



Heads Up: Skills for life

Teacher Resource

This resource has been developed by the Inspire Foundation in collaboration with the PDHPE Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training.



Background information

What does the research tell us about the mental health of young people?

In the last fifty years, there have been significant improvements in our overall material well-being. This has led to improvements in physical health, falling mortality rates and increases in life expectancy. The Australian adolescent population overall are considered healthy. Studies have shown that more than 75% of young people rate their own health as good or excellent and 80% are “delighted”, “pleased” or “mostly satisfied” with the quality of their life. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007)

Young people are saying however, that “feeling good” is not simply a physical or medical matter. Although the terms “health” and “wellbeing” have close association in policy documents, they are not the same concept and they do not occupy the same mind space for young people.

Recent research has demonstrated that social relationships are central to the feeling of wellbeing for young people. There is also clear evidence that social relationships are implicated in health outcomes for young people. Research shows that the health behaviours of young people are more influenced by friends than by knowledge. If friends were engaging in risk taking behaviours, then it is more likely that the young person would also engage in such behaviours. This is supported by research that shows that although young people report that their physical health is largely excellent, their mental health and feelings of wellbeing were largely reliant on the nature of their social networks.

What is resilience and how can young people be supported to become resilient?

Resilience has been defined as “the happy knack of being able to bungy jump through the pitfalls of life” (Fuller, 1998, p75). Research identifies several significant relationships or social networks that contribute to building resiliency, such as family, teachers, schools and community.

The importance of belonging is identified as a key indicator to the well being of young people. This includes a sense of being known, being familiar and linked with local people and may include significant adults, friends or family. The sense of belonging also appears to refer to a sense of place or territory. For example, school connectedness is an important part of this.

“School is like a second home you spend more of your waking time at school, you see more of your teachers than you see of your parents, you should see it like that, a second home”. (Fuller, 1998, p75)

Research has also shown that success in one area of a young person’s life can serve as the foundation for success in other areas. Resilience can be enhanced by providing young people with the skills to enable them to be more resourceful across a variety of situations.

Common characteristics of resilient people

We can determine certain factors that support resiliency and these characteristics can be learnt and further developed to provide protective factors for individuals. The following table outlines common characteristics of resilient people.



Background information

Social competence	Problem solving	Autonomy	Sense of purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness • Cultural flexibility • Empathy • Caring • Communication skills • Sense of humour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Help-seeking • Critical and creative thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of identity • Self-efficacy • Self awareness • Task-mastery • Adaptive distancing from negative messages and conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal direction • Educational aspirations • Optimism • Faith • Spiritual connectedness

Responseability, Commonwealth of Australia, 2005

In addition to these protective factors, resilient people have strong connections with adults who believe in them and support them to focus on their strengths. Schools can utilise intervention strategies that may enhance the resilience of their students.

A whole school approach to mental health promotion

A whole school approach to mental health promotion provides the structure to create a supportive environment, connectedness to the school and very often contact with a significant adult person. Many schools actively promote and support the health and well being of their students. These schools recognise the impact of school experiences on a young person's life, including their mental health. Studies have shown that a positive connection at school is one of the most important protective factors against mental health problems.

A whole school approach to mental health promotion aims to develop a school environment where young people feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful. In a school setting, creating a supportive and caring environment is important. Young people are likely to behave and perform more positively in a classroom and school in which they feel safe and accepted. Research suggests that three factors are important in creating a supportive environment that promotes resilience in young people. These are:

- An environment in which caring and support are considered important, creating a sense of connection and belonging.
- Positive expectations of the capacity and behaviour of a young person, with consistent guidelines and support to help them achieve their goals.
- Genuine opportunities for participation and chances to contribute to decision making.

Schools can also integrate the explicit teaching and development of skills that enhance resilience, such as communication, help-seeking and problem solving within the school curriculum. The Heads Up: Skills for Life and the Reach Out Central teacher resources provide explicit teaching and learning strategies for use in health and physical education programs. The Reach Out Teachers Network website (www.reachoutpro.com.au) and MindMatters resources for secondary schools (www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters) provide many classroom activities for other key learning areas that can support whole-school program implementation.



Background information

Using technology to promote youth mental health

Over recent years, Internet access and use has increased significantly, particularly among young people. Over 80% of households have Internet access. The computer gaming industry now has a larger annual income than the Hollywood movie industry. The way young people communicate and operate is also changing dramatically. Young people are using the Internet to build their social networks, to be entertained and to do their homework.

