resources available for teachers that guide the design of learning informed by Aboriginal perspectives. Stories by Aboriginal authors and artists are among these resources, as are contributions by Aboriginal academics, researchers, activists and psychologists.

In Victoria, teachers are required to follow protocols when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The **Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols** https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx provide guidelines about how to protect the integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions and enable all Victorian teachers and students to engage respectfully and feel connected to this identity. Further advice is also available from the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), who have produced the **Protocols for Koorie education in Victorian primary and secondary schools** https://www.vaeai.org.au/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2020/01/Protocols-for-Koorie-Education-in-Victorian-Primary-and-Secondary-Schools-2019.pdf**.** This guidance includes an emphasis on the importance of all students learning about the natural sovereignty that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples held across Australia prior to invasion, colonisation and Federation, which they still hold, the major events that have affected Aboriginal communities since colonisation, and the richness of the living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

VAEAI provides a range of downloadable **curriculum and education resources, policies, strategies and other publications** https://www.vaeai.org.au/resources/. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies **guide to evaluating and selecting education resources** https://aiatsis.gov.au/education/guide-evaluating-and-selecting-education-resources supports non-Aboriginal educators to make conscious and critical decisions when selecting teaching and learning materials.

Method

1. Introduce the authors and illustrators of *Sharing* to model recognition of and respect for Aboriginal peoples. Tell students that this book was written by Aboriginal author Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir who is a Boonwurrung Elder, along with her co-author Sue Lawson. It was illustrated by Aboriginal artist Leanne Mulgo Watson who is a Darug woman. Boonwurrung Country is in Victoria. It includes the areas from the Werribee River down to Wilsons Promontory, including the places called Westernport Bay, Mornington Peninsula, French Island and Phillip Island. Darug is in New South Wales. It is Country that extends around Western Sydney towards places called the Blue Mountains, the Southern Highlands and Illawarra.

Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir is a Boonwurrung Elder who cares about sharing her culture and stories with all children. (The Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation are also known as the Bunurong, Boon Wurrung and Bunwurung peoples.)

Leanne Mulgo Watson is a Darug artist-educator and is the daughter of Aunty Edna Watson. She has been a director of the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation for many years.

Sue Lawson is an author of young adult and children's books that are recognised for the sensitive way they explore growing up. She has written a number of books with Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir.

2. Read *Sharing* to the class. Then lead the class in circle time to reflect on things they learnt from the story, asking questions like:
   - 'What did we see in the pictures in this story?'
   - 'What are some of the kinds of sharing we saw in this story?'
   - 'Sharing is a way to care for people and to care for Country. What did we learn from this story about how we can help to care for Country?'
   - 'What are some of the ways people share with you at school and at home?'
   - 'What are some of the ways that you share with others?'
   - 'What does it feel like when people share with you?'
3. Invite students to respond further by drawing a picture called 'Sharing'. Work with them to add captions to describe their story.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'What did we do today to help us learn from Aboriginal people about the importance of sharing? What are some of the things we learnt about how to care for people? What are some of the things we learnt about how to care for Country?'

Coaching point

Using strengths-based approaches when communicating with parents and carers. It is important to use strengths-based approaches when communicating with parents and carers about issues of concern related to students' participation at school. Aim to make your initial contact one that highlights a positive experience or celebrates the strengths or progress of the child or young person. It can be challenging for parents if they only hear about what is not working, without a broader conversation about the positive aspects of their child's engagement, participation, wellbeing or learning. A focus on the problem, rather than the person, can be particularly challenging for members of marginalised communities, or for those parents or carers whose children don't feel a strong sense of belonging or connection to the school. When working with people from diverse communities, it can be helpful to seek guidance or involvement from cultural leaders, interpreters or other community liaison specialists who are available to provide guidance on communicating with parents and carers. For example, involving a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO), or making use of the Department of Education's interpreting and translation services: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/interpreting-and-translationservices/policy

Coaching point

'Country' is more than 'country'. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the meaning of Country (capitalised) is much more than just the meaning of the English word 'country'. See this explanation from Professor Michael 'Mick' Dodson AM. He is a Yawuru man, barrister, academic and 2009 Australian of the Year.

> *When we talk about traditional 'Country'... we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word ... We might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the titleholders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land [23].*

See this explanation from Aunty Laklak Burarrwanga. She is a Datiwuy Elder and caretaker for the Gumatj clan, and an honorary associate of the Department of Environment and Geography at Macquarie University.

> *Country has many layers of meaning. It incorporates people, animals, plants, water and land. But Country is more than just people and things, it is also what connects them to each other and to multiple spiritual and symbolic realms. It relates to laws, custom, movement, song, knowledges, relationships, histories, presents, futures and spirit beings. Country can be talked to,*

it can be known, it can itself communicate, feel and take action. Country for us is alive with story, law, power and kinship relations that join not only people to each other but link people, ancestors, place, animals, rocks, plants, stories and songs within land and sea. So you see knowledge about Country is important because it's about how and where you fit within the world and how you connect to others and to place.[24]

More information about the importance of Country can be found in **What is Country** https://www.commonground.org.au/article/what-is-country from Common Ground.

Engaging in school-wide activities

Active recognition of significant dates in the calendar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples provides a way for schools to model inclusion, learning, reconciliation and respect. Key dates in the calendar include:

- 13 February – National Apology Day, the anniversary of the Australian Government's apology for past government policies and practises relating to the Stolen Generations (13 February 2008)
- 26 May – National Sorry Day, commemorating the Stolen Generations
- 27 May to 3 June – National Reconciliation Week. 27 May commemorates the anniversary of the 1967 referendum, when Australians voted to remove clauses from Australia's Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 3 June commemorates the 1992 Mabo decision when the High Court of Australia recognised native title, which is the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights over their lands did survive British colonisation
- the first to the second Sunday in July – NAIDOC week, which celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- 9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 13 September – the anniversary of the signing of the *United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples* on Thursday 13 Sept 2007.

The annual VAEAI *Koorie education* calendar, which is available from the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency online **Cultural Hub**, https://www.vacca.org/cultural-hub provides a list of significant dates and links to stories and other educational and cultural resources.

Topic 02

Activity 3: Being kind, being brave and showing respect

Learning intention

- Students will identify some emotions felt by characters in a story.
- Students will name the strengths shown by different characters in a story.
- Students will identify how strengths can be used to show respect.

Equipment

- One or more children's stories, selected to support naming strengths demonstrated by characters who encounter challenges or adversity

Method

1. Choose a children's story where one or more of the characters demonstrates a range of cultural or personal strengths (for example, kindness or courage) when they encounter challenges or adversity.
2. Read the story and lead the class to reflect on the way the central character has responded.
3. First, focus your questions on emotions that the character may have experienced in response to particular experiences. Then, focus on naming some of the strengths they may have had to call on to respond to challenge or adversity. Ask questions like:
   - 'Which emotions do you think [character X] felt when [Y] happened?'
   - 'Were there any other emotions they might have felt when [Y] happened?'
   - 'Which strengths might [character X] have had to use to help them?'
4. If the story provides opportunity, repeat the process for one of the other characters.
5. Focus next on what the word 'respect' means. Invite students to explain what they think respect means. Supplement as needed with examples such as the following: Showing respect means being polite, being kind and caring about someone or something. We show respect for each other in our classroom every day, for example, when we are kind, patient, generous, friendly, helpful, neat or hardworking.
6. Invite students to consider whether any of the characters in the story showed respect for someone. Encourage them to describe the actions that they saw as respectful.
7. Ask, 'Which strengths do you think they used to show respect? How do you think others felt when they were treated with respect?'
8. Invite students to note if any of the characters behaved in a way that was not respectful towards another. Encourage them to describe the actions that they thought were not respectful. Invite them to note how being treated in a way that was not respectful might have made others feel.
9. To draw the lesson back to their own experiences, challenge students to think about and describe some of the ways that they have shown respect at school that day. Add some observations of your own as positive feedback. Ask, 'How does it make us feel when we are able to show respect? How might we feel when others treat us with respect?'

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Did you think of some emotions that the characters in the story felt? What were some of these emotions? Did you think of some strengths that the different characters showed? What were some of the strengths? Can you name a strength that can be used to show respect?'

Coaching point

Connecting words to actions. Connecting activities, feelings and emotions to words can be difficult for children. A child may have acted in a brave way by standing up for someone or themselves, but they may not see it as brave if it isn't a 'superhero event'. Small activities and acts can be 'big'. This is an important message to share with students.

Topic 02

Activity 4: What might being brave look like?

Learning intention

- Students will talk about what feeling afraid or nervous can feel like in their body.
- Students will explore what being brave can look like in everyday life.

Equipment

- Drawing materials

Coaching point

Modelling supportive care. Some younger students may share personal or sensitive information during class activities, because they can't yet discriminate between conversations that should be public or private. Should this happen, teachers can reframe the conversation by acknowledging that what they have shared sounds like an important or challenging situation that warrants a follow-up conversation in a more private context. For example, 'Thanks [student name]. That sounds like an upsetting situation. It's best if the 2 of us talk more about this out of class, because it might be good for you or others to get some help to deal with this. If we talk after class, we can work out how to support you.' A response like this utilises a teachable moment through which to normalise help-seeking, and to model proactive and supportive care in response to a sensitive student discussion. Reassure the class that if other students have sensitive situations, they too can talk to you out of class. Redirect the class activity to address the learning intentions, and prioritise meeting with the student(s) in a more private, safe space within the school as soon as possible.

Method

1. Bring the class together for circle time. Explain that you are going to do an activity that is about being brave when we are nervous or scared about something we must do. Ask students to think about the sorts of things in everyday life that can sometimes make them feel nervous or scared.
2. Invite students to think up some ideas with a partner. Invite the pairs to share their ideas. Build a list. Ask questions if needed to elicit situations, like having to talk to adults, trying new things, being lost or feeling left out.
3. Ask them to describe what being nervous or afraid might feel like in their body. (They might suggest things like feeling sick in the tummy, or shaky in their hands or legs.)
4. Ask what they think 'being brave' is when someone is faced with one of these everyday situations.

   Explain that being brave is when they find the strength to have a go, even when they feel nervous or afraid. It does not mean the feeling of being scared goes away, though that might happen afterwards. It means that they don't let this feeling stop them.
5. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves doing something for the first time or doing something that is challenging. When students have finished, invite them to share their drawing with the class.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Did the class think about situations that might make people nervous or scared? What were some examples?' Ask some students to summarise what they think it means to show the strength of bravery.

Coaching point

Repetition builds skill acquisition. This activity can be used many times to explore different personal and cultural strengths, including being kind, patient, generous, friendly, helpful, neat or hardworking. A 'personal and cultural strengths' display board can be used to display the students' drawings and key words that name personal and cultural strengths.

Topic 02

Activity 5: 'Personal and cultural strengths' celebration tree

Learning intentions

- Students will name and celebrate personal and cultural strengths like helpful, kind, patient, brave, neat, hardworking and friendly.
- Students will give examples of when they have seen someone using one of their strengths.
- Students will give examples of ways people can use their strengths to show respect.

Equipment

- 'Personal and cultural strengths' cards (Print and cut up the cards. Punch a hole in the corner of each card and attach a string so the cards can be tied to the tree branch or string line.)
- 'Acts of respect' cards (Print the cards onto different coloured paper than the 'Personal and cultural strengths' cards, and prepare them in the same way.)
- Two baskets or boxes – one for each set of cards
- String or ribbon
- A tree branch or string line to use for constructing a visual display
- Drawing materials

Coaching point

Supporting students to recognise cultural strengths. Some students may find it hard to describe the cultural heritage they have benefited from. Some have inhabited a dominant culture and do not recognise that they have a culture at all. It can also happen for those who have not yet been provided with sufficient opportunities to share their family and cultural heritage, for those whose culture and heritage has been portrayed in stereotypical or discriminatory ways within the dominant culture, and for those whose heritage has not been included within the curriculum of the school. This can be experienced as a form of discrimination or exclusion, where to be left out is to be erased, or made invisible, which can signal that a person's existence is not valued. Teachers can assist all students to identify some strengths that may connect to their family and cultural backgrounds (if known). For example, students might readily relate to the following terms, as well as offering additional suggestions:

- Strengths that people might have called on to get along well with others might include being fair, kind, neat, cheerful, polite, good listeners or patient.
- Strengths that people might have called on to preserve traditional knowledges about how to care for people and Country could include being generous, kind, brave, wise, hardworking, creative, respectful, thoughtful, clever or caring.
- Strengths that people might have called on to start over in a new country could include being brave, hopeful and hardworking.
- Strengths that people might have called on to overcome difficult times could include being brave, hardworking, patient, fair, helpful and playful.

Method

1. Find a large fallen branch and secure it safely in a pot or container in a corner of the room. Or, provide a string to use as the basis for a display.
2. Place the personal and cultural strength words into a basket.
3. Invite students to circle time.
4. Remind students about the activities you have previously undertaken on personal and cultural strengths, and how they use strengths to try new things, overcome fear and get along with other people.
5. Introduce the idea that you will work together to make a personal and cultural strengths display. Explain that the display will help students to celebrate each other's personal and cultural strengths, and to explore how they might use their strengths to undertake acts of respect.
6. Read the personal and cultural strengths words. As you work through them one by one, ask for examples or demonstrations of what each strength might look like as an act of respect in action. For example, a student might show what it sounds like or looks like to be fair, by showing how they could work out who will go first in a game, or how they take turns to use some equipment. Another student might show how they could wait patiently with their hand up, or how they might be kind by asking someone if they want to play or if they are feeling okay.

7. Ask students to listen as you read the list of acts of respect out aloud. Each time you read one, they will put their hand up if they think they already know how to use this action to show respect. Ask, 'Who thinks that they know how to wait for their turn when I am busy helping another student? Who thinks that they know how to help clean up in the classroom? Who thinks that they know how to help tidy up at home?' Acknowledge that there are many times every day when you see them use these acts of respect. Name some of the strengths that you see them call upon to do this. For example, 'I have seen that you are being patient when you wait for your turn. I have seen how polite you can be when you say thank you as I hand out the pencils.'
8. Ask each student to choose one of the strengths that they would like to use in action the next day and to draw a picture of themselves using this strength. Encourage them to use some of the ideas they have generated about how people use their strengths. Work with students to ensure that their name and the name of the strength is added to their picture.
9. Explain that these drawings will go on the display, to help students remember that they all have many strengths.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'What are some of the strengths words that the class has learnt today? What are some examples of using a strength to show respect to someone or something?'

Later in the week, use a reflective time to share stories or to create a class storybook about how they have used these strengths or where they have seen others use them. Provide affirmative feedback when you notice students showing these strengths in action. Refer to the display to help provide a visual reminder of key strengths that have been modelled, or when you are encouraging students to draw on particular strengths during an upcoming activity.

Coaching point

Fostering strengths through formative feedback. Help students learn to value the strengths you identify and to understand the ways strengths can be shown in action, by providing positive feedback that is strengths-based. This practise can strengthen the ways you provide formative feedback about students' social capabilities. For example, 'It was kind of you to let others go first. It was generous to share the pens that way. I saw how patient you were waiting with your hand up. I think it might have taken courage for you to have a go at that.'

Coaching point

Using visual cues to enhance recognition and recall. Consider making some visual cues to help students understand and remember the strengths words. Some examples are a picture of students listening to a story (effective listening) or a picture of a student with their hand up (waiting for their turn). The visual cues can also be particularly useful for neurodiverse students and students with additional learning needs.

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL STRENGTH CARDS

Patient	Kind
Hardworking	Good listener
Caring	Brave
Playful	Calm
Helpful	Polite
Fair	Generous
Cheerful	Neat

ACTS OF RESPECT CARDS

I can wait for my turn.	I can be quiet and listen to others.
I can help to clean up.	I can try something new.
I can work well with others.	I can cheer someone up.
I can say sorry.	I can share something with my friend.
I can wait in line.	I can smile and say hello.
I can put my rubbish in the bin.	I can use my indoor voice.
I can walk, not run, inside.	I can say please and thank you.
I can keep my table, tub or bag neat.	I can help someone.
I can finish my work.	I can count to 10 and stay calm when I am angry.
I can join in with others.	I can answer questions in class

Topic 02

Activity 6: Families are different

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students are advised that materials used in these lessons could contain images, voices or names of deceased people in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

Learning intentions

- Students will learn from Aboriginal perspectives about how families can care for each other and for Country.
- Students will describe ways that families can be different.
- Students will describe ways that family members can help each other.

Equipment

- *Family*, written by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson, and illustrated by Jasmine Seymour, or a thematically suitable alternative text created by Aboriginal author(s) and artist(s)
- Drawing materials

Coaching point

Unconscious bias. Remain alert to the ways that unconscious bias can lead to practises like positioning the dominant group or the stereotype as the norm, thereby signalling that difference from the norm is problematic in some way. Unconscious bias can also lead to victimblaming in situations of discrimination or violence.

Method

Part 1: Family

1. Introduce the book *Family*. Tell students that this book was written by Aboriginal author Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir who is a Boonwurrung Elder, along with her co-author Sue Lawson. The pictures in the book were created by Jasmine Seymour, who is a Dharug woman.

   Boonwurrung Country is in Victoria. It includes the coast from the Werribee River down to Wilsons Promontory, and includes places called Westernport Bay, Mornington Peninsula, French Island and Phillip Island. Dharug is in New South Wales. It is Country that extends around Western Sydney, towards the places called the Blue Mountains, the Southern Highlands and Illawarra.

   Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir is a Boonwurrung Aboriginal Elder who cares about sharing her culture and stories with all children. (The Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation are also known as the Bunurong, Boon Wurrung and Bunwurung peoples.)

   Jasmine Seymour is a Dharug woman and descendant of Maria Lock, who was the daughter of Yarramundi, the Boorooberongal elder who had met Governor Phillip on the banks of the Hawkesbury River in 1791. Maria was the first Aboriginal woman to be educated by the Blacktown Native Institute. She was married to carpenter and convict Robert Lock, and their union resulted in thousands of descendants who can all trace their Dharug heritage back past Yarramundi. Jasmine isa member of the Dharug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation.

   Sue Lawson is an author of young adult and children's books which are recognised for the sensitive way they explore growing up. She has written a number of books with Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir

2. Read the story to the class.

3. Lead the class in circle time by asking:
    - 'What did we see in the pictures in this story?'
    - 'What did we learn from this story about how families care for each other and for Country?'
    - 'What are some of the things you do to care for others? For Country? For animals or plants?'
    - 'What are some of the ways that your families and carers do things to care for you?'

Part 2: How can families be different

1. Ask students to describe some of the ways that families can be different.
2. Accept their suggestions. Point out that families can come in all shapes and sizes.
3. Note that families can be different in relation to the adults who are there to care for the children. Point out some key differences in relation to carers:
    - some people may have grandparents, aunties, uncles, sister, brothers or other family members as carers
    - some may have parents or carers who live the same house, and some have parents or carers living in a different house
    - some may have one parent or carer and others have may have 2 or more
    - some may have a stepdad or stepmum
    - some may have 2 mums living together as a couple
    - some may have 2 dads living together as a couple
    - some may have parents or carers who are gender diverse
    - some may have parents or carers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and some may have parents who were born in other countries, or whose families came to Australia many years ago
    - some may have parents who are fit and well, and some may have parents who are not well.
4. Point out that these differences do not make any family better or worse than any other family. The differences in our families are something for us to feel proud of. The important thing about families is that they include people who care for each other. They use their cultural and personal strengths to help each other. These strengths might include things like kindness, love, patience, fairness and pride in the family culture or traditions.
5. Ask students to describe some of the different ways that family members help each other. Add to their examples if needed.
6. Provide time for students to draw a picture of someone in a family helping another member of the family. Work with them to add a caption or a label.
7. Invite students to share their pictures with the class or within a small group.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to name ways that families can be different and ways that family members can care for each other and care for Country.

