



Award-winning
Student Wellbeing
Program

• Australia Wide •



PARENT SUPPLEMENT MODULE 4

Evidence-based psychological skills training
for mental health, wellbeing and resilience
in your school



Creating Futures Together

4

Learning about Emotions

- Key Concepts
- Key Student Activities
- ◆ Discussion Points
- ★ Parent Self-Reflection

● Key Concepts

- Emotions are natural – it is normal to feel the whole range of human emotions at various times
- Emotions provided a survival advantage to humans and therefore have played a key role in human evolution
- Our beliefs about emotions will affect the way we respond to them.
- It is not normal to feel happy 24/7
- The two most common *unhelpful* ways of dealing with emotions are:
 1. avoidance
 2. impulsively giving in to emotional urges
- As a general rule, emotions do not control our behaviour, our choices do.
- **Reaction urges** are the behavioural urges that come with strong emotions. They may have conferred a survival advantage for humans in the past, but in many circumstances in the modern world may actually be unhelpful.
- **Psychological Muscle** is the ability to feel a reaction urge that results from a particular emotion, yet respond with the ‘thinking brain’ – making a conscious decision about what to do based on what is the most *helpful* way to respond.

■ Key Student Activities

1. Discussing the ‘Learning About Emotions’ Fact Sheet
2. Students watch video examples of famous instances of poor psychological muscle
3. Completing the ‘Responses to Emotions’ worksheet which involves identifying unhelpful reaction urges in various scenarios and choosing the helpful response
4. Completing a ‘Mood & Response Diary’ for a week

Discussion Points

- How do you think most people would answer the question “Do our emotions control our behaviour?” Why?
- Ask your child to explain the **Magic Question**.
- Your child may be willing to discuss their diary (once completed). Were they able to always choose a helpful behaviour or did they go with any unhelpful reaction urges?
- Can you think of some situations in which the reaction urge might actually be the helpful response?

★ Parent Self-Reflection

- On a scale of 1-10, how would I rate the strength of my own ‘psychological muscle’? Do I often get swept up in strong emotions and end up responding according to the reaction urge that goes with those strong feelings, or am I able to choose a helpful response, even if it goes against the urge of the moment?
- If I was to ask those who know me best, how would they rate my psychological muscle?
- What have I taught my child – either explicitly or through modelling – about emotions and how to deal with them?