Technology has been shown to be an effective tool in strengthening a range of mental health indicators. In a national survey conducted by Mission Australia in 2007, 22% of young people aged 15-19 years old reported that after family and friends they would turn to the Internet for support if going through a tough time. The Internet was preferred to telephone help lines, individuals in the community (e.g. doctors, ministers), community agencies and teachers and school counsellors.

Reach Out website

Reach Out (www.reachout.com.au) is an initiative of the Inspire Foundation (www.inspire.org.au) and provides information, support and resources to improve young people's understanding of mental health issues, develop resilience, increase coping skills, and facilitate help-seeking behaviour.

Integral to Reach Out is:

- direct involvement of young people in the development and delivery of the service to ensure Reach Out is relevant and appealing to young people
- awareness-building activities to ensure young people and those working with young people know what Reach Out has to offer; and
- research and evaluation to ensure the work of Reach Out is evidence-based, the resources are being used in the best possible way, and to measure the impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing.

An online survey of 1,016 young people and 133 professionals conducted in 2006 demonstrated that Reach Out met its objectives. The findings showed that, after visiting Reach Out young people had:

- improved their understanding of mental health issues
- developed resilience and increased coping skills
- facilitated help-seeking behaviour
- 38% of young people sought help from a mental health professional
- 81% of young people would refer Reach Out to a friend
- 83% of professionals who work with young people rated Reach Out as either good or excellent.

The Leading Edge Reach Out Online Survey, 2006
Full survey results are available at www.inspire.org.au



Using Heads Up in the classroom

Using the Heads Up resource in the classroom

The Heads Up resource has been developed to support students to develop coping strategies, help seeking behaviours and the skills needed to support themselves or friends if they are going through tough times. The resource focuses on the use of the Internet as a source of health information, in particular the Reach Out website.

The module of work is driven by a process described in the resource as key actions or steps. Students work through activities linked to each step of the process developing and enhancing their knowledge in relation to selected adolescent health issues whilst also developing skills such as critical health literacy, communication, problem solving, decision-making and help seeking skills.

Investigate

Students begin the module by Investigating youth mental health issues through online resources and develop their critical health literacy skills.

Create

The Create step will involve students creating four fictional characters who will make up their “peer group” for the rest of the module.

Deviate

It is important when exploring any adolescent health issue that teachers ensure any scenarios are explored through the third person. In this step, common scenarios involving adolescent health behaviours and risk taking will be explored through the third person using the fictional characters created in the previous step. Students will propose strategies that they could implement to support their character’s in the selected scenarios.

Collaborate

In this step, students join into small groups and discuss their proposed strategies and actions that the characters could implement to work through the situation in a healthy and safe way. The strategies and actions proposed should take into account the factors that influence health decision making and support young people to behave in safe and healthy ways.

Evaluate

Students will evaluate the strategies and actions proposed in the previous step and determine which actions would be most effective in dealing with the selected scenarios.

Celebrate or Activate

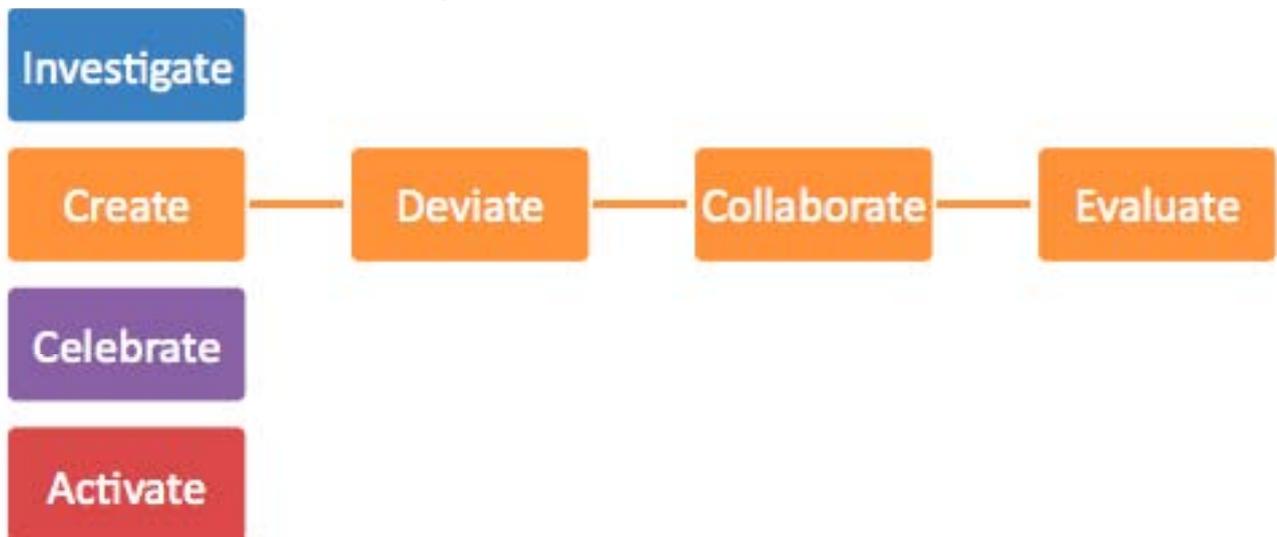
Students are able to choose the final step of the process. In the Celebrate step, students use multimedia technologies to design and create a digital artefact that celebrates a positive aspect of their life. In the Activate step, students take action to change or improve an aspect of their school or local community.