Coaching point

Modelling respect for diversity. Teachers can play a major role in modelling ways to show respect and appreciation for the ways that families can differ. They can also model inclusive approaches by referring to 'parents and carers' rather than 'mums' or 'dads', which will assure students that their family type is respected and recognised.

Topic 02

Activity 7: Learning about permission and consent

Learning intentions

- Students will learn what is meant by the words 'permission' and 'consent'.
- Students will practise ways to seek, give and deny permission respectfully when sharing possessions or personal space.

Equipment

- Space for show-and-tell role-plays

Method

1. Ask for some volunteers who can show you what it looks like or sounds like to ask someone for permission to borrow their pencils. Arrange one child in role as the one with the pencils, and another to show how to ask permission in a kind or respectful way.
2. Invite students to note all the things they did that showed they were asking for permission in a respectful way (for example, by asking before taking, saying please when asking, saying thank you if the person says yes, saying okay if they say no, using a nice voice, not standing too close and not grabbing the pencils.)
3. Let the class know that you are now going to show the opposite scenario, which is when someone does not ask for permission or consent and is not respectful. Explain that you will demonstrate this. Invite a student to volunteer to pretend to be your classmate, while you pretend to be another student in the class. Demonstrate walking up and grabbing the pencils without asking.
4. Invite students to note all the things you did that showed you were not asking for permission or consent or were not asking for permission or consent in a respectful way.
5. Once you have gathered student feedback and added to it as needed, ask the class to think of other situations when people need to ask for permission or consent in a respectful or nice way. Give them time to think–pair–share with someone near them, then ask for examples. (Students might give examples like asking to share food, asking a parent or carer for permission to have screen time, asking a teacher for permission to go to the toilet, asking if it is okay to hug someone, or asking someone to play with them.)
6. Select one of the examples and arrange for pairs to practise asking for permission in a nice or respectful way. Choose another example and arrange for them to swap roles, so the second student gets a turn to ask for permission.
7. Ask students to indicate if they think their pair successfully modelled to each other how to ask for permission in a respectful way. Ask, 'What strengths did each person use in asking and responding?' Point out that students may have noticed that we use the word 'consent' like we use the word 'permission'. Explain:

   When someone asks for consent, this means they ask for permission. This could sound like, 'Can I please borrow your pencils?' or 'Is it okay to hug you?' Focus on the strengths used, for example, the person is being thoughtful and showing respect to the other person.

   When someone says no, this means they don't give permission or consent. This could sound like, 'No, you can't borrow my pencils', 'No, you can't hug me' or 'I don't want you to sit so close to me.' Focus again on the strengths used, for example, the person is being brave and honest with their answer.

   When someone says yes, this means they do give permission or they consent. This could sound like 'Yes, you can borrow my pencils' or 'Yes, you can hug me'. Highlight the strengths used, for example, the person is being kind and honest with their answer.

   Consent is when someone says yes just because they want to. They are not made to say yes because they are scared or because they think they should. They don't say yes because they want a reward like a present, a sticker or some lollies. They say yes just because they want to.

   When 2 people consent to do something, that means they both agree. They both say yes just because they want to. For example, 2 people say yes when they agree to play a game together.
8. Let students know that you will now look at a situation where someone asks for consent or permission, but the other person wants to say no. Invite some students to show what it might look like or sound like if we want to say no when someone asks us for permission or consent. This no can be shown in a nice, respectful way, using our strengths.
9. Set up a role-play where one student asks if they can give their friend a hug, and their friend says no in a respectful or nice way.

   Invite students to note all the things that showed the person was saying no or was

refusing permission in a respectful way. (For example, they used a kind voice, they used the words 'no' or 'I don't want to', or they shook their head to show that they meant no.) Highlight the strengths shown here.

10. Invite students to suggest all the things the person who was told no and was not given permission or consent did to show they accepted the no in a respectful or nice way. (For example, they said 'okay' in a friendly voice, they didn't try to get their friend to change their mind, they didn't get sulky or grumpy, they didn't say anything mean, or they asked if they could do something else instead, like play together.) Again, highlight the strengths shown.
11. Provide some time for students to do a drawing of someone saying no or refusing consent or permission when someone asks them. They are saying no in a firm but respectful way. Invite students to share their drawing and explain the situation they have chosen where they might want to say no, or not give consent. Be alert to any need for protective interrupting with this drawing and storytelling.
12. Emphasise that we can also refuse consent when people want us to do something we think is not okay. We can say no if someone wants us to do something we think is dangerous, naughty or mean, or just not right for us. We can say no or refuse consent when someone wants to touch our bodies in a way we don't want to be touched. We can say no, even if someone is trying to make us change our mind by scaring us or giving us lollies or presents. If we know it is not okay to say yes, we can say no.
13. Acknowledge that sometimes it might be harder to say no. Ask students what might make it hard sometimes to say no. Emphasise that children are not to blame, and it is not their fault if they are not able to say no if an adult or someone bigger tries to make them do something that is not okay. However, it is good to let someone else know if this has happened.
14. Ask if it could be trickier to say no to someone who is bigger or older than them. Ask what feelings they might have in this situation. Gather some words for emotions. (Refer back to activities from Topic 1: Emotional literacy if needed.) Students might note emotions like feeling scared, shy or embarrassed.
15. Ask students to think back to their personal and cultural strengths. Refresh their memory of the various strengths words developed in the previous activities to assist with this. Ask what kinds of strengths they might need to use if they need to say no in a tricky or hard situation. (Students may suggest strengths like courage or determination.)
16. Acknowledge that each of us have previous experience of being brave and determined, but that we can ask for help if someone is trying to make us do something that is not okay for us. We might ask someone at home to help, or we can tell our teacher or another helping adult. We might also ask a friend, buddy or sibling to help us tell an adult if something bad is happening to us.
17. Remind students of the ways they have made statues to show different emotions. Demonstrate with some of your own statues, and invite some volunteers to show some 'emotions' statues to their peers using 'emotions' words.
18. Invite students to demonstrate what their 'brave statue' might look like. Arrange for them to note and admire these strong poses. You might comment on some body signals with comments like 'I see how strong people look and how their eyes and faces are looking so wide awake, like they are ready for anything.'
19. Invite students to show what their 'you can't make me' or 'determined statue' would look like. Again, comment on what you notice in their bodies. For example, you might point to the ways people have their mouth and jaw looking firm and strong. Invite students to comment on what they notice in their own body, and when they look at the body language of some other statues. Ask them to show what their 'I am going to ask for help' statue looks like. You might observe that you see a mix of brave and determined in their strong bodies and faces.
20. Acknowledge student contributions and the ways they have shown that they know a lot about asking for consent in a respectful or nice way, as well as saying no in a nice or respectful, strong, brave or determined way.
21. Reassure students that sometimes we don't feel brave, and this is okay. Sometimes we need to feel scared or a bit worried to realise that we might be in danger.

Review

Invite students to note the ways that they have met the learning intentions. They could describe how they have shown they know what it means, or might look like or sound like:

- to ask for consent or permission
- to give consent or permission
- to refuse or say no when someone else asks them for consent or permission.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How do you identify and foster students' personal and cultural strengths?
- What strategies do you have in place to name and celebrate strengths?
- How do you promote and celebrate using strengths to show respect for self, for others and for your environments?
- What could your school do to name and celebrate teacher strengths?
- How do you acknowledge students when you see them being respectful when they ask for consent, or respond to a request for consent?

Extension activities

- Continue to add to the 'personal and cultural strengths' celebration display as students set different goals, as you add to the strengths vocabulary, or to celebrate further acts of respect that are shown.
- Emphasise and build consent language and respectful acceptance of rejection into everyday interactions in the classroom to normalise this vital understanding of individual rights and responsibilities.

Talking further

- Send 'Personal and cultural strengths' cards home, and ask families to support their child to identify their personal and cultural strengths. Students can display these cards at home or bring them into school and add them to the display.
- Students can ask family members to identify their own personal and cultural strengths.
- Students can make a picture to take home that will help them to talk with their families about the strengths they use to show respect for others.
- Students can make a picture to take home that will help them to talk with their families about how strengths and showing respect are part of consent education.

Topic 03 Positive coping

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- reflect on how they can manage strong emotional responses
- discuss ways that they can take responsibility for their actions when they feel strong emotions
- practise techniques to deal with feelings of fear and anger.

Informed by the evidence base

As they grow and develop, children encounter situations where they feel worried, nervous and sometimes even scared.[27] Individuals deal with the demands on them by drawing on a range of coping strategies. Some strategies are more productive than others.[28] Helping students to learn a range of positive coping skills and allowing them to develop and practise them will enable them to cope more successfully with future changes and challenges. Resilience research shows that use of positive self-talk is associated with greater persistence in the face of challenge, whereas negative self-talk is associated with higher levels of distress, depression and anxiety.[25] Research studies have demonstrated that those who use positive self-talk about how they will approach and manage challenge are more likely to succeed. Negative self-talk includes over-personalising adversity, excessive self-blame and exaggerating the likely duration and impact of adversity or failure. It includes focusing on what is wrong and ignoring what is right. Positive self-talk includes more realistic appraisal of capacity, circumstances and effort. It includes acknowledging and being grateful for the positives, recognising personal strengths and positive intentions, and realistic attribution of responsibility. Positive self-talk can be learnt or strengthened through practice.[26, 27]

Activity 1: The Fast Emotions Game

Learning intentions

- Students will play a game to show their understanding of words for emotions.

Equipment

- None

Method

1. Teach students 3 poses:
   - Happy – Everyone is standing up with their hands in the air, trying to touch the sky.
   - Excited – Everyone is jumping up and down on the spot.
   - Sad – Everyone is crouching down with their fists to their eyes.
2. Explain that when you call out the emotion students must quickly jump into the right pose. Call the words a few times.
3. After a few rounds of the game, ask if anyone can add a fourth emotion and a pose to match. Add this new emotion and play a few more rounds. Add a fifth emotion and pose if students can manage this.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to recall the different words for emotions that were used in the game.

Topic 03

Activity 2: We can notice emotions

Learning intentions

- Students will learn a chant they can use when they find something hard to do.

Equipment

- Short stories or scenarios
- Soft toys or puppets (optional)

Method

1. Arrange students to work in pairs facing each other. Introduce the idea that sometimes, when we are asked to do new things, we feel like we can't do them. Our body might tell us this through its feelings – our tummy might hurt, we might feel like we are going to cry, we might not want to get out of bed, or we might feel scared or worried about getting things wrong.

   Explain to students, 'At times like these, we can sing a little chant to ourselves to help us to try something new, or to try hard to keep going when things are hard. I will sing a line and then you echo me. "I think I can, I think I can, I try and try, I try and try, I did it!"'
2. Practise the chant a few times. Add some actions to make it fun. Change the volume from a soft start to a loud finish. Introduce yourself as the orchestra conductor who can direct the volume and tempo of the chant.
3. Explain that you will read some short stories about children who need some help, and students will help them by showing them how to sing the chant.
4. Read each story, then lead students in a chant in response. Alternatively, use puppets or soft toys as characters who ask for help in coping with their problems. Use the Challenging Situations scenarios from the table below, develop some of your own, or take suggestions from students.
5. To support students to connect the scenarios to their own experiences, ask questions like 'If you were having these feelings, what could you do to help yourself to feel better? Who could you turn to for help with this?'

Coaching point

Supporting neurodiverse students to connect emotions to scenarios and to lived experience. Questions that support people to connect scenarios to their own experiences can be more meaningful for diverse learners. Research studies with primary school children have shown that neurodiverse students can be supported to recognise emotions through developing a language for emotions and through matching words to visual cues. This can help them to successfully progress to matching emotions to particular situations provided in scenarios, and identify situations that made them feel particular emotions.[13]

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Did you learn a special chant to help you try hard to keep going when things are hard?' Ask for some examples of where students might use this chant in the future.

Coaching point:

Revisit self-regulation strategies. Refer to the use of self-talk and positive coping strategies at intervals across the year. Provide additional opportunities for students to practise them and encourage students to try them when they are in challenging, scary or sad situations.

Coaching point

Modifying or adding scenarios. When modifying or creating scenarios to align with student needs and context, ensure that the narrative does not inadvertently stigmatise, demonise or pathologise particular groups, or normalise or glamorise harmful behaviour.

Carefully consider the ways you select the 'who', 'where', 'when' and 'what' of the scenario. Consider the implicit messages that may be transmitted via choice of character names or pronouns (the 'who'). Ensure contextual relevance via the 'when' and 'where' of the scenario. Ensure relevance to the learning intentions in your choice of the 'what', which is typically the predicament, or the challenge or opportunity confronted by the character or characters. Consider the timeliness or suitability of a scenario. (For example, avoid naming a character after a student in the class, or describing a fictional situation that mirrors an actual incident too closely.)

Challenging Situations

Situation 1	I have a new reader. It has new words that I don't know. I feel nervous. What could I say to myself?
Situation 2	I have to take a note to the principal's office. I don't feel confident to knock at the door. What could I say to myself?
Situation 3	I have to wait and wait for my parent or carer to stop talking on the phone. I feel really impatient and angry. I don't want to wait anymore. What could I say to myself?
Situation 4	I am going to play at my new friend's house after school. But I feel too shy to talk to their parents. What could I say to myself?
Situation 5	I want to go down the big slide, but I have never done it before. I feel scared to try. What could I say to myself?
Situation 6	I find some places too noisy and bright. I feel uncomfortable and stressed. What could I say to myself?
Situation 7	I have to share my toys and I don't want to. I feel grumpy. What could I say to myself?
Situation 8	I find it scary to go to new places or meet different people. What could I say to myself?
Situation 9	I am starting swimming lessons. I feel scared of being in the water without my parent or carer. What could I say to myself?
Situation 10	Sometimes I can't learn things as fast as other students. I feel disappointed. What could I say to myself?

Topic 03

Activity 3: How are you today?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify negative or troubling emotions.
- Students will identify what can help them cope when they experience negative or troubling emotions.

Equipment

- Song (based on the song 'Where is Thumpkin?'†)
- Finger puppets (templates provided in this activity)

Method

1. Bring the class together for a circle time. Introduce the finger puppets by name (see examples in the templates provided below).
2. Explain that each of the puppets needs some help because they are feeling some uncomfortable emotions, like being sad, angry or afraid. Ask students to guess the emotion each of the puppets demonstrates.
3. Sing the song 'How are you today?' using one of the puppets.

Where is Charlie? Where is Charlie?

Here I am. Here I am.

How are you today friend? How are you today friend?

Very sad. Very sad.

Who can help? Who can help?

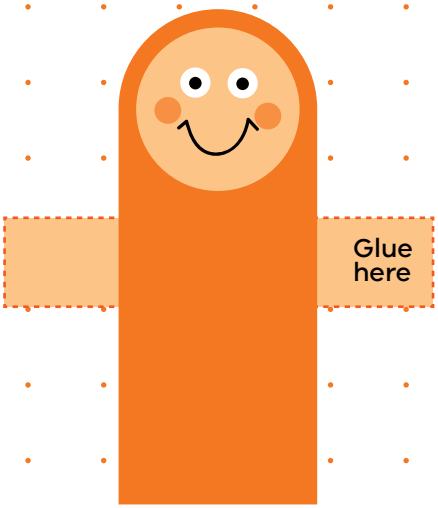
Original author unknown

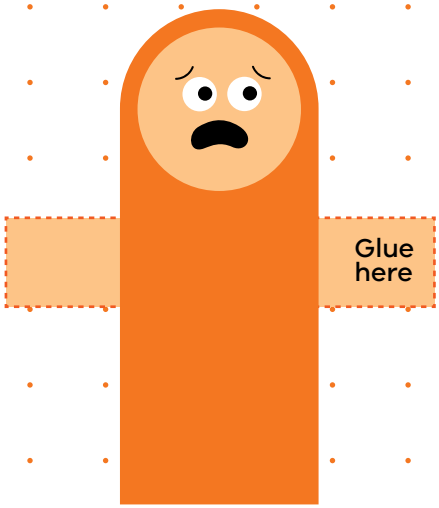
4. At the end of this song ask the class what might help Charlie. Gather some suggestions about what can help people to cope if they feel sad.
5. Sing the song again using a different character with a different emotion. Ask for helpful suggestions.

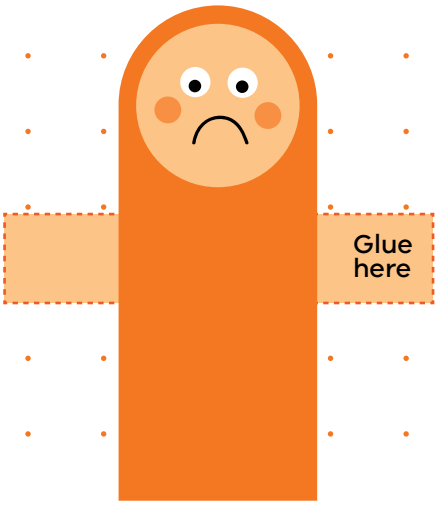
Review

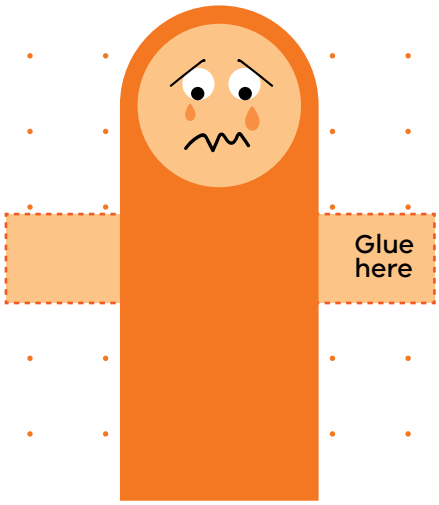
Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. 'What are some of the negative or troubling emotions that we talked about in this activity? What are some things that we can do to help people who feel these emotions?'

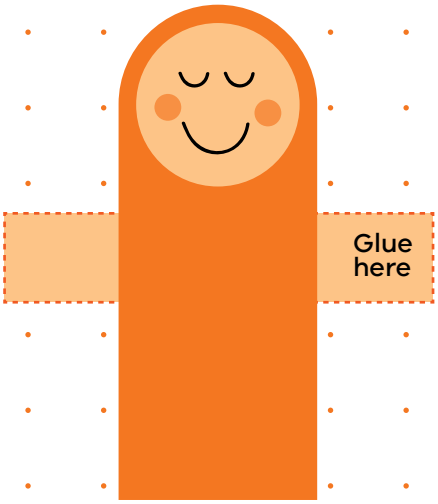
FINGER PUPPETS

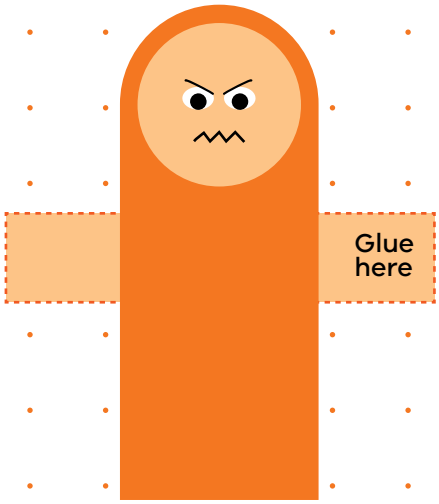




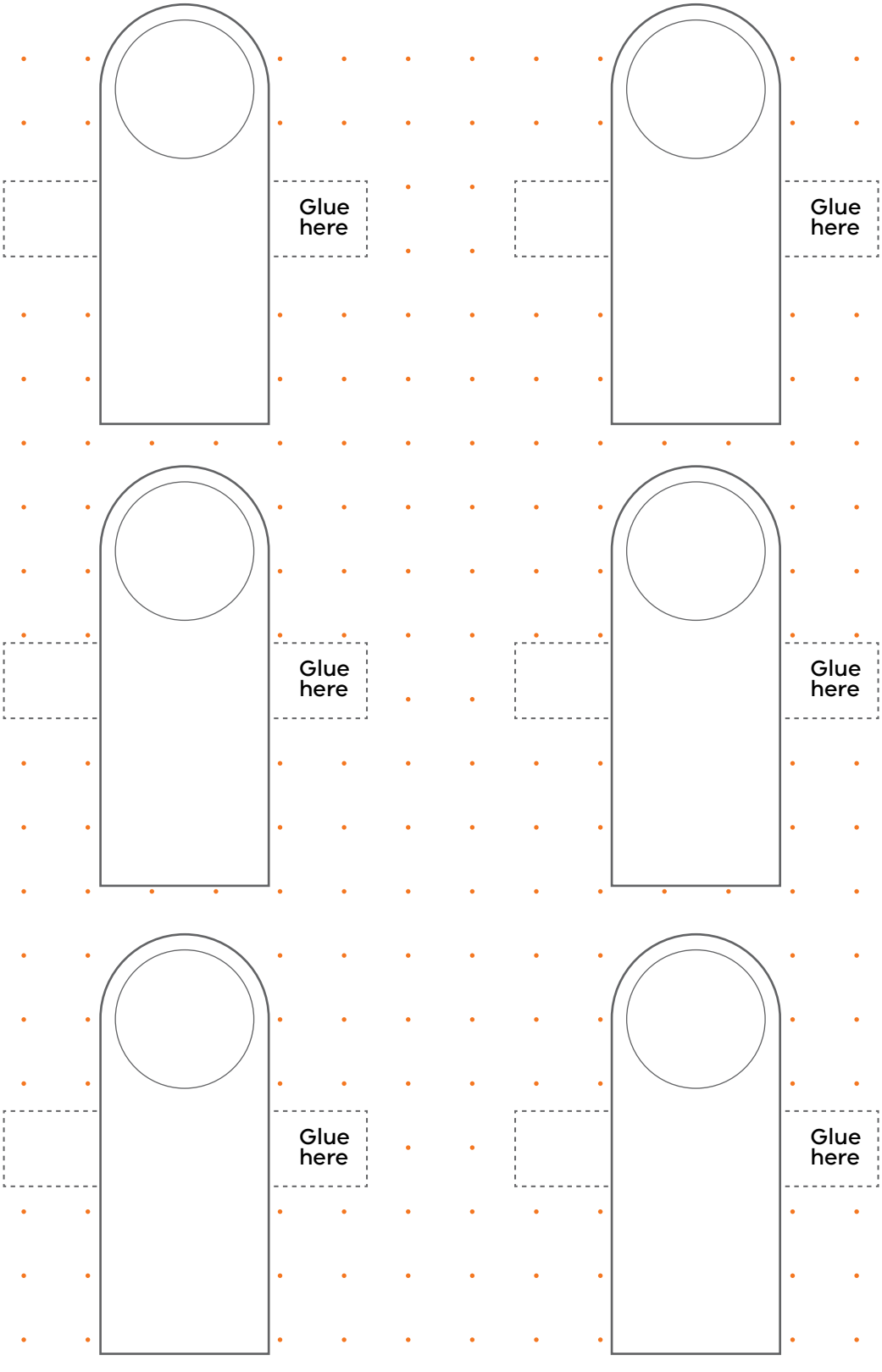








DRAW YOUR OWN FINGER PUPPET EMOTIONS



Topic 03

Activity 4: Calm Time

Learning intentions

- Students will practise ways to self-calm.
- Students will talk about what they like to do to calm themselves

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Explain to the class, 'We are going to do some activities help us relax and feel calm when we are tired or worried or angry or sad. We will try 2 different activities and then pick which one we liked the best.'

Part 1: The Listening Game

2. Ask students to lie on the floor on their backs (or sit at their desks with their arms folded on the desk and their heads resting on their arms). Ask students to close their eyes. Then talk students through the following relaxation exercise:

   Breathe in and out – slowly. Listen to the sounds that are far away as you breathe in and out – slowly. Listen to the sounds that are close to you as you breathe in and out – slowly. Listen to the sounds that are far away as you breathe in and out – slowly. Scrunch up your toes. Hold them tight. Relax your toes. Scrunch up your hands. Hold them tight. Relax your hands. Listen to yourself breathe in. Listen to yourself breathe out. Scrunch up your arms. Hold them tight. Relax your arms. Listen to a sound nearby. Wiggle your toes. Wiggle your fingers. Wiggle your nose. Open your eyes. Sit up slowly.

3. Ask, 'What did you hear? How did that game make you feel?' Provide positive feedback to students on their listening skills and engagement with the activity.

Part 2: The Balloon Breathing Game

4. Explain the game to students:

   In this game, we pretend to be a balloon. First, we breathe in to fill up our lungs with air. Then we hold our breath. Then we let the air out with a big 'whoosh'. Is everyone ready? Breathe in like a big balloon. Hold it. Let it out with a whoosh. Now let's rest the balloon. Then we will do it again. (Repeat). Now we have tried this a few times, we will pretend that we are an angry balloon. When we fill up with air, we feel angry. Then when we let the air out with a whoosh, we let go the angry feeling and we feel calm. Let's try that. Now pretend that you are a shiny, floating balloon. There is a soft breeze, and it is blowing you slowly and softly around the room. See if you can float yourself in slow motion around the room. Now settle in one spot. Take a big breath and let all the air out slowly. Then when we let the air out with a whoosh, we let go the angry feeling and we feel calm. Let's try that. Now pretend that you are a shiny, floating balloon. There is a soft breeze, and it is blowing you slowly and softly around the room. See if you can float yourself in slow motion around the room. Now settle in one spot. Take a big breath and let all the air out slowly.

5. Ask, 'How did that game make you feel?' Provide positive feedback to students on their willingness to follow instructions.

6. Invite students to turn to a partner to share which of the 2 self-calming strategies they preferred. Compare the different preferences of the class through a show of hands.

7. Invite students to share any other strategies they like to use to help them to feel calm, for example when they want to get to sleep, or if they are a bit bothered about something. Share one or 2 of your own strategies. Emphasise that it is okay for people to prefer different strategies. It is okay to be like or different from someone else.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Did you learn a strategy to help you relax and feel calm when you are tired, worried, angry or sad? Did you learn a bit about what other people do to help themselves to feel calm?'

Coaching point

Coping strategies. Explain that these games can also be used to help us to control our angry feelings, so we don't do something mean or not okay like hitting someone, saying mean things, or shouting or screaming at people. We can take a big breath, then let the anger out slowly. Doing this a few times can help us stay calm and in control of what we do.

Topic 03

Activity 5: Managing emotions

Learning intentions

- Students will learn about what they can say to themselves when they need to manage their strong emotions.

Equipment

- Room to move
- An item that represents a magic wand

Method

1. Explain, 'We are going to play a game which helps us to think about how we manage our emotions.'
2. Ask students to make an angry statue with their body. Have half the class relax and look at the other half of the class making angry statues. Swap and repeat. Ask, 'What can make people feel angry?'
3. Explain that it is important for us to learn how to manage how we express our emotions. For example, sometimes we feel like throwing a tantrum, or we feel like hitting someone, but we don't. These are times we are controlling and managing our angry feelings.
4. Talk with students about what they might be able to do and say to themselves when they feel angry. Examples include, 'When I feel angry, I can stop and breathe in and out. I can ask myself, "Why am I angry? Who can help me? How can I calm myself?" I can walk away or sit down. I can breathe in and out to make myself calm.'
5. Ask students to make a sad statue. Talk with students about what they might be able to do and say to themselves when they feel sad and there is no one around who they think can help them. Examples include, 'When I am sad, I can think or say, "Why am I sad? Who can help me? How can I cheer myself up? What can I do to that makes me feel happy?" For example, I can hug a soft toy, or I can play with a favourite toy.'
6. Ask half the class to watch while the others create statues. Explain that you have a magic wand that can bring statues to life so they can talk. When you tap a statue ask, 'What could you do to help make you feel calm or happy?' The statue will give their answer. Bring some of the statues to life, then swap, so the other half of the class can have a turn.
7. Talk with students about what they might say to themselves when they feel scared. When I feel scared, I can think or say "Why am I scared? Who can help me? How can I calm myself? What can I do that makes me feel strong?"'

Review

Conclude by inviting students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Did we learn some things that we can say to ourselves when we feel negative emotions? Why is it important for people to say positive things to themselves when they feel these emotions?'

Coaching point

Encourage students to identify when they need to use self-calming or self-cheering coping strategies. Teach students signals they can use to let you know when they need to use one of their self-calming or self-cheering coping strategies. Positively reinforce their capacity to identify when they need to deliberately self-regulate. Work with students to establish routines or strategies that are suitable for use in the classroom For example, some students may find it helpful to use a fidget toy, work for a while in a quiet corner, get a drink of water, wear headphones for a short time, or engage with a short mindfulness activity like colouring. Work with colleagues and families to understand the needs and self-regulation strategies of neurodiverse and trauma-affected students.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- What calming strategies work well to settle the class?
- What cheering strategies work well to energise the students?
- What calming strategies do you use to settle yourself?
- What cheering strategies do you use to shake off sadness or moroseness?

Extension activities

- Support students to express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and specifically developing simple written text about feelings – learning to write 'ad' words – sad, mad or glad.
- Work with students to develop 'I can' strategy cards to promote positive self-talk options and positive coping strategies that will expand their self-management capabilities.

Talking further

- Use the class newsletter to share the calming and cheering activities with families.
- Ask families if they have strategies that they use at home with their child.
- Suggest to students that they might play a relaxation game at home.

Topic 04 Problem-solving

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- recognise the needs and interests of others
- listen to others' ideas and recognise that others may see things differently
- recognise that there are many ways to solve conflict
- identify options when making decisions to meet their needs and the needs of others
- identify cooperative behaviours in a range of group activities
- practise individual and group decision-making
- practise solving simple interpersonal problems.

Informed by the evidence base

It is important to help students learn a range of problem-solving skills through applied learning tasks to help them cope with future challenges. Problem-solving is identified by the World Health Organization as a key skill for health.[28] To be able to solve problems, children need to be able to think critically and evaluate the consequences of various actions.[32] Use of problem-solving tools to explore possible responses to challenges provides opportunity for students to develop critical-thinking skills, while also learning with and from a diverse range of students within small task groups. For example, use of scenarios or narratives has been shown to be an effective basis for discussion between autistic and non-autistic pairs, generating increased connectedness and understanding of each other.[29]

Topic 04

Activity 1: The Picnic Problem-solving Game

Learning intentions

- Students will recognise that problems are a normal part of life.
- Students will name some problems.
- Students will think of some solutions to problems.

Equipment

- None

Method

1. Explain that you are the leader of the Picnic Problem-solving Game, and you need students to help so that you can all get to the park for the picnic. Ask students to stand up and follow you as you move around the room. As you progress, stop from time to time to create a problem or barrier. Ask students to help you solve the problem. The following are examples:
   - 'We need to pack a picnic. What will I take?' Seek ideas. Mime gathering the objects.
   - 'Let's pack everything in a bag. Oh no! It won't all fit in one bag! What should we do?' Seek ideas. Mime packing the bag.
   - 'We are ready to go. Oh no! It's raining outside. What should we wear to stay dry?' Seek responses. Mime putting up umbrellas.
   - 'Oh no! We forgot to invite everyone, and now some people feel sad about being left out. What can we do?' Seek ideas. Ask students to help you invite everyone and turn to those around them to extend and accept invitations.

   Announce a happy arrival at the park with everyone included, and end the game.
2. Sit students down for a circle time session and explain, 'A problem might occur when something is hard, tricky or new for you.' Ask the following questions:
   - 'What problems did we have in the game?'
   - 'How did we solve the problems?'
   - 'Who helped?'
   - 'What kinds of problems can children sometimes experience?'
   - 'When you have a problem, what can you do?'
   - 'Who helps you sometimes?'
   - 'Sometimes you help other people. What do you do to help other people?'

Review

Highlight with students that problems arise often, but usually there is a way to solve them. Ask, 'When we can't solve the problems by ourselves, what can we do?' (We can ask others to help us.) 'When we see that other people have a problem, what can we do?' (We can try to help.) Emphasise, 'When people get left out, they can feel very sad or angry. If we think carefully, we can find a way to include other people in our games.'

Coaching point

Games are beneficial. When effectively and purposefully facilitated, collaborative games can be used to help students to mix and to strengthen social connectedness, which is a protective factor for mental wellbeing. Structured play can assist those who are anxious in social situations to participate with their peers. Games can also be used to advance social and emotional skills.[24] Following participation in the game, ask students to identify the skills they used that can also be used in other life situations. Encourage them to find key messages in the games about how to conduct respectful relationships. Games can also be used to lift the mood after engaging with sensitive material, to engage or re-energise the class, and to bring a spirit of fun and joy into the class.

Topic 04

Activity 2: Can everyone play?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify how people might feel when others do things that are not fair or kind.
- Students will talk about how what they do can affect others.

Equipment

- A picture book or story that raises issues of inclusion and exclusion

Method

1. Invite students to a circle time session. Read the selected text.
2. When you have finished reading the book, lead students in a reflection about the ways people are affected if others treat them in an unkind or disrespectful way.
3. Use questions that lead students to name emotions felt by the affected characters, and which identify the unkind or disrespectful actions of the characters and their effects. Include questions that lead students to identify the ways certain characters challenged or refused to join in with the negative behaviour, or where they provide support for affected people. You might ask questions like the following:
    - 'Which characters treated someone else in a mean or unkind way?'
    - 'What did they do or say that was mean, unkind or disrespectful?'
    - 'How do you think it made [character X] feel when [character Y] did or said mean or unkind things to them?'
    - 'Which characters treated someone else in a kind, helpful or respectful way?'
    - 'What did they do or say that was kind, helpful or respectful?'
    - 'How do you think it made [character X] feel when [character Z] did or said kind, helpful or respectful things?'
    - 'When you are playing outside at school, what do you think it feels like if someone says something mean to you or to someone else?'
    - 'What can we do here at school to make sure that everyone feels included and can join in?'

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask students to recall some of the emotions that people might feel if they are treated in an unfair or unkind way.

Coaching point

What is ableism? Students with disability can be subjected to bullying or exclusion by peers and may also not feel respected and included by adults. This is a form of ableism, which has no place in schools. Ableism is when people discriminate against or unfairly treat those with disability or fail to cater for their needs. It can come from a lack of understanding of what people with disability may need and want, or making assumptions about people and not allowing them voice and choice regarding decisions about their lives. It can include being mean, or leaving people out on purpose. It can also include things like not providing wheelchair access, learning support, quiet spaces or sign language, not asking people what they need, or not treating people with full respect.

Topic 04

Activity 3: Friendly or unfriendly decisions?

Learning intentions

- Students will describe how people can feel when others make decisions that are not fair or not kind.
- Students will talk about how their decisions can affect others.

Equipment

- Drawing materials
- Camera (optional)

Coaching point

Enhancing empathy. This activity can help to build empathy as students learn about how others may be affected by particular situations. Listening to each other's contributions provides a form of peer-supported learning. The activity also provides opportunity to revisit language that can be used to describe and understand more intensely felt emotions.

Method

1. Ask the following questions and invite students to demonstrate their answers:
   - 'What do people do when they are being friendly and respectful at playtime?'
   - 'What do people do when they are being friendly and respectful in class?'
   - 'What do people do when they are being unfriendly or disrespectful in the playground or in class?'
2. Organise students into groups of 3 people. Ask each group to prepare a friendly pose that shows how they are being friendly and respectful in the playground. When they are ready, ask each group to show their pose. Invite the class to guess what they are doing and then have the players confirm or explain.
3. Optional activity: Take a photograph of each pose. Label and display the photographs on a screen or print them. Visual prompts can be used as a display to remind students about the kinds of friendly and respectful behaviour expected of them in class and in the playground.
4. Talk with students about how our decisions can affect the people around us. Ask the following:
   - 'How do you feel when someone decides to be friendly and respectful to you?'
   - 'How do you feel when you decide to be friendly and respectful to someone else?'
5. Ask students to draw a picture that shows them being friendly and respectful to another student.

Review

Invite students to consider whether they think the class met the learning intentions and comment on what helped them explore how their decisions can affect people around them.

Coaching point

Help-seeking reminders. Remind students that if they have a big problem that they would like to discuss, they can come and see you out of class to talk more privately. Alternatively, they can give you a note to let you know they would like a time to talk.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How do you structure the day and week to touch base with how students are feeling?
- What strategies do you use to support students to learn from their mistakes?
- What strategies do you use to notice and take care of your own wellbeing?

Extension activities

Talking about problems that need to be solved can at times be confronting and stressful. It can be helpful to lift the mood by playing fun games after these activities.

The Wriggle, Wriggle, Wriggle Game

Ask students to all stand up in a clear space. Then direct students as follows:

- Shake your head up and down and from side to side.
- Wave your arms like a bird in the sky.
- Flap your wings like a pterodactyl.
- Jump, jump, jump.
- Hop, hop, hop.
- Shake, shake, shake.
- Laugh, laugh, laugh.
- Wriggle, wriggle, wriggle.
- Giggle, giggle, giggle.
- Sigh, sigh, sigh.
- Calmly, calmly take a big breath.
- In slow motion sit back down.

Talking further

Send the book *This is our house* (or alternative selected texts) home for the family to read to their child. Include the reflection questions, so that families can consider these and develop their own reflective questions related to behaviours at home.

Topic 05 Stress management

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- recognise and identify their own emotions
- describe situations that may evoke strong emotions
- recognise and identify how their emotions can influence the way they feel and act
- develop self-regulation strategies.

Informed by the evidence base

Stress is a normal part of life, especially as children get older. Children who cope better with life's stressors develop good mental health and wellbeing.[28] However, students need assistance to recognise their personal signs and symptoms of stress. They also need practise in how to develop suitable strategies for dealing with stress. These learning opportunities will better prepare students to cope effectively with challenges in the future.

A study with children from grades 3 and 4 investigated the stressors they experienced at school, along with the strategies they used to cope. It found that children faced a ranges of stressors including interpersonal conflict arising from unfair play, anxiety about asking for help from peers or teachers, and worry about bad grades or performance challenges related to schoolwork and expectations.[30]

The 2022 Mission Australia Youth Survey found that almost 3 in 10 young people aged 15 to 19 years (29 per cent) reported high psychological distress, 16 per cent reported their overall mental health and wellbeing as poor, and almost a quarter reported feeling lonely most of the time.[31]

Almost half of females and gender-diverse young people reported feeling extremely or very concerned about body image (females 47 per cent, males 15 per cent, and gender diverse 49 per cent). Many young people reported feeling extremely or very concerned about mental health (females 53 per cent, males 25 per cent, and gender diverse 72 per cent) and school or study problems (females 47 per cent, males 23 per cent, and gender diverse 46 per cent). Close to 2 in 5 (38 per cent) young people who expressed strong climate concerns reported that they were also experiencing high psychological distress, and one in 5 (23 per cent) of these young people had a negative outlook about their future.[31]

Students reported finding it hard to generate coping strategies, indicating the importance of an applied focus on developing coping strategies suitable for a range of contexts. A review of mindfulness interventions used with children and young people found that body-centered meditations and mindful observations guided by explicit instructions led to improved socioemotional outcomes.[32]

Topic 05

Activity 1: The Melting Tiger Game for taming anger

Learning intentions

- Students will practise self-calming and self-control strategies.