Using Heads Up in the classroom

Overview of the process

The Heads Up module has been developed to be taught as a sequential process. Each step of the process includes a suggested timeframe for delivery. However, teachers may choose to only use some of the steps in their program. If this is the case, it is important to ensure that the students are provided with the necessary prerequisite knowledge from previous steps in order to engage fully in the selected parts of the process being taught. The diagram below outlines which steps in the process require prerequisite knowledge.



The following table provides an overview of the content, skills and key questions that will be addressed.

Step	Suggested content	Skills	Key questions
Investigate	<p>Mental health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding mental health <p>Health consumerism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing critical literacy skills <p>Nature of health knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in health knowledge Dealing with uncertainty Accessing accurate information 	<p><i>Critique</i></p> <p><i>Evaluate</i></p> <p><i>Research</i></p> <p><i>Organise</i></p> <p><i>Synthesise</i></p> <p><i>Examine</i></p>	<p>What health information is available about adolescent health issues?</p> <p>How can young people locate it?</p> <p>How do young people know it is accurate and up-to-date?</p> <p>How can young people use the Reach Out web site for information and support?</p>



Using Heads Up in your classroom

Step	Suggested content	Skills	Key questions
Create	<p>Influences on health decision making and risk behaviours</p> <p>Health issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health Drug use Sexual health Personal safety 	<p>Create</p> <p>Imagine</p> <p>Design</p> <p>Engage</p>	<p>What health issues are most relevant to young people in your area?</p> <p>What are some of the sociocultural factors that influence young peoples' health decisions?</p> <p>What factors influence a person's health decisions and behaviour?</p>
Deviate	<p>Supporting others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognising and challenging inequities supporting others to find their own solutions identifying positive and negative behaviours that impact on others <p>Strengthening resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coping with life's ups and downs Strategies for managing challenging situations 	<p>Explore</p> <p>Examine</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Plan</p> <p>Reflect</p>	<p>What factors are most influential on young peoples' health decisions and behaviours in your area?</p> <p>How can a person's decisions affect their health and wellbeing?</p> <p>How can health decisions and behaviour affect a person's relationships?</p> <p>What strategies can be used to support others through tough times?</p>
Collaborate	<p>Supporting others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessing support and help when you need it identifying positive and negative behaviours that impact on others supporting others to access help when they need it 	<p>Communicate</p> <p>Discuss</p> <p>Plan</p>	<p>How can we support our friends and family to make healthy decisions and act in a safe way?</p> <p>How can you help friends through tough times?</p> <p>Who can help you support friends in need?</p>
Evaluate	<p>Empowering individuals and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose and evaluate strategies that take into account influences on health decision-making, and support young people to behave in healthy and safe ways 	<p>Critique</p> <p>Evaluate</p> <p>Reflect</p> <p>Advise</p>	<p>How effective was the support proposed?</p> <p>What impact could this have on the relationships within the group?</p> <p>What strategies would work? Why?</p> <p>What would you do differently to help/support?</p>