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Explain, 'We are going to play the Melting Tiger Game to help us focus on self-control and self-calming.' In this game students will act out the movements of the melting tiger as you tell them the story.
2. Organise the class so they are standing in a free space with room around them. Use the following script or devise one of your own.

Melting Tiger script

Melting Tiger, stand in your own space, not touching anyone. Your feet are stuck tight to the spot. You do not walk around. You are a big angry tiger with your claws out and your feet tight on the ground. Hold your muscles tight and still and strong. This tiger is angry. It wants to pounce and fight, but it can't move.

As the tiger holds tight, the hot sun comes out. This tiger is made of butter. It starts to melt. Its muscles feel soft. It slowly melts into a pool on the ground. It lies on the ground, still and quiet. Its body is a soft pool of melted butter that is sinking into the ground. As it lies there, a soft breeze comes to blow across its skin. The breeze starts to wake this melted body. It is not a tiger anymore. It is just a sleepy person. Maybe this person had a dream that they were an angry tiger.

It is time to wake up the sleepy person. Wiggle your toes. Wiggle your fingers. Slowly, slowly sit up then stand up tall. Show how calm and peaceful you can be when your angry tiger has gone away. Show how you can walk silently and in slow motion around the room without touching anyone.

3. After the activity ask students the following:
   - 'How did that activity make you feel?'
   - 'Did you feel gentler and more relaxed after you had melted the angry tiger?'
   - 'Sometimes we can feel like we have an angry tiger inside us. When can that happen?'
   - 'This tiger melted with the sun, and all their anger soaked away into the ground. What helps to calm us down when we feel angry?'

Review

Ask students to reflect on the self-calming practise they have tried out. Ask, 'What do we do to keep our classroom a peaceful place for people to work? What else could we do if we notice we are getting angry and we need to calm ourselves?'

Topic 05

Activity 2: How stressful?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify situations that can make them feel stressed.
- Students will describe coping strategies they can use to respond to stress.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Signs for points along the stress continuum, for example, 'big stress', 'medium stress' and 'little stress', using face emojis to represent stress levels (optional)

Method

1. Bring the class together for circle time. Explain that you are going to talk about things that they can find stressful.
2. Talk with students about what they think is meant by the word 'stress'. Responses could include feeling uncomfortable, bothered or worried when something is changing or is hard to manage. Build understanding through a few examples, like 'We might feel butterflies in our tummy when going somewhere new. Our hands might shake when we have to do something that we find scary. We might feel disappointed when we can't do something we have tried really hard to do.'
3. Show an imaginary line across the floor. It stretches from the 'deep end', where things are very stressful, to the 'shallow end', where things are easy and not very stressful. In the middle is the place where it is a just a bit stressful or challenging.
4. Explain that you will give them a sample situation, and they will go to the place on the line that shows how stressful or uncomfortable it could be for them.

Stressful situations

- You are in a place you find too noisy, and you want to put your hands over your ears.
- Changes keep happening, and you are not sure what to do next.
- You left your school jumper at school and you are not sure where.
- Your friend is away sick, and you don't know who to play with.
- The teacher asks you to put on your sunhat, but you have left it at home.
- You have to sleep over in a room that is very dark, and you are a bit scared.
- You have a sandwich you don't like, and the teacher has said you must eat before you go out to play.
- You want a turn on the slide, but some big kids are blocking the slide and you can't get through. You can't find a teacher to help.
- You are in a place you find too noisy, and you can't settle.
- Changes keep happening, and it makes you feel bothered.
- Your baby sibling gets lots of attention, and if feels like you are not getting any.
- You broke something, and you have to own up that it was you who did it.
- You try and try, but you can't manage to do something, even though other people can do it already.

5. Ask students to suggest some extra situations.
6. As students move, ask for volunteers to explain why they went to that part of the line. Ask the following:
   - 'What is challenging about that situation?'
   - 'What might you be afraid of or worried about?'
   - 'What can you do to help yourself to cope?'
   - 'Who could you turn to for help with this?'

Review

Invite students to consider whether they think the class met the learning intentions and comment on which situations people might find stressful. Ask them to name some of the coping strategies and the helpers that people suggested.

Coaching point

Different stressors, different strategies. Remind students that different people can find different things stressful. What worries one person might be fun for another. Some students find too much noise and movement to be stressful, while others may not. Some people find it distressing when changes happen, and other people like change. Also, people can have different preferences in relation to the coping strategies that work best for them. It is useful to ask people what they find helpful when they feel stressed.

Topic 05

Activity 3: Positive play – strategies for self-cheering

Learning intentions

- Students will draw pictures that show them doing something that can help them to cheer up when they feel down.

Equipment

- Materials for drawing

Method

1. Refer to the activity on stressful situations. Point out that everyone has many things they like to do to help themselves cheer up when they feel down, stressed, grumpy or worried. Provide some examples. Explain, 'Next, we will talk about some of the games we like to play or things we like to do when we are at home and want to cheer ourselves up.' Give some examples of things you like to do to cheer up.
2. Ask students to think–pair–share some of the things they like to do to cheer up. Ask the pairs to share some of their ideas, for example, playing with toys, friends or family, cuddling a soft toy, patting a pet, playing with a ball, thinking of something funny, jumping up and down, playing a game, singing a song or listening to music. Explain that sometimes we call these 'coping strategies', because not only do we like doing them, but they can also help us to cope when we are stressed, sad or grumpy.
3. Ask students to identify the activities that they do at school that help them to cheer up when they are inside the classroom, and when they are out at play.

Arrange for students to draw a picture of themselves using one of their cheering-up coping strategies either at home or at school. Work with them to write on the page, 'I like to [activity] when I need to cheer myself up.' Arrange for students to share their images and build a class display.

Review

Invite students to comment on what they learnt from their classmates about activities they like to use to cheer up if they are feeling stressed.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- What cheering-up strategies do you use when the class or individuals are feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- What self-cheering strategies do you like to use to lift your own mood?

Extension activities

- Help students to design some small group activities that they can use in the playground that help them to build strong relationships and show awareness for the feelings, needs and interests of others. For example, they might design a 'guess my emotions' game.
- Consider incorporating brief relaxation, calming or mindfulness activities into the weekly or daily timetable, for example, revisit the Melting Tiger Game in Topic 5, Activity 1.

Talking further

- Display photos of students playing some of the calming and cheering games. Encourage them to show these games to their parents or carers and talk about good ways to calm down or cheer up when at home.

Topic 06 Help-seeking

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- identify situations that feel safe and unsafe
- identity when they may need to seek help and who they could approach for help
- discuss the importance of seeking help when dealing with problems that are too big to solve alone
- practise seeking help from adults and peers.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

The help-seeking behaviours of children and young people are fundamental to their mental health and wellbeing. Encouraging and fostering help-seeking behaviours is one way to improve mental health and wellbeing.[33] There are several barriers that children and young people can face when it comes to help-seeking, including embarrassment, shame, fear of making things worse, fear of getting into trouble, lack of confidence to initiate conversations with an adult, anxiety about not being believed and lack of knowledge about who to approach.[33] Additionally, research shows that those who are in the most need of help for psychological distress may be least able to seek it, due to the burdens affecting their emotional competence and confidence at that time.[34] Therefore, it is important to work with students to identify situations in which help from appropriate adults is warranted, make sure they are aware about help-seeking avenues, and ensure they feel confident to persist in seeking help from appropriate sources when needed.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Advise students that in the following lessons they will focus on help-seeking. This means discussing scenarios where peers are concerned about what is happening to a friend or classmate. The scenarios include situations when someone is feeling distressed, like when they have problems at home, with friends or with school. They will focus on how to help others and how to seek help. They will also learn about the different kinds of help available in the school and beyond. Remind students that it will be important to make sure the class is a friendly and supportive place while they work on this topic. Revisit the class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour. See guidance in the learning activities provided in 'Introductory activities'.

Sample script for content advice for Topic 6:

Across the next few lessons we will talk about ways to seek help or to help others. We will talk about situations when people are distressed because they have been left out or hurt by others, or worried about something that has gone wrong. We will learn about this because we want to make sure we know how to help our friends or ask for help if this sort of thing happens.

Sometimes, when we hear a story about someone being unsafe or hurt, it might make us feel a bit wobbly inside. Before we start each lesson, I will let you know if there will be scenarios about children who have been hurt, left out or called mean names. If you find that the lessons make you feel upset or wobbly, your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. If a topic is not good for you at any time, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else, here at school or at home, and that is also okay.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 06

Activity 1: The Don't Drop the Ball Game

Learning intentions

- Students will name skills that they use to be helpful to their classmates.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Soft toys, balls or other objects that can be passed easily from person to person

Method

1. Divide students into equal groups of 4 or 5 people. Ask each group to form a line behind their leader. Explain that in this game, students stand on the spot while they receive the ball, then they pass the ball over their head to the person behind them. Once they have passed it, they will move to the end of the line. Each team needs to keep moving the ball along their line. The teams will slowly move their team from the front to the back of the room as people keep joining the end of the line.
2. Have a short practise first to ensure that everyone understands the rules, then play the game.

   Ask the following:

   - 'What skills did you use to work well with your team?' Name some of the skills you saw them demonstrate, for example, listening, concentrating, noticing if the person next to them was ready, encouraging others or asking if someone is ready.
   - 'What are some of the things we do to help our classmates?'
   - 'Which of these skills can we use to be helpful to our classmates?'

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

3. Inform students:

   'In our next lesson, we will think about who we help and who we trust to help us. Remember, you can come and tell me if you or someone else has a problem and you can also tell other teachers, for example wellbeing staff.'

   Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Invite students to comment on what they learnt from their classmates about ways that we help each other. Ask, 'Does having fun together as a team help us to build positive relationships?'

Coaching point

Reminders for group work skills. Remind students of the skills they will use when working together on group tasks. Invite them to remind each other of the expectations prior to commencing the task. Examples of skills include playing fair, listening well, being kind, being patient and encouraging others.

At the end of the task, ask groups to self-assess how they worked as a team. Ask them to think of at least one thing they did well, and if there is anything they could do better in the future.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 06

Activity 2: Who are your helpers at school?

Learning intentions

- Students will describe who can help them when they have questions or problems at school.

Equipment

- Photos of key help providers in the school, for example, teachers, staff, wellbeing coordinator(s) or buddies

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   Today we will make sure everyone knows about who can help you with a worry or problem at school or somewhere else. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support.If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Show the class the photos. Explain that these are pictures of people who can help them at school if they are feeling sad, scared or angry, if they feel sick or injured, or if they have lost something.

3. Work through some of the photos. Make sure students know who the person is and what their name is. Ask, 'What sorts of things can this person help you with?' Add other suggestions of your own if needed.

4. Inform students:

   'Next time, we will identify your helpful people – those who can help you with a worry or problem at school or somewhere else. Remember, you can come and tell me if you or someone else has a problem, and you can also tell other teachers and wellbeing staff, for example the teacher on yard duty.'

5. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

To review the learning intentions, play a quick quiz to reinforce who students think could help them with a problem. The following are examples:

- 'I can help you if you have fallen over and need first aid. What's my name? Where could you find me?'
- 'I can help if you forgot your lunch.'
- 'I can help if you need permission to go to the toilet.'
- 'I can help if you feel a bit sick at school.'
- 'I can help if you are not sure what to play in the playground.'
- 'I can help if you are finding your schoolwork hard.'

Coaching point

Help-seeking. Aboriginal students, students from diverse religious or cultural backgrounds, and LGBTIQA+ students may be less likely to seek help if they anticipate that help services will not understand their cultural needs, belief systems or identities.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 06

Activity 3: My helpful people

Learning intentions

- Students will identify people who they can go to for help.
- Students will identify people who they can help.

Equipment

- Drawing materials

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   'Today we will talk about people we help and people who help us. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.'

2. Ask, 'Who are some of the people who help you? What do they do that is helpful for you? Who do you like to go to for help when you feel worried about something?' Ask, 'Who are some of the people you help? What do you do that is helpful for them?'

3. Arrange for students to draw 2 pictures – one showing someone helping them, and the other showing them helping someone else. Work with them to label the pictures.

   Invite them to share one of their pictures in circle time and display the pictures. Save the 'helping' pictures to refer to in Topic 8, so you have a sense of who students anticipate they could use as a source of help when it is required.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

4. Inform students:

   'Next time, we will play a "let's pretend" game about help-seeking to practise how to ask for help. Remember, you can come and tell me if you or someone else has a problem, and you can also tell other teachers and wellbeing staff.'

5. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Conclude by reviewing some actions that people use to help others and some types of people they like to ask for help when they are bothered or worried.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 06

Activity 4: How to ask for help

Learning intentions

- Students will practise help-seeking conversations.

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Inform students:

   'Today we are going to play a "let's pretend" game about help-seeking. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.'

2. Ask everyone to think about a situation where a student needs some help but is a bit afraid to ask for it. Collect some ideas from the class. Choose one that is relevant to the school setting. Ask, 'What sorts of things might a student need to say when they ask for help in this situation?'

3. Provide a worked example using a volunteer. The volunteering student will play the part of a teacher (they can sit in your chair to show they are in this role). Explain that you will be the student who comes to ask the teacher for help. Read the problem and ask students to give you some ideas about how to ask the teacher for help with this problem. Role-play using some of their advice and adding positive strategies of your own. Some help-seeking situations might include asking a teacher for help in response to losing something in the schoolyard, feeling sick, forgetting to bring lunch, or some students treating someone in a mean way.

4. Once the role-play is complete, ask the observers to comment on what you did well and to make suggestions about what you could do better. If they have suggestions, replay the scene to model their suggestions.

5. Thank observers and the student who played teacher. Ask the student who played the teacher what it was like to have someone come to you for help.

6. Explain that students will now work in pairs (or groups of 3) to act out a help-seeking conversation. One person will be the teacher and one person will be the student. Help the groups to work out who will play which part. If you are working in groups of 3, 2 students can approach the teacher together to ask for help.

7. Provide the problem. Ask the 'teacher' to pretend that they are standing in the playground. Ask the 'student' to move a few paces away. When you give the signal, the 'student' will approach the 'teacher' and begin the help-seeking role-play.

8. After students have tried their scenes, ask them to swap parts. Give them a new problem and repeat the process.

9. Ask some groups to show theirs to the class.

10. Work with the class to name some of the positive behaviours they demonstrated (for example, they approached the teacher, they used a calm and strong voice, they named the problem, they explained what help they needed or they kept trying when their words wouldn't come out).

11. Arrange for some more replays to show some additional models if needed. Or ask students to replay a scene when they first tell the person they need help and tell them what the problem is.

12. As an option, arrange for students to work with new partners and select a different type of problem as the basis for the help-seeking.

13. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Reflect on the activity, asking students what they have learnt from role-playing how to ask a teacher for help. Ask them to suggest when it would be useful for them to use these skills they have been practising.

Coaching point

Building confidence to show role-plays.
If students are shy about showing their role-plays, work up to it by arranging for half the class to play their scene at once for a minute while the others observe multiple 'scenes' at once. Then swap while the other half has a turn. Repeat, but with 2 or 3 scenes played simultaneously, then eventually work up to taking short looks at individual scenes. Observing multiple scenes at once can also be helpful when time is short and all students want a chance to show their scene before the lesson ends.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- Who are the people you could turn to for help when needed?
- How do you encourage students to seek and provide assistance?

Extension activities

Using a whole-of-school approach, the school could develop a 'help committee' with students from each year level to be 'help champions' for the school. When a student is having difficulty they could let one of the champions know. The champion can take the student to a nominated teacher (possibly the wellbeing teacher) for support. Alternatively, offer a suggestions box that students can use to make requests or suggestions. A visible 'buddy bench' in the schoolyard is a similar option that schools can use to assist students who wish to seek extra support during playtime. It can be very affirming for teachers and students who are wellbeing leaders to occasionally model using the buddy bench, so that students don't attach any stigma to its use.

Talking further

- Encourage families to talk with their children about who they can talk to when they have a problem, even if it seems really big, scary or bad.
- Share copies of the help provider photos with families.
- Make sure families know who they can go to at the school when they have a problem and need help or advice.

Topic 07 Gender norms and stereotypes

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- reflect on the influence of gender norms and stereotypes
- develop an awareness of positive and negative gender norms
- challenge negative gender norms
- develop appreciation and respect for difference.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Studies show that school-based social and emotional learning, respectful relationships education and other violence prevention initiatives can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours in students.[35-37] Providing comprehensive classroom programs to all students is a key part of a school's whole-of-school approach to preventing gender-based violence and promoting positive relationships.[38] Research shows that children become aware of gender at an early age, are well aware of gender norms, and are making efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten.[39] As young children learn about gender, they may also begin to enact sexist values, or stereotypical beliefs and attitudes.[39-43] They may, for example, insist that some games are for boys and others are for girls, and actively reject peers of a different gender from certain games. This means that it is important to begin building positive gender relationships within these early years. Classroom activities can be used to help students to challenge stereotypes, to value and show respect for diversity and difference, and to learn how to apply respectful and inclusive attitudes within positive gender relationships.

An inclusive or 'gender-complex' approach can be used to challenge the oppression and disadvantage that arise from negative gender norms and in response to the gender binary.[44] In the past, it was common for educators to employ 'gender stereotypical' approaches which replicated the gender binary and associated expectations by assigning different roles and opportunities for girls and boys. As gender equality movements drew attention to the importance of equal opportunities for girls and boys, it was not uncommon for teachers to seek a 'gender-free' or 'gender-blind' approach whereby the the teacher sought to be fair by ignoring gender. However, with this approach, dominant patterns tended to persist because steps were not taken to recognise and address inequality or positions of relative privilege or disadvantage. Subsequently, 'gender-sensitive' approaches were developed.

Gender-sensitive approaches allow teachers to devise differential strategies to counteract inequity. However, this approach tends to operate within a gender binary and therefore may fail to recognise diversity of gender and sexuality. This can lead to continuation of experiences of exclusion, devaluing or discrimination on the part of those who do not fit within the dominant binary identities or gender-conforming norms. Within a gender-complex approach, a teacher employs strategies from a gender-sensitive approach but becomes additionally alert to the ways in which heteronormative and binary boy/girl or man/woman classifications can work to exclude or stigmatise those who do not fit neatly within these membership categories. To interrupt this trend, they intentionally use inclusive approaches that offer recognition and normalisation of, and respect for, all genders, including non-binary gender identities and those who do not identify with the gender assigned them at birth.[44]

Topic 07

Activity 1: Who am I? Different things to know about me

Informed by the evidence base

Children become aware from an early age that characteristics like gender, language and differences in ability are connected with privilege and power. They learn by observing the world around them and absorbing spoken and unspoken messages about the patterns that they observe.[45] As they become aware of gendered patterns of behaviour, and attempt to fit within the categories that they perceive themselves as belonging to, they can begin to limit their options, and this can affect the way they interact with peers.[45, 46] The early school years are a critical time to challenge stereotypes based on gender and other differences. It is useful to teach students how to acknowledge, explore and celebrate diverse identities. This helps them realise that their likes and dislikes do not have to be limited by their gender or any other characteristics, and that their preferences and interests can change and evolve over time.

Research shows that many people are aware of both their gender identity and their sexuality from an early age. Research conducted in Australia finds that half of young people who are same-sex attracted will know before age 12.[15] Gender-diverse young people are also likely to know from a young age that their gender is different from what has been presumed for them, even though they may not communicate this to others until late adolescence or adulthood.[16] A national study conducted into the wellbeing of trans young people in Australia found that more than half of trans young people were 13 or younger when their parents realised they were trans, or when the young person came out to their parents.[16] Additionally, children who have family members who identify as of diverse gender or sexuality can find it particularly distressing when they witness sexist, homophobic or transphobic behaviour from their peers. Approaches to addressing genderbased violence should therefore advance the importance of treating all people with respect and promoting gender equality across all genders.

Learning intentions

- Students will describe their likes and dislikes.
- Students will compare how they are similar to and different from their friends.
- Students will learn that people's likes and interests do not depend on whether they identify as boy or a girl or as gender diverse.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Bell (optional)
- Paper and coloured pencils

Method

1. Invite students to stand or sit in a circle. Explain that you are going to ask students to vote to show their answer to some questions. (Clarify the meaning of 'vote' with students as required).

Part 1: The Voting with my Hand Game

2. Model and explain that to vote, students will put their hand up if they agree, down if they don't, and in the middle (waist height) if they are not sure. Work through some examples:
   - I like ice cream.
   - I like creepy crawly insects.
   - I like big bouncy dogs.
   - My favourite colour is yellow.
   - I like playing with water.
   - My favourite game is 'chasey'.
   - I like playing in water on a freezing cold day.
   - I like eating healthy foods.
   - My favourite game is hide-and-seek.
   - My favourite food is pasta.

Part 2: The Voting with my Body Game

3. Ask students to stand for 'yes', sit for 'no', and crouch halfway if they are not sure. Work through some examples. 'One day I would like to:
   a. climb mountains
   b. jump out of a plane
   c. crawl through deep mud in the jungle
   d. hold a baby chicken
   e. own a snake

f. live in a cave all by myself

g. have my photograph taken standing next to a hungry lion

h. eat a grasshopper

i. jump off the high diving tower

j. cuddle a baby chimpanzee.

4. Ask, 'What do you notice? Does everyone always like the same things?' Make the observation that people can be similar is some ways and different in other ways.

Part 3: The Voting with my Feet Game

5. Explain:

   'Voting with my Feet is more complicated. If your favourite is Answer A, you go to one side of the room. If your favourite is Answer B, you go to the other side. If you have a different favourite you stand in the middle. If you are not sure, you also stand in the middle. You will need to move to the place in the room that shows what you agree with.'

Coaching point

Teachable moments. During the game and debriefing session look for opportunities to elicit from students or comment on patterns of similarity and diversity in preferences within the group. Point out how important it is that we respect each other's differences and preferences. Refer to key learnings from Topic 1, Activity 6: It feels good when people like us just the way we are and Topic 2, Activity 4: Celebration tree. These activities set up key concepts and language around diversity, respect and inclusion. Reinforce that it is important to be able to enjoy a variety of interests, regardless of our gender or abilities, and to enjoy the ways our friends can be different in some ways as well as similar in others. Provide constant modelling to set the scene for recognition and appreciation of diversity. This can help to interrupt gender stereotypes.

6. Review key student contributions and language from Topic 1, Activity 6: It feels good when people like us just the way we are, as this activity introduces language around gender diversity.

7. Work through the following examples with students.

8. Ask, 'Show me your favourite flavour of ice cream, A) chocolate B) vanilla or something else, stand in the middle.' Ask some of those in the 'different' area what flavour they were thinking of. Ask, 'Can people of different genders have the same favourite flavours?'

9. Ask, 'Show me your favourite equipment on the playground, A) slides B) monkey bars or something else, stand in the middle.' Ask, 'Can students of different genders have the same playground favourites?' Reinforce that people can have whichever favourite games they like, regardless of their gender.

10. Ask, 'Show me your favourite quiet activity in the classroom, A) story time B) drawing time or something else, stand in the middle.' Ask, 'What are some of the differences for those in the middle? Who also likes to do these things? Does being a boy or a girl or gender diverse mean there are rules about what you can and can't like as your favourite quiet activity?' (No, we can all have our own favourites.)

11. Ask, 'Show me your favourite colour, A) green B) red or something else, stand in the middle.' Ask, 'What other colours are in the middle? Who also likes these colours? Does being a particular gender mean there are rules about what you can have as your favourite colour?' (No, we can all have our own favourites.)

Review

Emphasise that it is okay to like the same things and that it is also okay to like different things. We can respect other people's preferences. Point out that just like the other favourites, children of the same gender can have different favourites. It is also okay for different genders to like the same or different colours, to play the same or different games, and to be friends with people of any gender.

Invite students to help you review the learning intentions by asking, 'What have we learnt about being the same and being different from each other?'

Coaching point:

Diversity is delightful. Throughout each stage of the activity, make connections with the key point that diversity is to be appreciated and respected. Teach the use of inclusive language to model ways to show respect for diversity and difference. Reinforce that it is important to be able to enjoy a variety of interests regardless of our gender, and to enjoy the ways that our friends can be different as well as similar to us. Provide constant modelling to set the scene for recognition and appreciation of diversity. This can help to interrupt gender stereotypes. Refer to the previous activity and include the students' examples when discussing stories. Read literature to the class that interrupts gender stereotypes and find authentic ways to model this yourself. Additionally, include the idea that people can change their minds about what they like to do – for example, they can play different things on different days. As we grow and change our interests and preferences can change.

Topic 07

Activity 2: Thinking about a future me

Informed by the evidence base

Imagining that something is possible can be a first step towards making it come true [47]. If we can imagine performing or freely expressing ourselves differently, then we are more likely to do so. If we can imagine ourselves treating others with respect, then we can work at this. Those with equitable or rights-affirming attitudes are more likely to be able to challenge restrictive or harmful gender norms, and less likely to endorse forms of gender-based violence.[48, 49]

Learning intentions

- Students will describe some hopes or dreams they have for their future.
- Students will recognise that the hopes and dreams they have for their future are not limited by their gender identity as a boy, girl or a gender-diverse person.

Equipment

- None

Method

1. Ask students to name different jobs and roles that they know adults have. As you receive their input, introduce and reinforce the idea that people of any gender can perform these roles. You may wish to refer to characters in stories you have read with the class or provide some images of famous people of different genders performing similar roles.
2. Invite students to cover their eyes and think about all the different things they might be able to do when they are an adult. Or they might think about an experience they want to have, something they want to do one day, or about a job they think they might like. Or they might think about some problem in the world they want to solve or something they want to do to make people healthy or happy. You might like to share some of the dreams you had when you were a child. With eyes now uncovered, ask them to share some ideas that came to mind.
3. Point out that when they grow up, they can make choices that are right for them. There are no rules that say some jobs are only for people of one gender and not for people of other genders.
4. Provide time for them to do a drawing about 'A future me'. This drawing or story will be about something they want to do when they are an adult.
5. Invite students to circle time and to take turns sharing something about their drawing, describing and explaining their wish. Encourage students to respond positively to the wishes that different classmates have. Remind students that it's wonderful to hear that different people may have different wishes.
6. During sharing time, use the opportunity to note that people of any gender might also share this interest, and that it's okay for people to have similar or different wishes. Emphasise that while some jobs and experiences may be more popular with some genders, this does not mean that people can't choose what is right for them. They can make their choices regardless of their gender. They can also change their mind and have different interests at different times in their lives.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to identify some of the things they learnt about the different hopes that people have for their future selves. Ask them if they think this activity helped them to realise that it's okay for people to have different interests and hopes.

Coaching point

Opening possibilities. The pictures created during the activity 'Thinking about a future me' may provide some indication to you as to whether students' wishes are heavily informed by gender stereotypes or not. Use this information to guide you as you seek out nonstereotypical examples and images of people performing adult roles. Read stories to the class that show characters who are not governed by restrictive gender norms.

Topic 07

Activity 3: Anyone can choose

Informed by the evidence base

Social norms are commonly accepted standards or ways of behaving or doing things. Some are positive, including showing respect or courtesy. Others are negative, like presuming that violence is excusable when someone experiences frustration. Gender norms are those social norms that are differentiated for girls and boys, and men and women. While some gender norms can be positive, like showing loyalty to family, others can be restrictive and harmful in that they limit people's life choices, lead to inequitable treatment or discrimination, and foster acceptance of gender-based violence. [46, 50] For example, gender norms influence the ways in which men and women relate, and they shape the vision that girls and boys have about their careers and futures. [46] Gender norms are also linked to health-related behaviours, with boys engaging in more risk-taking with drugs and cars, and girls experiencing higher rates of anxiety and body image distress.[46, 51]

Children benefit from activities that assist them to challenge the limiting nature of gender norms. Gender norms influence beliefs about emotional experience and self-expression. For example, men and boys are expected to not express their feelings of vulnerability and are less likely to seek help if they are experiencing mental health problems.[52] Girls can be judged in relation to their appearance and socialised to expect that they should defer to men.[53] Therefore, regardless of their gender, dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity can limit the possibilities that children see for themselves and others, influencing their attitudes, behaviour, relationships, selfimage and life choices.

Learning intentions

- Students will talk about what to do if someone tells them that they can't do something because of their gender.

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Explain that students will play a game to show that the ways people help out at home do not have to be organised according to their gender.
2. Explain how to play the Anyone Can Miming Game. First, create and teach the moves below:
   - Shush the baby (arms cradling and rocking)
   - Take out the rubbish (one hand holding nose and one with a bag held high)
   - Clean the dishes (wiping motion)
   - Play with others (a smiling face and welcoming hands)
   - Read a story (hold up hands in shape of an open book)
   - Control their anger (a frozen statue)
3. Have a practise as a class before starting the game.
4. Play the game. Before each rotation of the game, call out 'Anyone can (for example, shush the baby)' and then everyone, including you, mimes the instruction.
5. As the game progresses, you can stop modelling the action. Once students have shown they know all the moves, an option is to invite students to add some new moves that suggest an action that a person of any gender can do.
6. Pose the following problem. 'Sometimes people might tell us we can't do something, just because we are a girl, a boy or gender diverse. They might say it like it is a rule (when it is not) or make fun of us for doing something.' Lead the class to respond to the examples on the next page.

Scenario 1

Ari wore his new pink shirt to school. A student from another class went up to him and said, 'Boys can't wear pink! Only girls can.' Ask, 'Is this true? What could Ari do or say?' Responses might include, 'Yes I can, because people can wear any colour they like' or 'Lots of men wear pink to work out at the gym, and my dad does too.'

Scenario 2

Lowanna was building in the construction corner. Some boys said, 'Girls can't play here. This corner is for boys only!' Ask, 'Is it true that girls are not allowed to do construction? What could Lowanna do or say?' (Responses might include, 'Yes I can, because I like building. Building is for everyone, not just for boys!. ' or 'My aunty is a builder and one day I am going to be one too!')

Scenario 3

Stacey is a transgender girl. She dresses like the other girls, plays with them and everything seems fine. But one day, Lara says Stacey should be in the boys' team at sports, not the girls' team. Ask, 'Is it true that Stacey would not be allowed to be in the girls' team with the other girls? What could Stacey do or say?' Responses might include, 'Yes I can play with the girls' team because I am a girl!' or 'Go and ask the teacher if you don't believe me. Our teacher says I belong in the girls team.'

Scenario 4

Rashid is playing on the adventure playground with his friends Poh and Ella. Toby walks up and laughs, chanting 'Rashid's a girl, 'cos he plays with girls! Ha, ha!' Ask, 'Is it true that people have to play in separate boy and girl groups? What could Rashid do or say?' Responses might include, 'People can play with whoever they want' or 'You can play too if you want to.'

Scenario 5

Yindi has short hair. She likes to wear shorts to school every day, so that she can play on the balance beams and monkey bars in the adventure playground. Some of the girls in her class tease her and say, 'You look like a boy.' When it's mat time or they're doing group work, the girls try not to sit near her.

Ask, 'Is it true that people can't wear shorts or have their hair short if they are a girl? What could Yindi do or say?' Responses might include, 'People can wear whatever they want' or 'People can have different hair styles – I choose short hair.'

Emphasise that if students regularly experience treatment in class or in the playground that is like the scenarios (forms of gender policing), they should ask their teacher for help to deal with the situation, because it is not fair for people to do this. We should all be gender fair. This means we treat everyone as equal.

Review

Conclude the activity by reviewing the learning intentions. Ask students to comment on some of the key activities they came up with that everyone likes to do (regardless of gender). Ask if students have learnt some things that they could say if someone tells them (or their friend) that they can't do something just because of their gender.

Coaching point

Gender fair. Some students may have very strong views about what it is appropriate for boys, girls and gender-diverse students to do. A 'gender-fair' or rights-based approach is useful. Encourage students to challenge the limiting nature of gender labels by focusing on the positives – identifying what anyone, including boys, girls and gender-diverse students, can do, rather than what they can't. Provide books that include characters who are not limited by gender stereotypes and who provide positive role models for children of all genders. Be alert that researchers have found that most central characters in children's fiction have been boys, and that boys and girls are often portrayed in stereotypical ways. Gender-nonconforming characters have typically been absent. This means that attention is needed when selecting texts to correct this imbalance.

To reinforce the understanding that girls, boys, men, women and gender-diverse people can choose to do or be anything that they would like to be, regardless of their gender, collect images and stories of people in the community, for example, women's sports teams, women who are firefighters or doctors, trans and gender-diverse personalities or professionals, men who are childcare workers, receptionists, family carers and so on. Refer to these when relevant during the school day.

Topic 07

Activity 4: Everyone can be strong and gentle

Informed by the evidence base

Gender norms influence beliefs about emotional experience and self-expression. For example, men and boys are expected to not express their feelings of vulnerability and sadness because 'boys are tough' and 'boys don't cry'.[45] Therefore, dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity can limit the possibilities that children see for themselves and others, influencing their behaviour and relationships. This activity challenges gender norms by demonstrating that both girls and boys can be strong and gentle, and by teaching students that both boys and girls need to be able to exercise self-control. This helps to challenge the stereotype that men cannot control their anger and are entitled to use aggression. It sets the same standards for self-control for all, regardless of gender.

Gender norms can influence what children presume to be permissible within their play. [54] For example, boys can be socialised to presume that forms of physical violence are permissible to exhibit strength and prowess in play. Sometimes adults are more inclined to excuse violence perpetrated by boys on other boys, justifying it as male bonding, rather than seeing it as a mechanism for dominance. Sometimes adults are more inclined to dismiss the hurtful nature of verbal forms of violence perpetrated by girls on other girls, dismissing it as 'gossiping'. Classroom activities can question and challenge gender norms around the acceptability of verbal and physical aggression in play. This in turn can help to create new possibilities for more positive peer relationships.

Learning intentions

- Students will practise being strong and gentle at the same time.
- Students will talk about when it is important to be able to be both strong and gentle at the same time.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Bell (optional – you can use a hand clap pattern instead)

Method

1. Explain that we all need to know how and when to be strong, and how and when to be gentle. We can even be strong and gentle at the same time.
2. Introduce the Strong and Gentle Game for self-control. In this game the teacher calls out the move and students mime it. Students listen for the bell that tells them to stop. They will switch between strong and gentle scenarios, such as the following:
   - Show me a strong mountain-climbing person.
   - Show me how you gently stroke a frightened kitten.
   - Show me a strong running-on-the-spot-in-a-hurry person.
   - Show me how you gently and very, very slowly carry a plate with a big wobbly cake on it across the room.
   - Show me how strong you are when you carry a big heavy bag of shopping up some big stairs.
   - Show me how gentle you are when you dust the sand off the knees of a toddler who just fell over.
   - Show me how you can be strong and gentle at the same time, when you ask someone if they are okay, even though you feel a bit shy.
   - Show me how you can be strong and gentle at the same time, when someone lets you hold their brand new baby.

3. Ask the following:
    - 'Can everyone be strong?'
    - 'Can everyone be gentle?'
    - 'When do we need to be gentle?'
    - 'When do we need to be strong?'
    - 'Can women, girls, boys, men and gender-diverse people all be strong?'
    - 'Can women, girls, boys, men and gender-diverse people all be gentle?'
    - 'Can everyone in this class be both strong and gentle?'
4. Conclude by saying that it's important that we all know when to be strong and when to be gentle, and we need to make sure we do not hurt anyone when we are being strong. 'Sometimes you might hear people saying that boys can't be gentle, or girls can't be strong. But we know that is not true. Everyone, regardless of gender, can be both strong and gentle. We must all know how and when to be strong, and how and when to be gentle. And sometimes, we need to be both at once.'
5. Invite students to move back to their desks in a way that is both strong and gentle. It will be a slow-motion walk, as if they were walking on sharp stones in bare feet and must tread very lightly, while also being strong about how sharp the stones are.
6. When they are back in their seats, provide positive reinforcement to students about their selfcontrol. Explain, 'We call it 'self-control' when people can stay in charge of their bodies like that. Self-control is a mix of strong and gentle. You must be strong to control your feelings and your body, and gentle in the way you move and speak.'

Coaching point

Reinforcing learning intentions. Throughout the school day look for opportunities to catch students displaying self-control. Comment on this to reinforce the concept, and provide positive feedback on the effort it can take to show self-control by using a combination of both strong and gentle behaviour.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students what they have done to show they know how to be both strong and gentle

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Teacher note

Teachers should read the content advice guidance in the Introduction well in advance, plan ahead with their school leadership team and colleagues, and revisit protocols for management of students who may show distress or engage in help-seeking. Inform students about upcoming content for Topic 8 in case they want to talk to a teacher, parent or carer in advance of or in response to the activities.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How do you support students to feel free to follow their interests without being limited by stereotypical gender norms?
- What books and images do you have in your classroom that demonstrate non-stereotypical gendering of children and adults?
- What approach do you take to enable students from same-gender families to feel comfortable to talk about who is in their family?
- Does your school's anti-bullying or diversity policy specifically address harassment or discrimination based on sexuality, gender identity or intersex status?

Extension activities

- Read some stories to the class that include characters who are not limited by gender norms.
- Select and read to the class some developmentally appropriate literature that challenges gender norms.

Talking further

- Invite students to talk to parents, carer or older siblings at home about what their favourite toys, games and activities were when they were 5 or 6 years old.
- Invite students to ask their parents or carers about some of the different jobs or roles held by adults they know, and whether these jobs can be done by people of any gender.
- Encourage students to ask parents, carers or extended family about whether things have changed at all for boys, girls, men, women and gender-diverse individuals

Topic 08 Positive gender relationships

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- develop an understanding of the negative impacts of gender-based violence
- develop an understanding of the positive impact of respectful gender relationships
- practise enacting skills to support positive peer relationships
- practise strategies they can use to help keep themselves safe or seek help in situations involving gender-based violence.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Patterns of gender-based violence in society affect children and young people. Family violence includes a range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur in families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. Family violence is often witnessed by the children who live in the household.[55] Children are victims of family violence when they hear, witness or are exposed to the effects of family violence on a family member as well as when the violence is directed towards them. In Australia, domestic, family and sexual violence is found across all cultures, ages and socio-economic groups, but the majority of those who experience these forms of violence are women.[56] Children who witness family violence are negatively affected. They are also more likely to be affected by violence as adults – either as victims of partner violence or as perpetrators of violence against children or partners. Some research shows that boys who witness their father use violence against their mother are up to 5 times more likely to use violence against their own partner when they grow up.[57, 58]

Research highlights that one of the most consistent predictors of the perpetration of violence against women at an individual level is a traditional view about gender roles and relationships.[49] A body of research has demonstrated that cultural understandings of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' operate as normative discourses (or 'scripts') that shape people's identities, expectations and behaviours, regardless of their gender or sexuality. These discourses and norms intersect with race, class, age and other lines of identity and difference to shape what people presume to be desirable and permissible in relation to their social interactions.[59-62]

Some boys and men can become defensive in response to initiatives addressing prevention of gender-based violence. They may feel that the focus on the violence perpetrated by some men is an attack on men in general and on their own personal identity or integrity. This can lead to the presumption that they are being individually blamed or accused, or that they are being expected to redress a wrong they did not perpetrate. In response, there can be an urge to defend one's membership group, to challenge the veracity of the data, to disbelieve the scale or impact of the problem, or to attribute blame on the victims themselves. [63] A combination of relevant and inclusive scenarios and information can help to build recognition of the effects of violence on targets and on witnesses.