Overview of the Heads Up process

Step	Suggested content	Skills	Key questions
Activate	<p>Empowering individuals and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing advocacy skills • Developing personal supporting environment • Supporting others • Difference and diversity • Challenging inequities 	<p><i>Plan</i></p> <p><i>Act</i></p> <p><i>Interact</i></p> <p><i>Interpret</i></p> <p><i>Advocate</i></p>	<p>How can community links or networks formed?</p> <p>What issues are important to you and how can you take action?</p> <p>How can we measure changes in our community?</p> <p>What are some of the personal and community impacts of this action?</p>
Celebrate	<p>Challenges and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive life experiences during adolescence • Responding to challenges 	<p><i>Communicate</i></p> <p><i>Express</i></p> <p><i>Share</i></p>	<p>What is good in young people's lives?</p> <p>What makes a connection and why?</p> <p>What avenues are available for young people to share their thoughts and feelings with others?</p>

Teaching and learning activities



Step 1: Investigate

Length: 90 minutes

Overview

The Internet is a great source of health information. It is no longer enough to teach students the skills needed to find information. We need to support students in developing the skills to become discerning consumers of Internet health information.

In this step of the process, students will develop critical health literacy skills and practical strategies for effectively searching the Internet. Students will be able to identify cues for assessing the reliability of websites and will develop a directory of trustworthy online health information sources (de.lici.ous bookmarks)

What you will need

- Learning Resource 1 - Criteria for evaluating websites (in Learning Resource section and Digital Journal)
- Computer and Internet access

Activity 1: Finding reliable information on the Internet

Exploring the concept

Explain to students that the key to locating trustworthy health information on the Internet is to be able to assess the reliability of the author of the website containing the information.

Ask students to reflect on the last time they accessed information on the Internet. Discuss the following:

- How confident were you about the accuracy of the information you found?
- Have you ever found websites that contain information that was inaccurate or misleading?



Explain to students that the Internet is a self-publishing medium which means that anyone can publish on the Internet. As with any information source it is important to evaluate what you find on the Internet to make sure that the information is correct and up to date.

Putting it into practice

Divide students into small groups and ask them to identify which health issues are most relevant to young people in the local area? The health issues could include:

- Depression and anxiety
- Mental illness
- Alcohol use and/or binge drinking
- Illegal drug use
- Bullying and harassment
- Body image
- Sexuality



Teaching and learning activities

Allocate one health issue to each group and ask groups to find a range of websites that provide information on that health issue. Hand out Learning Resource 1 and discuss each of the criteria and key questions.

Each group must use the criteria to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of each website that they located. From their research and evaluation, groups create a list of reliable websites for their selected health issue.

As a class, compare and discuss students' findings through the following questions.

- Which websites did they think were reputable sites? What cues indicated this?
- Which websites were not as credible? What cues indicated this?

If students haven't identified Reach Out (www.reachout.com) as one of the reliable sites, explore as a class all of the information that is available on the Reach Out site. Use the criteria on Learning Resource 1 to evaluate the Reach Out site. Explain to the class that Reach Out is a site that is developed in partnership with young people to provide information and support for young people who may be going through tough times.



Take home message

The Internet is a great, anonymous source of health information. But ... don't believe everything you read. If you are in doubt, check the information with that on other websites or in print form from reputable sources.



Teaching and learning activities

Activity 2: Mental health mythbusters

Exploring the concept

Explain to students that they are going to use the Reach Out website to “bust” some of the myths that exist around mental illness and propose strategies to dispel these myths in their local community.

As a class, brainstorm some of the myths or misconceptions that they have seen or heard in the community/ media about mental health and mental illnesses. Some of the myths could include:

- Mental illnesses are contagious.
- The mentally ill should be institutionalised so that they are not a threat to society.
- You can pick a person with a mental illness just by looking at how they behave in public.
- A person who says they’re depressed is just trying to get attention.
- Someone with a mental illness cannot hold down a steady job.

Putting it into practice

Divide students into small groups and allocate a myth to each group. Ask each group to research the development of the myth by exploring where it came from, how it might have started. Each group then develops arguments to dispel the myth and the negative community perceptions that are attached to believing the myth.

Groups report their findings back to the class and propose strategies for dispelling their allocated myth within their local community.



Take home message

Mental health difficulties are common with at least 1 in 5 people experiencing one. Some are more severe than others, and some will have more noticeable symptoms. In most cases someone who is experiencing mental health difficulties is able to live a happy and successful life if they are receiving help to manage their illness.



Step 2: Create

Length: 60 minutes

Overview

When teaching about sensitive issues such as mental health, sexual health or drug use it is important to ensure students discuss and explore these issues from the third person.

Anecdotal feedback from students tells us that they will make more carefully considered decisions relating to scenarios discussed in class if they feel more connected to the characters involved in the scenarios.

This step in the process is designed to allow students to create characters who will make up their “peer group” for the rest of the module. Students will create characters (we have included a bank of 12 characters as a starting point) and develop a back story for each of their characters. The backstory will provide information about factors that affect their health and wellbeing and the influences on their health decisions and behaviours (see example in Student Digital Journal).

What you will need

- Student Digital Journal (powerpoint file)
- Computer access
- Learning Resource 2: Character profile templates (if working offline)



It is important to highlight to students that this step has time constraints (recommended 60 minutes). Students should not get stuck on the characters’ names, the focus needs to be on the backstory and identifying the relationships and factors that will influence that character’s health decision-making and behaviours. This aspect of the module can be completed on computers as an online activity or as a paper-based activity if computer access is not possible.

Activity: Creating a peer group

Exploring the concept

Explore the importance of peer support for young people who are going through tough times. Discuss as a class the role a peer group can play in supporting someone through tough times. Discuss questions such as:

- What are some of the characteristics that you like in a friend?
- What qualities in a friend make it easier to ask them for help?
- What factors determine who is a member of your peer group?

Explain to students that they are going to create a “peer group” of characters that will be the basis of scenarios and situations that will be explored in future lessons.

Teaching and learning activities



Putting it into practice

Ask students to open the Student Digital Journal file on their computer and use the Save As function to rename and save the file including their name in the filename e.g. XXX-jane-smith.ppt. If access to computers is not possible distribute Learning resource 2: Character profile templates to each student.



Each student needs to select four characters from the group of 12, who they would like to include in their “peer group” and drag/paste them into the space provided on Slide 3.

Discuss with the class the example character backstory on Slide 4. Highlight to students some of the features that are required in the backstories that they will develop for each of their characters, including:

- relationship to you and other members of the peer group
- why you are friends with them
- brief background into their home and school life
- factors that might affect their health decisions and behaviours.

Make a copy of Slide 4 for each of the characters in your “peer group” and paste their photo into the designated spaces, one character per slide. Ask students to give each character a name and write each character’s backstory.



Students then determine each character’s mood according to what is going on in their lives and record it by pasting a copy of the character’s photo between Crap and Awesome on the Mood Meter. Ask students to provide reasons why the character might be feeling this way in the space provided on Slide 6.

Ask students to save their file and then introduce their “peer group” to a partner by sharing each of their backstories. Students should view the file as a slideshow in order to be able to access the hyperlinks on Slides 5 and 6. Prompt partners to ask questions about each others characters and work together to add in further details to the backstories.



Take home message

Peers are an important source of help and support when we are going through a tough time. They are also a powerful influence on our health decisions and behaviours.



Teaching and learning activities

Step 3: Deviate

Length: 90 minutes

Overview

It is important to recognise that health decisions and risk behaviours are not simply an individual responsibility. Recognising the range of influences on health decisions and behaviours is important when dealing with situations that may be placing a friend at risk of harm.

In this step of the process, students will explore a number of scenarios involving one of the characters in their “peer group”. They will analyse the range of influences impacting on the character’s ability to behave in a healthy and safe way and propose strategies to support their character that take into account these influences.

What you will need

- Computer and Internet access
- Access to previously saved Student Digital Journal files
- Learning Resource 4: Deviate scenarios (if working offline)
- Learning Resource 5: Deviate strategies template (if working offline)

Activity 4: Supporting others

Exploring the concept

Brainstorm the range of factors that can influence health decision-making and behaviours such as education, peer influence, media and culture. Categorise each of these influences under the headings of Individual, Sociocultural, Economic, Environmental or Political. Add any additional influencing factors to each of the columns to ensure that there is a range of influences recorded.

Discuss as a class how giving advice to friends when you are worried that they might be getting involved in risky behaviours can be difficult. Brainstorm different ways that friends may react if you approach them with your worries. Discuss some of the strategies that could be used to start a conversation about the issue.

Ask students to explore the Reach Out website (www.reachout.com) to find advice on how to help and support friends who you think might be getting themselves into risky situations.