Studies show that school-based social and emotional learning, violence prevention and respectful relationships initiatives can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours in students [22, 64-66]. In effective respectful relationships programs, children and young people learn about the ways in which power relations inform gender relationships. They learn how to translate a belief in respect for others into respectful communicative practises. This requires a focus on skills as well as attitudes. Studies show that effective programs employ participatory and interactive pedagogy. Participatory pedagogies stimulate the critical thinking necessary to interrogate social norms and the skills development needed to engage in a positive way with others.[67]

High rates of victimisation and associated trauma mean that in any class there will likely be students who have been affected by family violence or sexual violence. In any school, there will also be a proportion of staff affected. Some of those affected may find the focus on this material to be particularly sensitive. They may also be without established means of support, as many people do not disclose that they have suffered abuse or sexual violence in childhood or beyond.[68] Disclosures about bullying, family violence and sexual abuse can increase during or following provision of such programs, with some disclosures made to educators, while other students turn to helplines [69]. Given this likelihood, it's important that clear protocols and pathways for teacher response are clearly established in advance, that wellbeing staff are made aware of the timing of program delivery, and that students are provided with information about trusted external help sources that they may access by phone or online.

Trauma-informed approaches to education recommend that teachers be informed about the strategies that may be useful to assist those affected to settle, connect and participate in class. Effective strategies include providing opportunities for student voice, choice and control, establishing positive and caring relationships, understanding the effects of trauma, and using proactive approaches to provide wellbeing support.[70] To signal recognition of the possible effects of trauma being triggered, and to promote awareness of participation options and further support, it is appropriate to provide content advice – both in advance and at the commencement of lessons addressing gender-based violence. Content advice can include description of options for levels of participation and information about how to access support within and beyond the school.

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Some students may have direct experience of the sensitive issues being addressed in this resource. Content advice is provided to support the wellbeing and safety of those students.

Advise students that in this section they will focus on what it can be like if people are mean or hurtful to someone, including when this takes the form of violence and gender-based violence. This means discussing scenarios that focus on how other people must respect their body boundaries, and not hurt, scare or trick them into keeping secrets that are not safe. There will also be activities that focus on how to help others or to get help for yourself if people are treating you badly.

Reinforce the importance of respectful conversations. Revisit the class agreements as appropriate (see guidance in the learning activities provided in the introductory section of this resource).

Sample script for content advice for Topic 8:

Across the next few lessons we will be talking about what it can be like if people are mean or hurtful to someone. In some of the stories and scenarios we hear, there will be children who have been called mean names, or hurt or left out. Sometimes this is because other children have done this to them. Sometimes a child has been hurt by an older child or an adult. We will learn more about how to help our friends if this has happened to them. We will also learn more about how to ask for help if this happens to us.

We will also be talking about 'good' secrets and 'bad' secrets. A bad secret is when someone has been hurting or bothering you and they make you promise not to tell anyone about this.

We want to keep everyone safe, and that is why we will do these lessons.

Sometimes, when we hear a story about omeone being unsafe, or hurt, it might make us feel a bit wobbly inside. Before we start each lesson, I will let you know if there will be scenarios about children who have been hurt, left out or called mean names. If you find that the lessons make you feel upset or wobbly, your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get support. If a topic is making you feel wobbly any time, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else, here at school or at home, and that is also okay.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point

Self-care when teaching about sensitive issues. Teaching about sensitive issues can cause teachers to reflect on situations affecting them personally or people they are close to. If you want to seek help on your own behalf, a list of support services can be found in the 'Teacher professional preparedness and support' section of the Introduction.

Topic 08

Activity 1: Fair and friendly play

Informed by the evidence base

It is important to work with children from an early age to consider the difference between fair and friendly play and play that is violent or too rough. This sets the scene for understanding that violence is never acceptable and is definitely not a mode of resolving a relationship problem.[38, 71] Some gender norms encourage tolerance of higher levels of violence when perpetrated by boys on boys, dismissing violent acts as an inevitable sign that 'boys will be boys'. Violence data indicates that many boys are the victims of violence perpetrated by other boys. It is important to set the same nonviolent standards for all genders. It is also important to establish the expectation that all children can learn the self-control needed to ensure that they do not resort to violence to get their own way or to deal with their frustration.

Studies show that school-based social and emotional learning, Respectful Relationships Education and other violence prevention initiatives can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours in students [22, 64-66]. In effective programs, students learn how to translate a belief in respect for others into respectful communicative practises. This requires a focus on skills as well as attitudes. Studies show that effective programs employ participatory and interactive pedagogy. Participatory pedagogies stimulate the critical thinking necessary to interrogate social norms and to develop the social skills needed in daily life.[67]

High rates of victimisation and associated trauma mean that in any class there will likely be students who have been affected by family violence or sexual violence. In any school, there will also be a proportion of staff affected. Some of those affected may find the focus on this material particularly sensitive. They may also be without established means of support, as many people do not disclose that they have suffered abuse or sexual violence in childhood or beyond.[68] Disclosures about bullying, family violence and sexual abuse can increase during or following provision of such programs, with some disclosures made to educators, while other students turn to helplines [69]. Given this likelihood, is important that clear protocols and pathways for teacher response are clearly established in advance, that wellbeing staff are made aware of the timing of program delivery, and that students are provided with information about trusted external help sources that they may access by phone or online.

Trauma-informed approaches to education recommend that teachers be informed about the strategies that may be useful to assist those affected to settle, connect and participate in class. Effective strategies include providing opportunities for student voice, choice and control, establishing positive and caring relationships, understanding the effects of trauma, and using proactive approaches to provide wellbeing support.[70] To signal recognition of the possible effects of trauma being triggered, and to promote awareness of participation options and further support, it is appropriate to provide content advice – both in advance and at the commencement of lessons addressing gender-based violence. Content advice can include description of options for levels of participation and information about how to access support within and beyond the school.

Learning intentions

- Students will review the rules of fair play that are used in some children's games.
- Students will describe what being 'mean' and 'friendly' can look or sound like when people are playing together.
- Students will talk about how all students, regardless of gender, can play in a fair, inclusive and friendly way.

Equipment

- Room to move

Method

1. Invite students to talk about the games they play in the schoolyard.
2. Ask some students what it means when we say we include others, for example we include someone in our game. Clarify that this means we help them to join in. The word 'inclusive' means we are including others, or helping them to join in.

3. Once they have described some of their games, ask the following:

- 'How do people make sure that the games are fair for everyone?'
- 'What could being friendly and inclusive look like in these games?' Consider in relation to a number of common games like playing in the sandpit or adventure playground, playing ball, 'chasey' and 'make-believe'.
- 'What could being mean look like or sound like in these games?'

4. Remind students that in previous lessons they learnt about being 'gender fair', which meant helping students of all genders play together kindly.
5. Affirm that everyone can choose to play in a fair and friendly way when playing together, not in a mean way.
6. Announce that you will now play a game, and at the end of the game the class will talk about how well they think they did to play together in a fair and friendly way.
7. Teach students to play duck, duck, goose (or choose an alternative game of your choice which permits everyone to play at once).

How to play duck, duck goose

The players sit in a circle facing inwards. They put their hands behind their back. One player is chosen to be the 'tapper' and walks around the outside of the circle. As the tapper walks around, they touch each player gently on the hand while saying, 'Duck, duck, duck'. At some point the tapper will tap a player and say 'Goose'.

The goose then jumps up and chases the tapper around the circle. The tapper in turn tries to get all the way back to the goose's spot without being caught. If the tapper gets home safely, the goose becomes the new tapper and the game starts again. If the goose catches the tapper, the game starts again with the same tapper.

8. After the game, ask students to report on whether they were able to play in a fair and friendly way. (For example, sharing turns by not taking too long to call goose if you are the tapper, not choosing just your friends or people of the same gender when you are the tapper, offering to share turns if you already had a turn, letting people have another go if they did not remember how to play, or being patient to wait your turn.)
9. Inform students:

   'In our next lesson we will be talking about violence, including when people say mean things to others or try to hurt them. Remember, you can come and tell me if this worries you, if you or someone else has a problem. Or you can also tell other teachers and wellbeing staff.'

Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Invite students to review the learning intentions by describing some of the ways they can be fair and friendly when working and playing with each other.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Coaching point

Playtime check-ups. Make regular opportunities to check in with students about how they are managing to 'play fair' and play 'gender fair' during break times. Reflect on how to ensure gender-fair play. Avoid use of a 'boys will be boys' script as this will signal that this is an acceptable performance of masculinity. Additionally, help students to consider alternative options if you observe that girls, members of minority groups and students with disabilities acquiesce when dominant students take over a play space. To simply accept these norms may erroneously signal to students that boys or certain groups are entitled to more than their share of resources and should not be expected to exert the same control over their bodies as others.

Topic 08

Activity 2: What is fair? What is violence?

Informed by the evidence base

A substantial body of research shows that social and emotional learning programs have many benefits, including in relation to improved student behaviour, prevention of bullying and harassment.[72] and reductions in homophobic name-calling and sexual harassment.[73] Students who participate in these programs are also more likely to relate in positive and inclusive ways to those classmates who experience emotional and behavioural challenges.[74]

Effective respectful relationships programs use a combination of critical-thinking and collaborative learning activities.[75] The collaborative learning tasks provide structured opportunities for students to mix across friendship and gender divides, and further develop their capacity to treat each other with respect. The critical-thinking activities provide opportunities for students to challenge gender norms and stereotypes which are associated with acceptance or normalisation of gender-based violence. As part of this process, it is important to name the different behaviours that constitute forms of gender-based violence, to consider the effects these actions can have on others, and to develop awareness of the ways that certain gender norms may lead to acceptance or normalisation of these forms of behaviour.

Learning intentions

- Students will identify the emotions people can have when others are being mean or violent.
- Students will describe the actions or words that fit with the words 'friendly' and 'fair'.

Equipment

- A cheerful game, or cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Coaching point

Protecting privacy. In discussing the scenarios, students may make comparisons with their own experience. Ensure that they do not name the people involved when sharing from their own experience. Explain to them it is best not to use the classroom as a place to discuss worrying things that have happened at home or elsewhere. This is better done when everyone else in the class is not part of the conversation. It is better to tell that story to the teacher in a more private way. Use reminders at the start of the activity when you anticipate this might happen.

Protective interrupting is also a strategy that teachers can use, in an assertive and respectful way, to interrupt students who begin to disclose private or sensitive information about themselves or others. It is a teaching strategy designed to protect the person telling the story from disclosing in front of the class (redirecting students to a more supported context for disclosure instead), other people in the story from having their experiences discussed in a public setting, students from experiencing any distress at hearing the disclosure, and the fidelity of the lesson. If a student begins to disclose private information about themselves or others in the group space, respectfully interrupt the student by acknowledging their contribution and preventing further disclosure, for example, 'Thank you. It sounds as though you have something important to talk about. Let's chat about this after the lesson when we can talk properly.' Prioritise meeting with the student(s) in a more private, safe space within the school as soon as possible.

Coaching point

Label the behaviour, not the person. When discussing violence, ensure that you model approaches to naming the behaviour, rather than labelling the person. This emphasises that the behaviour is a choice and not an integral part of someone's identity. For example, talk about 'the person who bullied someone' rather than 'the bully'. Talk about 'the person who used sexual violence against another' rather than 'the perpetrator'. Ensure that you identify that this behaviour is directed towards another person, as interpersonal violence is violence intentionally directed towards another. Careful attention to your language will help to draw attention both to the choice made by someone to use violence, and to the impact of the violence on others. It is important that students learn that people make a choice to use violence, and that if they do choose to be violent towards others, it has negative effects on the person experiencing violence, on others around them, and on the person who uses the violence.

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   'Today we will be talking about violence, including when people say mean things to others or try to hurt them. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.'

2. Invite students to sit in a circle. Read the first scenario aloud: 'One day some friends were playing together in the schoolyard and one friend said. "I don't like it when you do that in our game. You're being too rough."'Invite a trio to come out and act the moment of the scene when the friend objects to the rough play. Leave them in place as the focus for the discussion.

3. Ask the class, 'What might the playmate have been doing that was too rough?' Brainstorm the 'too rough' behaviours, ensuring students describe but do not re-enact them.

4. Ask, 'How might these rough behaviours make the other person feel?' Ask students who suggest some emotions (for example, sad, scared, nervous or angry) to make an 'emotions' statue, arranging their statue behind the 'victim'. Sum up the suggestions by pointing to all the 'emotions' statues and acknowledging that this is how we can feel when people are mean or too rough or violent. Thank the 'emotions' statues for helping to show how it can affect us when other people are too rough.

Coaching point

Terminology. Some people prefer to use the word 'target' rather than 'victim' to imply that the person who used violence made a choice and that their act was deliberate. Some prefer to use the words 'survivor' or 'victim-survivor' rather than the word 'victim' as they find this word more suggestive of strength and recovery. Others prefer 'victim' as suggesting the innocence of the targeted party. It is important to avoid use of labels like 'bully', or 'perpetrator', as that suggests an identity. Instead, comment on the behaviour of the person doing the wrong thing.

5. Explain that there is a word we can use for being 'mean' and being too rough or hurting people on purpose. We can call it 'violence'. Ask students to say the word. Thank all the 'statues' who showed the types of emotions people can feel when others are being too rough.

6. Read a second scenario aloud: 'One day in the playground some friends are playing happily together. The bell rings, so they stop playing, and one of them says, "I like playing with you. We have fun when we play together."'

7. Ask a pair to model this scenario in the center of the circle. Leave them there to remind students of the interaction.

8. Ask the class, 'What might the friends have been doing that meant they were so good to play with?' Make links to the previous lesson, 'Fair and friendly play'. Ask, 'How might all these actions make their friend feel?' Ask students who suggest these emotions (for example, happy, proud or excited) to come and make an 'emotions' statue, arranging their statues around the friends.

9. Summarise by stating that you have heard suggestions like taking turns, joining in, sharing, encouraging, helping, smiling and talking as friendly and fair ways to play. Explain that there are some useful words we can use to sum this up. Like 'fair' – this friend was being fair. And 'respect' – this friend showed respect.

10. Make some points about gender and fair play:

    - 'Can people of any gender be too rough or violent sometimes?' (Yes) 'Is this okay?' (No)
    - 'Can people of any gender play together in a fair and friendly way?' (Yes)

11. Summarise some of the key messages from the activity:

    Today the class have talked about fair play. We have learnt that everyone, of every gender, should play fair and not be violent. Remember our lesson on being strong and gentle? We said that being both strong and gentle at the same time gives us self-control. Who can show us strong and gentle walking in slow motion on sharp stones?

12. Select some volunteers to demonstrate. Tell them:

    That is self-control. We all need our self-control when we feel like being too rough or violent. Our selfcontrol is what we use to stop us from hitting people or biting or spitting or yelling or snatching or throwing things at them.

13. Say to the class:

    Today, I want you to show me how you walk in slow motion on tippy toes with one hand on your mouth, and the other hand behind your back. See – like this. I have my hand on my mouth to show I can have self-control about what I say to people. I don't say mean things. I have one hand behind my back to show I don't hurt people. I am on tippy toes to show that sometimes I have to try extra hard to be extra strong and gentle in my self-control. Let's see how you stand on tippy toes, one hand behind, one on your mouth. Now, off you go in slow motion.

14. Inform students:

    'In our next lesson we will be talking about what it is like to be treated unfairly or disrespectfully. We will also work out what to do if others treat someone unfairly.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get support.'

15. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

16. Provide a fun and energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Optional extension activity

17. Take the class into the school playground and visit several different popular play spaces. Arrange for students to demonstrate how to play in a fair and friendly way in these different places. Arrange for the class to play a game together in the yard. Choose from one of the examples provided below or an alternative game of your choice. Talk with them about how the game can help them to enjoy being with each other and to play with people they do not usually play with in the yard. Ensure that students of all genders are given the opportunity to be the characters 'farmer', 'Wolfie' or 'Gremlin'.

Examples of traditional games to play in the playground

Farmer, farmer, may we cross your golden river?

One player is named the farmer and stands in the middle of a designated area of the playground. The other players stand in a row behind the line, about 10 metres away from the farmer. A designated 'home' area is agreed, usually the opposite end of the play area.

The players call out 'Farmer, farmer, may we cross your golden river?'

The farmer replies, 'Not unless you have the colour [colour] on.'

Those players lucky enough to have the colour on may cross the playground safely to the designated home area.

The farmer then counts to 5. On 5, other players must walk or run home while the farmer tries to catch them. Anyone who is caught helps the farmer to choose what colour the players should be wearing next to be able to cross the river.

The game continues with a different colour each time until the last player is caught, and they become the farmer for another round of the game.

What's the time, Wolfie?

One player is chosen to be Wolfie.

The other players stand in a line on the opposite end of the playground, 10 to 12 metres away from Wolfie. This line is 'home'

Wolfie stands with their back to them.

The players call, 'What's the time Wolfie?'

Wolfie replies with a time (for example, 4 o'clock).

The players move forward the same number of steps (4 steps for 4 o'clock)

The game continues until Wolfie thinks the players are close enough to catch. After being asked the time again, Wolfie replies, 'Dinnertime!' then turns and chases the players. The first player caught becomes Wolfie.

If Wolfie does not catch anyone, the game starts again with the same person as Wolfie.

If a player reaches Wolfie before dinnertime, they tap Wolfie on the shoulder and run for home. If the player gets home then they are safe. If they are caught, they become Wolfie.

Gremlin's footsteps

Players stand at 'home' base in a line. The gremlin stands with their back to them, about 10 metres away.

The players creep forward, but when the gremlin whirls around they must stop moving and freeze. If the gremlin sees any of them moving, the gremlin sends them back to the starting line again. The gremlin turns their back on the players again and the players continue to creep forward.

The player who is the first to touch the gremlin on the shoulder becomes the next gremlin.

You may need to set a suitable time limit (or silent counting time) to regulate the frequency of the gremlin turning around, otherwise they may spend most of the time facing the players searching for movement.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Review

To review the learning intentions with the students, ask them what they did in the lesson to help them remember that it is always important to play in a fair and friendly way.

Coaching point

What respect looks like. A focus on behaviours or how people can show respect can be more empowering than a focus on qualities. 'I wait my turn' signals more clearly what is expected than 'I am patient'. It is important to be able to name the behaviours that constitute disrespect and those that are respectful. This specificity helps peers and teachers to address comments like, 'I was only joking' in an educative way. Such comments work to erase or excuse gender-based harassment and violence. Naming the behaviour can be an important first step in signalling that it is unacceptable, disrespectful, hurtful or harmful. Equally, it is important to be able to name positive behaviour to provide endorsement for and encouragement of these behaviours. Use a strengths-based approach to behaviour management, aiming to find 5 to 8 positives to acknowledge for any negative behaviour that must be named. (For example, 'It's good to see you ready and listening', 'I see you have already made a start' or 'It's great to see you have all lined up so quickly.')

Topic 08

Activity 3: Witnessing school-related gender-based violence

Informed by the evidence base

Violence against women is a profound problem in Australia, with significant social, health, economic and other consequences.[76] While it is often not labelled as such, the kind of bullying that students experience at school is often gendered in nature. Moreover, bullying and violence in school often mirrors the types of gender violence that take place in the broader community. This activity introduces scenarios where children experience bullying based on their gender. Students consider the impact of these behaviours and practise assertive responses, including peer support and help-seeking. Research shows that many children are reluctant to seek help in the face of bullying[77] or to intervene as an upstander,[64] highlighting the importance of comprehensive efforts to normalise and practise help-seeking.

Learning intentions

- Students will learn what is meant by the term 'gender-based violence'.
- Students will name some types of gender-based violence.
- Students will suggest ways that classmates can help each other to be fair and friendly.

Equipment

- Room to move
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   Today we will be talking about what it is like to be treated unfairly or disrespectfully. We will also work out what to do if others treat someone unfairly. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Bring students together for circle time. Explain to students that you are about to tell a story about Su-Lee, who went to a school where she couldn't play in the sandpit because some boys complained, just because she was a girl. Tell students that at the end of the story, students will use what they have learnt in previous activities to try and help Su-Lee.

Scenario: Sue-Lee

Su-Lee loved the sand. She loved digging, building sandcastles and creating roads and paths in the sand. She was very good at making enormous sandcastles.

Su-Lee was so excited when she went to visit her new school because it had a huge sandpit.

On her first day of school, Su-Lee went straight to the sandpit at lunchtime. She picked a blue spade from the bucket and started to build a sandcastle. As it started to grow, 3 boys who were playing there became mean. Josh said, 'Hey, this sandpit is only for boys.' Su-Lee said, 'No, everyone can play in the sandpit.' Luca stood on her sandcastle and smashed it down. Su-Lee went to the teacher on yard duty. The teacher came with her to the sandpit and said to the boys 'This sandpit is for everyone to play in.' The boys said, 'Okay.'

The next day at lunchtime, Su-Lee ran to the sandpit. She went to get a spade, but they were all gone. She noticed there were 2 spades beside Luca. She asked Luca if she could use one of them. He said 'No! These spades are for the boys. See, they're blue.' Su-Lee said, 'That's not fair. All you boys have spades and this one is a spare.' Luca said, 'Blue is for boys. There are no pink spades. You should go play with the girls!' His yelling scared Su-Lee, and she thought he might even hit her with the spades. Su-Lee ran away and sat on the seat. Her heart was pounding and she felt like she was going to cry.

3. Discuss the story with students. Ask the following:
   - 'Who was stopping Su-Lee from playing in the sandpit?'
   - 'Was this fair and friendly?'
   - 'What did they do that was mean or violent?'
   - 'How might other students help make it safe and friendly for Su-Lee?'
   - 'What do some of the students in this story need to learn about how to be gender fair?'
   - 'What can other students do to help them to learn this?'
4. Explain that, in this example, some people have not been gender fair. They have been mean or violent because of someone's gender. We can call that 'gender-based violence'.
5. Introduce a second story. Alert students that, in this story, some girls are being mean to a boy who wants to play, just because he is a boy.

Scenario: Marcus

Anna, Fu and Rashida have been playing an elves-and-dragons game in the schoolyard. They make little houses for the elves, and play make-believe games where the elves fight dragons and have special parties. Marcus has watched them play, and he would really like to join in. One day he just starts to join in by making a new elf house just next to where they are playing. The girls tell him to stop. They say he can't join in because their game is just for girls. They push his elf house down and tell him to go away.

6. Discuss the story with students. Ask the following:
   - 'Who was stopping Marcus from joining the elves-and-dragons game?'
   - 'Was this fair and friendly?'
   - 'What did some students do that was mean or violent?'
   - 'How might other students help make it safe and friendly for Marcus?'
   - 'What do some students need to learn about how to be gender fair?'
   - 'What can other students do to help them to learn this?'
7. Reiterate that, in this example, some people have not been gender fair. They have been mean or violent because of someone's gender. We call this 'gender-based violence'.
8. Emphasise that sometimes, when we feel very upset about the way someone is treating us, or the way someone is treating someone else, we need to ask for help. Review the help-seeking strategies introduced in Topic 6: Help-seeking (for example, speaking in a calm strong voice, naming the problem or explaining what help you need).
9. Invite a pair of students to role-play asking a teacher to help Su-Lee or Marcus. Encourage the class to give suggestions before the volunteers show their help-seeking approach.
10. Provide feedback and add to the help-seeking suggestions.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

11. Inform students:

    'In our next lesson we will be learning about the private parts of our body. We will learn that our bodies are our own, and we don't have to let people touch them or hurt them.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

    Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

- To review the learning intentions, ask students what they have done in this lesson that reminds them of how important it is to be gender fair or to treat everyone in a friendly and respectful way, regardless of their gender.
- Provide a fun energising activity following review of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Coaching point

Be alert. This activity can prompt students to reconnect to their own experiences of exclusion or violence, so be alert to the need to end on a positive note about what they can do. Also be alert to any signs that there is a need to have a follow-up conversation with individual students who may have experienced bullying or violence. Revisit activities from previous topics (for example, Positive coping, Problem-solving and Help-seeking). In particular, refer to Topic 6, Activity 4: How to ask for help.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 08

Activity 4: What are clothes for?

Informed by the evidence base

Children can learn that when people hurt someone on purpose, it is called violence. The opposite of abuse and violence is to care, protect and respect. Child protection means keeping children safe from harm or danger. Parents, carers and teachers are all obligated to help keep children safe from harm. Children are more likely to be able to disclose family violence or sexual abuse within safe, caring spaces where adults ask children about their circumstances, notice and ask about their struggles and listen to their concerns.[78] Research shows significant knowledge gains and improved self-protective behaviours as a result of teaching students about their rights to be safe from abuse and their right to say no or to tell, even when it is someone in authority over them who abuses them.[79-82] To be able to use protective responses or to self-report, children need to understand that they have the right to say no.

Learning intentions

- Students will list the different ways that clothes protect the body.
- Students will identify clothes that are used to cover the more private parts of the body.

Equipment

- Drawing of a body outline
- A puppet or soft toy (to be the character 'Sam')
- A cheerful game, or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   'Today we will be learning about the private parts of our body. We will learn that our bodies are our own, and we don't have to let people touch them or hurt them. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.'

2. Introduce the class to Sam (a puppet or soft toy). Tell students that today they are going to help Sam to learn about what clothes are for. Say to the class, 'Sam has fur, so they don't wear clothes. Who can tell Sam what we use clothes for?

3. 'Ask students to suggest clothes that people might wear in different conditions or for different occasions.

   - 'What sorts of clothes do people need on a hot day?'
   - 'If people are playing sports, what sorts of clothes do they like to use?'
   - 'What about if people go swimming?'
   - 'What about if people take a shower or bath?'
   - 'What if they are going to a party or special celebration?'

4. Reinforce the students' knowledge that clothes help to protect the body and keep it healthy and safe:

   We wear clothes to keep us warm when it is cold, or dry when it is raining. Some clothes help to protect us from the hot sun. Some clothes are good for sport because they let us move easily. Sometimes we wear special clothes for special occasions. We wear uniforms for school or for jobs like being a police officer or nurse. Underneath our clothes we wear underwear (or undies) to keep parts of our body comfortable and private.

5. Explain that Sam has some more questions. Ask each question on Sam's behalf and invite the class to answer:

   - 'If people get hot at school, can they take all their clothes off and run around with nothing on?'
   - 'If people get hot at school, can they run around just in their underwear?'

   Thank the class for helping Sam to understand what people do with clothes, and say goodbye to Sam.

6. Explain to the class, using diagrams to illustrate if needed (refer to the sexuality education resources):

   Now the class will learn a bit about the body parts that we keep more private. These are the parts we cover with our underwear or swimwear. These parts have lots of names. Some are slang names or names that we use when we are young. There are also the scientific names. For example, at the back, everyone has a bottom. We also call the bottom our buttocks. At the front, male and female bodies look a bit different. Males have a penis. Females have a vulva. Some people have a mix of some body parts because they have been born as 'intersex'. Sometimes we call these body parts 'private parts'. This is because they are the parts we usually keep covered with clothes or swimwear when we are out in public areas, for example when at we are at school, at the shops or in the park. On the chest, people have nipples. As females grow older, they grow breasts where the nipples are.

7. People can have different family or cultural traditions, which means they may also have different customs about clothes. We can all respect these traditions.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

8. Inform students:

   'In our next lesson we will learn more about the private parts of our body. We will learn that our bodies are our own, and we don't have to let people touch them or hurt them. We will also learn how to listen to our bodies, because sometimes they tell us we don't feel safe, and we need to move to safety or ask for help.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get support.

9. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

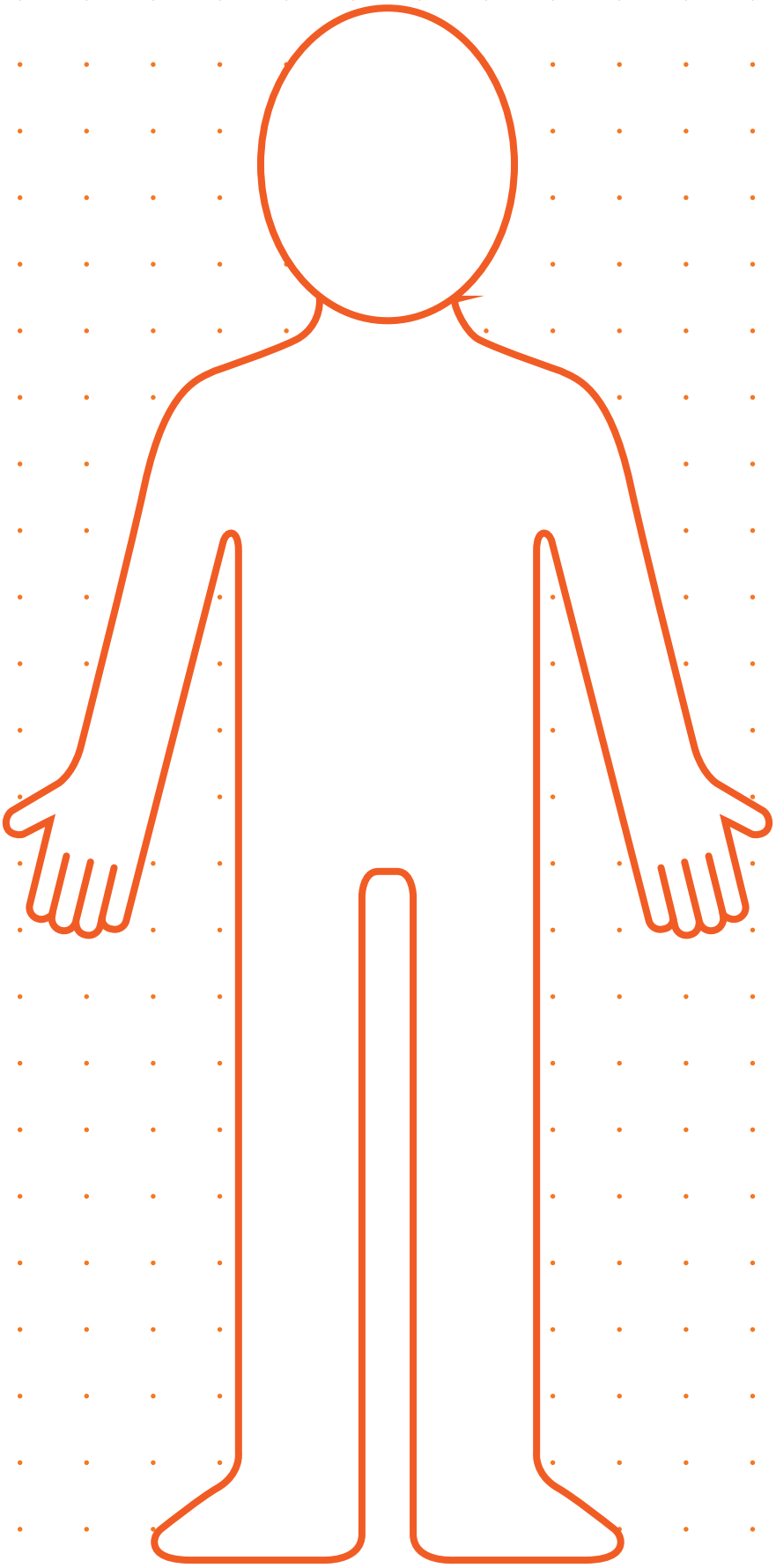
- Review the learning intentions by asking students how they showed that they know a lot about what clothes are for.
- Following review, provide a fun and energising activity to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point

Talking about body parts and privacy. This activity helps students to learn that there are some parts of the body that are private. It is important to emphasise that while we keep these body parts private, there is nothing bad about them, they are just private. Additional teaching and learning materials are available to schools that provide guides for sexuality education relevant for students of Foundation age. This includes working with students to know and name the main external parts and organs of the body, for example, penis, vulva, breast and buttocks (or bottom). Being able to name their body parts can assist those students who need to report abuse.

When talking about private or sexual body parts, students may giggle or say that it's rude. Do not reprimand them for this. This is a common response, and it can signal embarrassment. As you rolemodel confidence to talk in a regular way about these matters, students will begin to develop a similar confidence. Teachers can identify that they hear this initial giggling as a sign that students are still getting used to talking about this topic, and that over time, a sign of their confidence will be that the giggling reduces and goes away.



Drawing of a body outline

Topic 08

Activity 5: Keeping my body safe

Informed by the evidence base

It is important to teach students that other people do not have the right to hurt or touch their bodies inappropriately. The terms 'okay' and 'not okay' can be used to refer to rules and so are useful in teaching about the right to be safe. Later in life, students will be able to understand that sexual touch between consenting parties over the age of consent is part of healthy human expression [83].

Programs that increase children's understanding that they have rights over their bodies, and that there are others who have a responsibility to help them protect these rights, can enable children to seek help. Effective child abuse prevention education programs teach body ownership and the correct names for genitals. Children who do not know these words may find it harder to disclose or to be understood by others if they ever need to report sexual abuse. Additionally, if adults around them do not say these words, or if they model a silencing of these words, children can pick up that these things must not be spoken about to adults [84]. Students provided with comprehensive child safety programs, including how to identify 'okay' and 'not okay' touch, demonstrate an increased ability to identify potentially abusive situations and to differentiate between 'okay' and 'not okay' touch.[85, 86] They are more able to recognise and name unsafe and confusing touch and show increased capacity to ask for it to stop, use strategies to protect themselves and seek assistance from trusted adults in having it stop.

The need for such programs is evident. Prevalence data reveals that over one in 10 Australians aged 18 years and over (13 per cent) experienced abuse before the age of 15. This includes 7.7 per cent who experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15, and 8.5 per cent who experienced physical abuse.

In the first incidence of sexual abuse experienced by women before the age of 15, 12 per cent were aged zero to 4 years, 48 per cent were aged 5 to 9 years, and 40 per cent were aged 10 to 14 years. In the first incidence of sexual abuse experienced by men before the age of 15, 6.8 per cent were aged 0 to 4 years, 45 per cent were aged 5 to 9 years, and 48 per cent were aged 10 to 14 years. [87]

Data collected from men who experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 years showed that 98 per cent reported experiencing abuse by someone known to them. The most common perpetrator type was a known, non-familial person (a known person who wasn't a family member, relative or in-law), with 65 per cent of sexually abused men experiencing abuse by this perpetrator type. Of the women who experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 years, 91 per cent experienced abuse by a known, non-familial person (a known person who wasn't a family member, relative or in-law), with just under half of sexually abused women (47 per cent) experiencing abuse by a known person who was not a family member, 28.4 per cent experiencing the abuse by a relative or in-law, and 17.4 per cent experiencing the abuse by a parent.[88].

Research shows significant knowledge gains and improved self-protective behaviours as a result of sexual abuse prevention education. [79-82] A review of 24 child sexual abuse prevention programs showed that these programs increased children's knowledge about abuse prevention and improved their skills in protective behaviours.[89] This study found no evidence that the programs increased children's anxiety or fear.

Learning intentions

- Students will practise ways to tell people when they do not like the way their body is being touched or treated by others.
- Students will practise ways to seek safety when in the presence of violence or inappropriate forms of personal contact.
- Students will practise ways to seek help from an adult if someone is hurting them or touching them in a way that is not okay.

Equipment

- Puppet or soft toy (to be the character 'Sam') as used in previous learning activity
- 'No, Go, Tell' display cards
- 'No, Go, Tell' scenarios
- A cheerful game, or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   Today we will be learning about the private parts of our body. We will learn that our bodies are our own, and we don't have to let people touch them or hurt them. We will also learn about how we can listen to our bodies, because sometimes they tell us we don't feel safe, and we need to move to safety or ask for help. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Reintroduce Sam to the class. Explain:

   Sam has come back because they have another problem. Sam is not sure what to do if they ever need help to keep their body safe. Sam has learnt about clothes. But what about keeping someone's body safe if someone is hurting it, or trying to touch parts of the body that are private, for example, their penis, vulva or bottom? I think we can tell Sam that for each of us, our body is our own. Other people do not have the right to hurt us. If this happens, there are things that we can do.

3. Invite the class to help teach Sam a simple way to remember what to do if someone is hurting them or if someone wants to touch private parts of their body.

   Show the word cards. Explain the No, Go, Tell model in the following way.

The No, Go, Tell model

No

Ask, 'Who knows how to say no?' (Everyone.)

Ask, 'When do you say no?' After students have given some answers, emphasise that when they were little they learnt to say 'no' to tell people to stop doing something, or to tell someone that they didn't want to do something. 'No' is a very important word and that is why we learn it so early.

Say to students, 'Let's tell Sam we can say no if someone wants us to do something that makes us feel uncomfortable. We can say no if we get a scared or uncomfortable feeling. We might get a strange sick feeling in our tummy or a lumpy feeling in our throat. We can say no if the other person is hurting us or making us feel scared.'

Invite the class to show Sam what saying no sounds like.

Go

'Sometimes when we tell people no it is not enough to stop them. In this situation we can "go". "Go" means get to a safer place.' Invite the class to echo your 'go' loudly.

'Go means someone can move away. They find a safe place to go. They can do this to get away from a scary person, or to get away from someone who might hurt them or make them feel uncomfortable about their body. They can go offline if they are seeing something scary or uncomfortable online.'

Ask students to suggest where they can go to be safe, and who they can we ask for help.

Tell

Explain to Sam that there is one more thing that we have learnt how to do. This is to 'tell'.

Ask students to describe what it means if they tell. What do they do?

Reinforce that they can tell someone what has happened. 'We can tell a safe grown-up if someone is hurting our body or wanting us to touch private parts of their body or if they want to touch us on our private parts. If that grown-up won't listen or won't believe us, we can try a different grown-up to tell.'

4. Make the No, Go, Tell model into a song or chant with accompanying movements, and sing it with the class (optional).

5. Explain that Sam has some friends who need help to use the No, Go, Tell model. Use a selection of the scenarios to pose as problems for students to advise on. Invite some of them to show what some the suggestions would look like or sound like. Invite small enactments to demonstrate, or set pairs the challenge of practising with each other.

Coaching point:
Scenario selection. When selecting scenarios to use, you may wish to make modifications to align with student needs and the local context.

6. Remind students that if they face a situation where someone is treating their body the wrong way or asks them to touch their own body in the wrong way, it is good to tell one of their helpful adults.