Putting it into practice

Ask students to open their Student Digital Journal file and navigate to Slide 7: Deviate scenarios. Explain to students that there are a number of scenarios that they can choose from on Learning Resource 4. Ask students to select one scenario and type it into the space on Slide 7. Ask students to decide which character from their “peer group” will be involved in the scenario, type their name into the appropriate spaces.

Distribute the Deviate scenarios and strategies template if working offline.

Ask students to consider the following questions in relation to the scenario:



Teaching and learning activities

- What factors may be influencing the character’s behaviours and decisions in this situation?
- How might this situation affect the character’s health and wellbeing?
- How might your character’s current mood affect the way they deal with this situation?
- How might your character’s home and school life affect the way they deal with this situation?
- How might this situation affect the character’s relationships with other members of the “peer group”?
- What can the character do to deal with the situation?
- What strategies could you use to support your friend in this situation?

Allow students to access the Reach Out website (www.reachout.com) to explore how they can support their character in this particular situation. Ask students to identify avenues of support for the character and the members of their “peer group”, if appropriate.

Emphasise to students the importance of not taking on the character’s problem as their own. The best support they can offer the character is to help them to find their own way of dealing with the situation.

Ask students to repeat this process with three other scenarios.



Take home message

Recognising and overcoming negative influences on health behaviours can be difficult and needs support from friends and family.

Step 4: Collaborate

Length: 60 minutes

Overview

Friends and the Internet are a great source of health information, however, it is important to make sure the information and advice that you are giving is the right advice. Asking advice from a trusted adult is a good way of checking that the information you are giving, or getting is right.

In this step of the process, students will explore the importance of having a personal support network. They will identify a range of trusted adults in their life and develop scripts for conversations they might have to ask advice about how to support a friend in need.

What you will need

- Completed scenarios
- Internet access
- Health information pamphlets and brochures (if working offline)

Activity: Sharing ideas

Exploring the concept

Explain to students that often if a friend asks you for help when they are having a tough time, they will make you promise not to tell anyone what's going on. Sometimes you will need to ask advice from a trusted adult so that you can be sure that the advice you give your friend is the right advice. Even if you've made a promise to your friend, if you think that they may be at risk of harm it is important to tell a trusted adult about the situation.

Discuss as a class the range of adults that students would consider to be trusted adults e.g. parents, teachers, sports coach, church minister. Discuss the characteristics and qualities that make them a trusted adult.

Explain to students the importance of having a network of trusted adults who they can go to for advice or support about their health and wellbeing. These people are also the people who can give advice about how to help a friend who is going through a tough time.

Ask students to answer the following questions:

- Who might you include in your personal support network? Why?
- How can your support network help you through tough times?
- How can you help friends through tough times?
- Who can help you support friends in need?



Teaching and learning activities

Putting it into practice

Ask each student to select one of the scenarios that they worked on in the previous step. Explain to students that they are going to ask a trusted adult for advice about the strategies they proposed to support their character in the selected situation. Ask students to identify a trusted adult from their personal support network who they could talk to about this situation. Ask students to write a script of a conversation they might have with this adult to ask them for advice.

Divide the class into groups of three and ask each student to role play their scripted conversation with one of the other group members. The remaining group member observes the conversation and provides advice on what aspects of the conversation they thought were good and what they might do differently next time.

Instruct the students that once each group member has had a chance to role play their conversation, they will share ideas about other strategies to support each of the characters. If time permits explore more of the scenarios that each group member explored in the Deviate step.



Take home message

Having a personal support network is important as you go through adolescence. Trusted adults can be a great source of support and advice about how to deal with tough situations.



Teaching and learning activities

Step 5: Evaluate

Length: 90 minutes

Overview

The kind of support and strategies that can help someone cope with a tough time will be different for different people. Individuals need to work out what strategies will work best for them in a situation.

In this step of the process, students will evaluate each of the strategies that they have proposed to deal with each scenario and decide which ones would work best for them.

What you will need

- Completed scenarios from the Step 4: Collaborate step

Activity: What works best?

Exploring the concept

Ask students to brainstorm some of the strategies that they have proposed to support their characters through the tough times. Identify some of the similarities and differences between the strategies, for example, some may involve encouraging the character to seek professional help, others may involve using the Internet to find out information, or going to parents or family members for help. Discuss the idea that each person will have different ways of coping with tough times. Explain that it is important for students to recognise the ways that work best for them when coping with tough times.