Coaching point
Help-seeking for young children. Activities in Topic 6: Help-seeking provide opportunities for students to practise asking for help. The key help-seeking steps in the Foundation program are: approaching the trusted grown-up (for example, a teacher), using a calm and strong voice, and telling the grown-up the problem and that you need help. Guide students to use this process when advising on the scenarios. You might choose this time to have students review the list of people they can go to if they feel uncomfortable or scared.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

7. 'In our next lesson we will be learning about different types of secrets, which secrets are safe to keep and which should be told.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get support.
8. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask all students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip. This provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried face response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.
9. Following the activity review, provide a fun and energising activity to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content. There are games suggested in the section 'Additional games to reinforce respectful relationships'. Otherwise, students could replay one of the cooperative games from other topics (for example, Topic 2, Activity 1).

Review

To review the learning intentions, ask students to say the 3 important words they were looking at today. Ask, 'Who thinks they could use the No, Go, Tell model if they ever need to?'

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

No, Go, Tell scenarios

Scenario 1

Arif squeezes Olivia's arm and makes it hurt. He laughs. But it is not funny for Olivia. She wants it to stop. Arif says it is only a game and she should not be a crybaby. What could Olivia do or say?

Who could she tell?

Scenario 2

Ashini is climbing on the monkey bars and a boy stands under her and lifts up her dress. What could Ashini do or say?

Who could she tell?

Scenario 3

Jandamarra is waiting at the gate for his parents to pick him up. Some older students are waiting there too. Some boys touch him on the bottom and laugh. They try to pull his pants down.

What could Jandamarra do or say? Who could he tell?

Scenario 4

Johnny has an uncle who always wants to kiss him even when he is playing. Johnny only likes to kiss his mum and his Nana and Pa when he is saying goodnight to them at bedtime.

What could Johnny say? Where could he go? Who could he tell?

Scenario 5

Shani is at a birthday party with their parents. When they leave, a friend of their parents asks Shani to hug them goodbye. Shani doesn't know this person and feels uncomfortable to give them a hug.

What could Shani say or do? Who could they tell?

Scenario 6

Zhou is playing 'chasey' in the playground and Ben says, 'If you catch a girl you have to kiss her.' Lillian and her friends say, 'No, we don't want you to do that.' But Ben tells Zhou that he has to kiss them. Zhou feels scared. He doesn't want to upset the girls by kissing them in the game, but if he doesn't agree, Ben will be really mean to Zhou.

What could Zhou say or do? Who could he tell? What could Lillian and her friends say or do? Who could they tell?

No	NO
Go	Go
Tell	Tell

Topic 08

Activity 6: Is this a safe secret?

Informed by the evidence base

In effective child abuse prevention education programs the scenarios provided include abuse by people known to children. This is because research shows that contrary to the popular perception that child sexual abuse often takes place at the hands of strangers, most perpetrators are family members or people known to children.[90] Adults who abuse children can use very sophisticated grooming techniques to elicit their trust. They may initially befriend a child, providing attention, praise, fun or gifts. They may work at making the child feel special. Adult perpetrators can also lead a child into thinking that the activity is their fault. They can instil fear or guilt, or a sense of closeness, all of which can drive the child to keep the abuse secret.[91, 92]

Coaching point:
Normalise help-seeking. Reading the scenarios to students can help to normalise speaking about these matters. The teacher's calm tone can help to signal that an adult will be available to talk about the issues that are addressed and to provide support. Providing the puppet characters as those who need advice helps to position students in more secure and collective helping roles, rather than overly identifying with the character who has been victimised.

Learning intentions

- Students will identify fun secrets that are okay to keep.
- Students will identify that some secrets should not be kept, including when someone is being hurt or being touched in a way that is not okay, or if someone is doing something wrong.

Equipment

- 4 soft toys or puppets
- Some music or equipment to play or perform a favourite song or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this session, we are going to be learning about different types of secrets and which secrets are safe to keep and which should be told If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Invite students to sit in a circle on the mat. Explain, 'In this session, we have some friends who need our help. They have some worries, and they hope we can help them.' Introduce the puppets or soft toys. 'They want to know when a secret is a "keep" secret and when it is a "tell" secret. Sometimes it is not okay to keep something secret and they are not sure how to work this out.'

3. Introduce Ali. Explain, 'Ali's mum is having a special birthday and the family want to give her a surprise present. Ali wants to make a special card, which will also be a surprise on the big day. Ali wants to know, is this the kind of secret that it is okay to keep? What do you think?' Guide students to affirm that this secret is okay to keep, because it won't last long, and it is about doing something nice for someone. Allow Ali to pass on their thanks, and their intention to leave and go and get the birthday card ready.

4. Introduce Ollie. Explain, 'Ollie is very worried that maybe he has been asked to keep a secret that is not okay. This secret is making him feel a bit scared. Ollie's secret is that his big cousin shows him pictures of adult's private body parts on his computer when he comes over to do some babysitting. He told Ollie not to tell his parents about them looking at these pictures, which are for grown-ups. Is this a "keep" secret or a "tell" secret?'

5. Guide students to recognise that this is a tell secret. It is not okay to keep. This is because older kids are not allowed to let little kids see things that are only for adults. Ollie needs to tell, so that this doesn't happen again. It is not Ollie who did the wrong thing. It is his big cousin.
6. Pass on the message from Ollie that he is very relieved, and that, deep down, he thought he should tell his parents. So he is going home now to do that. Invite students to give Ollie a big cheer for being so brave.
7. Introduce a third character. 'We have Lee here today. Lee says they need help to know if their secret is okay to keep. Lee's secret is that they know what their big sister is getting for her birthday. Lee's parents said not to tell because it had to be a surprise. But their big sister was asking them to tell. Should Lee tell this secret, or is it okay to keep this secret?' Guide students to affirm that this secret is okay to keep. It will only last for a short time, and it is about something that will make someone happy. Say goodbye to Lee. Let students know that Lee is happy that they only have to keep the secret for one more day.
8. Introduce Trent. 'Trent wants to know if this is an unsafe secret. In their family, the iPad can only be used with adult permission. Trent used it on his own without asking first, and he clicked on something that made him feel yucky in the tummy. He can't stop thinking about it. There were grown-ups without any clothes on and you could see their private parts. Trent wants to tell his parent so they will help cheer him up, but he is scared about getting into trouble. Is this an unsafe secret?'
9. Reinforce with students that this is an unsafe secret. This is because some things on the internet are not good for children and can give them scary or worrying thoughts. It is better if they tell, so their parent can help them stay safe online. Invite students to give Trent a big cheer to help him to be brave and tell a parent.
10. Introduce Peggy. 'Peggy is feeling quite shy and a bit scared about the secret she was told to keep. It is making her feel wobbly in the tummy. Peggy's secret is that a grown-up has been trying to do touch games with her private parts. Peggy's grown-up is always telling her that this must be a secret, and no one should ever, ever, ever find out. The grown-up gives lollies to Peggy to encourage her to keep this secret. Is this an okay secret or an unsafe secret?'
11. Reinforce with students that this is an unsafe secret. The grown-up is breaking the rules and laws that say grown-ups can't play with the private parts of children. This secret is also unsafe because Peggy has been told to keep it forever and not even tell her parents. Also this secret is making Peggy feel upset and worried. It is a heavy secret. It is weighing Peggy down. Affirm that it is the grown-up who has done the wrong thing, not Peggy. Invite students to give Peggy a big cheer to help her be brave and tell a trusted adult who will be good at helping Peggy.
12. Pass the message back from Peggy that she now feels strong enough to tell her teacher, and she is going to get her teacher to help her. Encourage the class to give a big round of applause to the departing Peggy.
13. Provide positive feedback to students on how well they have done to help these friends with worries about secrets. Remind them that it is good to ask for help, and if they ever have a worry they can go to a teacher or to one of their special adults at home.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

14. Inform students:

    'In our next lesson we will talk about ways to keep safe when there is danger or when someone is violent.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get support.
15. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.
16. Play a game or have the class sing a song or engage in some aerobic dance (following the review section of the lesson). You might choose some music for students to do a 'strong and proud' dance, to remind them that they have many reasons to be strong and proud of their learning. They can also be proud about knowing when to go for help. Alternatively, choose a cheerful and energising game that is a favourite of the class, or return to one of those provided in earlier topics or provided in the section 'Additional games to reinforce respectful relationships' optional games section. During this activity, continue to observe students to watch for signs of distress including disruptive or withdrawn behaviours.

Review

To review the learning intentions, ask students to think about the difference between a 'keep' secret and a 'tell' secret. Check for understanding that any secret that hurts or worries them should not be kept.

Coaching point

Watch for indications that follow-up is warranted. This activity may prompt students who have experienced family violence or sexual abuse to reconnect with their own experiences of violence, so aim to end the session on a positive note and to focus on what they can do to take positive help-seeking actions. Refresh student's memories of the No Go Tell model and the work they have done on help-seeking. Remain alert to any signs that there may be a need to have a follow-up conversation with individual students. Some students who have been affected by violence may appear withdrawn, others may be agitated, erratic or distracted, while others may start acting out. Any change in behaviour or increase in common distress patterns should be followed up.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Topic 08

Activity 7: Let's revisit our strengths

Informed by the evidence base

Games can be used to teach social and emotional competencies. [93, 94] They can also be used to revisit and reinforce inclusive gender messages, and to acknowledge and reward the class for their efforts, or as time out when students have been experiencing frustration, fatigue or conflict.[95] Having positive experiences in playing with each other in large collective games can help students to feel more connected to each other and to school.[96] This is important, as a sense of connectedness or belonging to school is a significant protective factor for young people and contributes to building their resilience. Students who feel cared for by people at their school and feel connected to learning are more likely to be motivated and confident, and show improved academic outcomes [97, 98].

Learning intentions

- Students will participate in games to talk about things children can do to help keep themselves safe.
- Students will participate in games to build their sense of joy and connectedness to others.
- Students will identify strengths they use to play and work well with others.

Equipment

- Items or tools to mark out safety zones on the floor – you can use 6 or 7 plastic toy hoops, marker cones or chairs, or mark out the space with masking tape or chalk
- Some cheerful games to play

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   Today we are going to play a fun game. We will also talk a little bit about ways to keep safe. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset or wobbly, remember to try a coping strategy that might help you to stay calm, for example, taking some deep breaths. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get some support. If this topic makes you feel wobbly today, you can do one of our quiet activities, or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember that what we say or do may affect other people. We can help on another by working well together.

2. Teach students the Safety Zones Game. In this game, students sit in a circle. There are plastic toy hoops spread around the room. When the music starts, students dance and move around the room. When the music stops, they must get to a safety zone. The toy hoops are the safety zones. If there is not enough space in the hoops, chairs are also safety zones. If they are sitting in a chair, they are safe.

3. Ask students to think up some safety rules that will help to make sure no one gets hurt while playing the game. Add your own rules if needed. Examples of rules include: not more than one person on a chair, no running, only fast walking allowed, no pushing and no crowding in the hoops.

4. Play a few rounds of the game. Settle students back into a circle of chairs. Point out that in everyday life, just like in this game:

   - sometimes we keep ourselves safe by going into our safety zone. Ask for student suggestions about where some of the safety zones are at school. Students may suggest going to the teacher on yard duty, to their grade teacher, to the library or another quiet space for students, or to the office
   - sometimes we keep ourselves safe by hiding from the danger. Ask students how children can move away from scary or upsetting things they might see on the computer, phone or television. Students may suggest actions like turning off the device, leaving the room where others are watching something unsafe for children, or telling their safe grownup who is caring for them
   - sometimes we do things to keep ourselves safe when we see someone being violent. Ask students how children can stay safe if someone nearby is being violent. Students may suggest actions like moving away, not joining in, getting help, moving to one of the safer spaces in their school or home, calling for help, finding a grown-up who can help or asking an older buddy or student to help.

5. Ask students to name some of the strengths they used in playing The Safety Zone Game, that they also use to help them work and play well with others. Revisit some of the strengths language used in Topic 2.
6. Play some additional games to provide opportunities for fun and connectedness as well as for meaning making. Consider replaying some of the games from earlier topics or selecting some from the optional games below.
7. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals. For example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.
8. Following the review section of the lesson, provide a fun and energising activity to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Invite students to review the learning intentions by describing some of the things they enjoyed about playing together and noting some of the strengths they used to play well together.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How have the activities provided insight into gender relationships within and outside your classroom?
- How are you contributing to broader school efforts to create and sustain a safe, supportive, inclusive and gender-friendly school community?

Extension activities

- Reinforce and embed the key ideas of the lesson in classroom and playtime routines, giving students feedback on, and inviting them to report, fair and friendly behaviours.
- Consider co-constructing a class book incorporating the key ideas and language from this activity and the previous activity, as well as images of freeze frames and dialogue to exemplify fair and respectful play and relationships.

Talking further

- Invite students to talk to people at home about who they could ask for help if something bad happens.

Additional games to reinforce respectful relationships

Informed by the evidence base

Games can be used to teach social and emotional competencies. [93, 94] They can also be used to revisit and reinforce inclusive gender messages, to acknowledge and reward the class for their efforts, or as time out when students have been experiencing frustration, fatigue or conflict. Just having positive experiences in playing with each other in large collective games can help students to feel more connected to each other and to school. This is important, as a sense of connectedness or belonging to school is a significant protective factor for young people and contributes to building their resilience. Children and young people who feel cared for by people at their school and feel connected to learning are more likely to be motivated, show improved academic outcomes and academic self-efficacy [99].

The 'Sam Says' Game

Method

1. Explain that this game is like 'Simon says'. But it is also a little bit different. Point out that you have chosen the name 'Sam' because it is gender neutral – it could be used for a boy, a girl or a gender-diverse person. Explain that when the leader calls out, 'Sam says, everyone can [add movement]' and makes a movement (demonstrate the movement), the class must copy that movement. Then explain that when the leader calls out 'Sam says …' and does not add 'everyone can' then the class must not copy the leader's movement.
2. Play a few rounds of the game so as everyone gets to practise. Eliminate those who get it wrong, but only for a few rounds. Intermittently include, 'Sam says, everyone can join back in the game even if they went out' to enable all students who went out to rejoin.

Review

Ask, 'What did we need to be able to do to play that game well? How do we use those skills in class, in the playground and at home? What is the key message in that game about what everyone can do, regardless of their gender?'

Coaching point

Resisting gender policing. This variation on 'Simon says', called the 'Sam Says' Game, can be used to reinforce what people can do. This is an important enabler for students as they work to resist limiting gender norms, and the peer pressure and comments that can accompany them.

The Controller Colours Game

Method

1. Explain to students that this game will call on them to remember 5 different moves, one for each colour. Teach the following moves:
   - Green – walk on the spot (like 'walk' on the traffic light).
   - Red – stand still on one leg, with hand up making stop sign (like 'stop' on the traffic light).
   - Yellow – turn round and around on the spot (like 'wait' on the traffic light).
   - Brown – bob down and touch the ground.
   - Blue – reach up and touch the sky.
2. Play the game a few times over. Invite a student to have a turn calling the colours. Ask, 'What do we have to do to be good at to play that game?' (Answers could include listening or making the right move). Ask, 'When do we have to be able to use these skills in real life?'

Review

Point out that in this game we show we can switch from one move to another very quickly. This means we have self-control and concentration. In real life we can also feel proud if we can play different kinds of games, and work and play with different kinds of people. Being able to do different sorts of things makes us stronger and more capable. We can also stay in charge of the ways we express any angry feelings, so we don't hurt anyone or ourselves.

Coaching point

Promote self-control and concentration. The Controller Colours Game can be used to develop students' skills in concentration and their confidence in their capacity to control their body. Make positive reference to self-control (as something students can do) and concentration (as something that is possible and fun) can help to build students' awareness of their own capacity to engage at will.

The Giant's Treasure Game

Method

1. Appoint one student from the group to be the Giant and to stand at one end of the room, facing the wall, with a soft toy placed on the floor directly behind them.
2. Ask the rest of the group to line up along the starting wall at the opposite end of the room.
3. While the Giant has their back turned, the group must creep forward and attempt to steal the treasure and run all the way back to the opposite wall without being caught.
4. As the group creeps forward, the Giant may turn around at any time. When this happens, the group must freeze. If the Giant sees any of the players move, those players must go back to the starting wall and begin again.
5. The person who succeeds in stealing the treasure and running back to the starting wall with it becomes the new Giant. If the Giant catches anyone with the treasure before they get back to the starting wall, they become the Giant's helper and may do all the same moves as the Giant.
6. At a certain point, explore the possibility of teamwork. Stop the game and ask students, 'I wonder if there is a way that we could get the treasure back to the wall more quickly? How might we do this? Maybe if we worked together, passing the treasure to a player further back...'
7. Play more rounds using this cooperative technique.

Review

Ask students to identify some messages they can learn from this game. How did they make sure it was fair and friendly for everyone? How did they show cooperation? What did they do? What did they say?

Coaching point

Promote group problem-solving. The Giant's Treasure Game can be used to develop skills in self-control and stillness. It can also be used to develop awareness of the possibility of team play and alertness to the availability of others to assist in solving a problem or addressing a challenge.

Cross-referencing to Catching On

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Foundation Level								
	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
Introductory activities	●	●						
TOPIC 1: Emotional literacy								
Activity 1: The Emotions Echo Game	●							
Activity 2: We can notice emotions	●							
Activity 3: Mirror, mirror, on the wall, how are you feeling overall?	●							
Activity 4: What do emotions sound like?	●							
Activity 5: What causes these emotions	●							
Activity 6: It feels good when people like us just the way we are.	●	●						
TOPIC 2: Personal and cultural strengths								
Activity 1: Building strengths through cooperative games	●	●						
Activity 2: Learning about sharing and caring from Aboriginal perspectives								
Activity 3: Being kind, being brave and showing respect	●	●	●					

Cross-referencing to Catching On

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Foundation Level								
	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
TOPIC 2: Personal and cultural strengths								
Activity 4: What might being brave look like?	●							
Activity 5: Personal and cultural strengths celebration	●	●						
Activity 6: Families are different	●	●	●					
Activity 7: Learning about permission and consent?	●	●	●			●		
TOPIC 3: Positive coping								
Activity 1: The Fast Emotions Game	●							
Activity 2: The 'I Think I Can' Game	●							
Activity 3: How are you today?	●							
Activity 4: Calm time	●							
Activity 5: Managing emotions	●							
TOPIC 4: Problem-solving								
Activity 1: The Picnic Problem-solving Game	●							
Activity 2: Can everyone play?	●		●					
Activity 3: Friendly or unfriendly decisions?	●	●	●					

Cross-referencing to Catching On

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Foundation Level								
	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
TOPIC 5: Stress management								
Activity 1: The Melting Tiger Game for taming anger	●							
Activity 2: How stressful?	●							
Activity 3: Positive play: strategies for self-cheering	●							
TOPIC 6: Help-seeking								
Activity 1: The Don't Drop the Ball Game	●						●	
Activity 2: Who are your helpers at school?	●						●	
Activity 3: My helpful people	●						●	
Activity 4: How to ask for help	●						●	
TOPIC 7: Gender norms and stereotypes								
Activity 1: Who am I? Different things to know about me	●	●		●				
Activity 2: Thinking about a future me	●			●				
Activity 3: Anyone can choose								
Activity 4: What are clothes for?								

Cross-referencing to Catching On

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources **Foundation Level**								
	Essential relationship skills	**Respect and inclusion**	**Ethics and decision-making**	**Understanding Gender**	**Respect and safety in the digital world**	**Consent**	**Help - seeking**	**Gendered violence**
TOPIC 8: Positive gender relationships								
Activity 1: Fair and friendly play	●	●	●	●		●		●
Activity 2: What is fair? What is violence?	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Activity 3: Witnessing school-related gender-based violence	●	●	●	●			●	●
Activity 4: What are clothes for?	●					●	●	●
Activity 5: Keeping my body safe	●					●	●	●
Activity 6: Is this a safe secret?	●		●		●	●	●	●
Activity 7: Let's revisit our strengths	●	●	●					

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