Putting it into practice

Ask students to re-visit the strategies they proposed for supporting their characters through the tough times in the scenarios. Ask students to evaluate the possible success of each of these proposed strategies in this situation.

Ask students to consider the following questions:

- How effective was the support proposed?
- What impact could this have on the relationships within the group?
 - What strategies would work? Why?
- Would the strategy still be successful if it was a different character involved in the scenario? Why? Why not?
- How did the strategies that you proposed differ from character to character? Why do you think they differed?
- How did the strategies you proposed differ to those proposed by other members of the class? Why do you think there were differences?
- Are all strategies transferable to different people, contexts, situations?
- What would you do differently to help/support?



Teaching and learning activities

Ask students to identify three to four strategies that they could use if they found themselves in a situation similar to the scenarios

explored. Ask students to provide reasons why they would feel comfortable using these strategies.

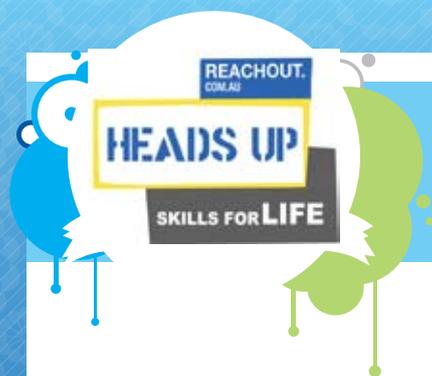
Ask students to now identify strategies that they would not be able to use themselves and provide reasons why they would not use them. For example, I would not go to my local doctor for advice about sexual health issues as I live in a small rural community and the doctor is a friend of the family.

Invite students to share their responses with the rest of the class.



Take home message

Individuals react in different ways to different situations. The strategies we use to help friends to cope through these tough times will depend on the individual.



Step 6

Length: 90+ minutes

Overview

This step of the process is the culmination of the module. Students can choose to undertake a social action project to change or improve something within their world (Activate) or to create a digital product that celebrates something good in their life (Celebrate).

Option 1: Activate

Active and meaningful social participation strengthens the resilience of young people by building meaningful connections at an individual and community level. ActNow (www.actnow.com.au) is an online program that connects young people with opportunities to learn more about their world and take action on the social issues they care about. ActNow is a space where young people define their own 'action' - be it volunteering, engaging in the democratic process, campaigning, fundraising or just gaining more understanding of an issue to be better able to articulate their opinions.

If students choose to undertake the Activate task they will be required to undertake a social action or advocacy project within their local community.

What you will need

- Access to the ActNow website (www.actnow.com.au)

Explore the concept

Introduce students to the Activate task by discussing how individuals can become more active members in their community and get their voice heard about social and political matters.

Discuss some of the common reasons why people are not engaged in social action (e.g. lack of knowledge, lack of time, not knowing what to do, feeling that they cannot make a difference). Ask students to discuss some of the individual and community benefits of social action and engagement for their generation. Discuss what some of the consequences may be of social disengagement for their generation.

Ask students to brainstorm a list of issues and concerns in their local community that they are passion about changing or improving. Ask students to go to the Act Now website (www.actnow.com.au) and research a range of potential issues for action. Have students identify any issues in which they have already been active (e.g. collecting money for the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels deliveries, providing food for homeless, volunteer coach for local sports club). Discuss what kinds of action students have undertaken and how this action made them feel. Also discuss how successful the action was and what they would do differently next time.

Putting it into action

Divide students into Action Groups based on issues and areas of interest. Ask each group to discuss why they care about this issue with the other members in their group. Ask students to discuss what they want to change in their community and why they want to make changes.

Open the Student Digital Journal to the K-W-L-Chart. If students don't have access to computers, distribute Learning Resource 4: K-W-L Chart in hard copy. Ask students to complete the first two columns of the chart as a group to explore their prior knowledge about the issue and what they would like to learn more about.

Teaching and learning activities



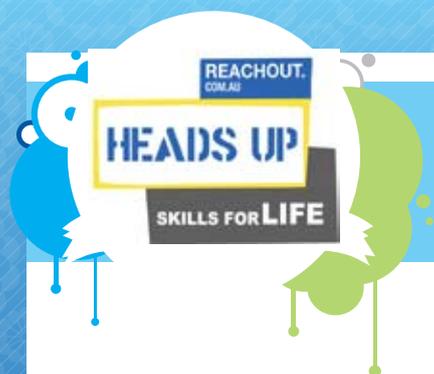
The following steps in the process could be completed as a homework activity and reported back to the group in a subsequent lesson. Any activities that undertaken with community groups outside of school need to be carefully planned to ensure they meet school policies and guidelines.

Ask groups to read through the tools available on the Getting started page (http://actnow.com.au/Toolkit/Getting_Started.aspx) and work together to develop a plan of action that they will undertake to address their selected issue. Use the Toolkit on the ActNow website to get ideas of some of the strategies and actions that could be undertaken.

Share each group's plan of action with the rest of the class. Ask other groups to provide feedback and ideas about each plan of action presented.

Over a designated period of time, groups implement their plan of action. At the conclusion of the module of work, students report back to the class on the action that they initiated and reflect on the outcomes, success and problems that they encountered during implementation. Groups should propose changes they would make to their action plans in order to be more effective next time.

Encourage groups to publish the story of their Activate project on the ActNow website using the Content tools available at http://actnow.com.au/Toolkit/ActNow_Content_Kit.aspx.



Option 2: Celebrate

Within the Find section on the Reach Out website, is a showcase of digital stories created by young people for young people. It's a place to find out about other people's goals and inspiration or ideas on how to get through tough times - or just to have a laugh at how strange life can be.

If students choose to undertake the Celebrate task, they will be required to create a digital story that captures a positive aspect of their life. This task provides students with an opportunity to celebrate all that is good in their life or to provide an inspirational message to other young people who may be going through a tough time.

What you will need

- Access to the Internet
- Access to digital video recording and editing equipment and software

Exploring the concept

Introduce the concept of digital story telling by explaining to the class that a digital story is personal. It's told from the heart with feeling and makes frequent use of the word "I". Discuss the fact that the narrative of the digital story is revealed through both words (spoken or written) and pictures.

Show a number of the digital stories from the Reach Out website (<http://au.reachout.com/find>) and discuss some of the features and characteristics of the stories, such as the pictures or footage used, the inclusion of text, the voice over etc.

Brainstorm a list of the positive things in their life that students might want to celebrate through a digital story. Ask students to select one of these areas and create a mind map of the different aspects that make it something to celebrate.

Putting it into practice

Ask students to access the ActNow website and read through the How to make a digital video tool page (www.actnow.com.au/Tool/How_to_make_a_digital_video.aspx). Alternatively, you can use Module 3 of the Act Now: Youth homelessness matters resource available on the Reach Out Teachers Network website (<http://teachers.reachoutpro.com.au>) that provides specific learning activities for developing documentary films and digital stories.

Ask students use the steps outlined in the How to make a digital video tool to plan their script and identify the footage that they will need to create their digital story.

Divide students into pairs and ask them to share their scripts with their partner. Ask partners to provide feedback and ideas about how the digital story could be enhanced.



The following steps in the process could be completed as a homework activity and reported back to the group in a subsequent lesson. Any activities that undertaken with community groups outside of school need to be carefully planned to ensure they meet school policies and guidelines.

Over a designated period of time, students film, edit and publish their digital story. At the conclusion of the module of work, students present their digital stories to the class.

Completed digital stories can also be sent in to the Reach Out Crew for publication on the Reach Out website. Email the crew at Crew@reachout.com.au for more info on sharing your students' digital stories.



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Useful websites and help lines



Websites

www.reachout.com.au

www.inspire.org.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

www.responseability.org

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au

www.actnow.com.au

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/index.htm>

www.redi.gov.au

<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/staff/index.htm>

www.headspace.org.au

Website for young people going through tough times

Website of the Inspire Foundation

Support and information about depression

Mental health information for educators

Website of the Curriculum K-12 Directorate

Website to support social participation for young people

Information and activities to address bullying in schools

Website for school mental health promotion

Resilience Education and Drug Information for schools

Web-based resources to support staff wellbeing

National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Help lines

Kids Help Line (ages 5 – 18 years)

Lifeline – support for people in crisis

Just Ask – Information for rural areas

Mensline Australia

SANE Australia Helpline

1800 55 1800

13 11 14

1300 131 114

1300 78 99 78

1800 187 263

