

4 Self Concept



Aim: To explore accurate self-awareness and effective self-development.

Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 1
Wanting Control

Activity 2
Personal Responsibility

Coping Under Pressure

Activity 3
Finding Another Way...

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Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 1: Wanting Control



Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning:

- to identify areas of their lives over which they have control;
- to consider different ways of coping with areas over which they have little or no control;
- to review learning and some aspect that might be improved;
- to experiment with ideas and questions.



Opportunity for AfL Sharing learning intentions and success criteria



Skills and Capabilities

- Self Management: Review learning and some aspect that might be improved.
- Being Creative: Experiment with ideas and questions.
- Communication



Learning Experiences

- Offers choice
- Supportive environment
- Ongoing reflection



Attitudes and Dispositions

- Personal responsibility
- Tolerance
- Self belief, optimism, pragmatism

Resources

- 'The Uncontrollables' (Resource 1)
- 'Prayer For Serenity' (Resource 2)

Methodologies

- Brainstorm
- Self reflection
- Worksheet
- Class discussion



Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 1: Wanting Control

This activity starts with a 'creative thinking' brainstorm. It is important to clarify the difference between 'what I want' and 'what I want to control'. We all want the world to be a particular way and are disappointed when it isn't. There are certain things in our lives and environment that we can control and change to suit us better. However, we have no control over many things. By understanding what we do and do not have control over we develop a more realistic and constructive attitude. We understand the things we can improve and those things that we have to accept.

1.1

Ask pupils to brainstorm how many areas of their lives they have control over. For example:

- food they eat;
- clothes they wear;
- who they are friends with; and
- what they think.

Encourage debate around the suggestions offered. There are no right or wrong answers. Form a list of 'things we don't have control over' and a list of 'things we sometimes have control over.'



Opportunity for AFL Effective questioning

Work through the list of 'things we don't have control over'. Discuss what it feels like not to have control over these things. For example, some people may find it threatening that we can't control what other people think or say about us. Many people give over control about major health issues to doctors; they are happy to do this because they know the doctor is well trained and knows a lot about medicine.

Ask pupils to consider what they WANT to control in their lives by answering the following questions:

- 'What do I want to control in my life?
- Why do I want to control these things?
- What are the consequences of not having control over these things?'

This will be very much an individual consideration and pupils should not feel that they have to share these ideas if they don't want to. Resource 1, 'The

Uncontrollables', may help pupils with this exercise.

Give pupils the opportunity to discuss the last exercise in pairs, and to share any thoughts or opinions with the class. Prompt questions for discussions could be:

- Why do we want to control?

Because we want things our own way to avoid being unhappy. Because we do not trust other people to do what they say they will do. Because we assume other people will not consider our needs. Because we are afraid of losing something important to us.

- How does it feel when we can't control a situation that we want to control?

scary, insecure, untrusting, powerless, stressful, depressed, angry, anxious

- What can happen if we can't accept having little control over certain areas of our lives?

Become obsessive about the situation. Feel worn out and lack energy. Cannot relax. Feel paranoid. Become stubborn and inflexible. Neglect your relationships with family and friends. Lower self-esteem.

- What can we do to accept having little control over certain areas of our lives?

Focus on the positive. Consider alternative points of view. Be patient. Consider what needs to be different in life to help you to let go. Accept the facts. Allow yourself to be upset. Grieve the loss.

Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 1: Wanting Control

1.2 (optional)

Provide the class with a copy of the Prayer for Serenity on Resource 2.

Ask pupils to consider the questions on Resource 2.
Possible answers are:

- 1. What qualities are needed to have 'serenity'?**
Calmness, inner strength, not looking for approval from others, ability to be realistic...
- 2. Describe what someone has to do to be able to 'accept the things they cannot change'.**
See the reality of a situation, however painful that may be.
- 3. What does 'wisdom to know the difference' mean?**
Wise people have the ability and courage to be completely realistic and honest. They recognise when their actions can have an effect on a situation, and, when they have no control over the situation at all. They are extremely empathic and are able to consider many different points of view without becoming influenced by their own wants, needs or aversions.
- 4. Rewrite the second verse in your own words.**
Some useful phrases or words for this question are, 'patience', 'relax', 'be nice to yourself', 'accept your faults', 'accept that life always has difficulties', 'letting go', 'attention to reality' 'trust' and 'acknowledge my inner strength'.

In their personal journal, pupils consider:

- How they feel when they have no control over a situation that they want to control.
- What strategies they could use to help them cope with this situation.



Opportunity for Afl Pupil reflection



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Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 2: Personal Responsibility

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- acknowledge their personal responsibility to self;
- reflect on the benefits of positive self management;
- sequence, order, classify, make comparisons;
- set personal targets and review them.



Opportunity for AFL Sharing learning intentions and success criteria

Skills and Capabilities

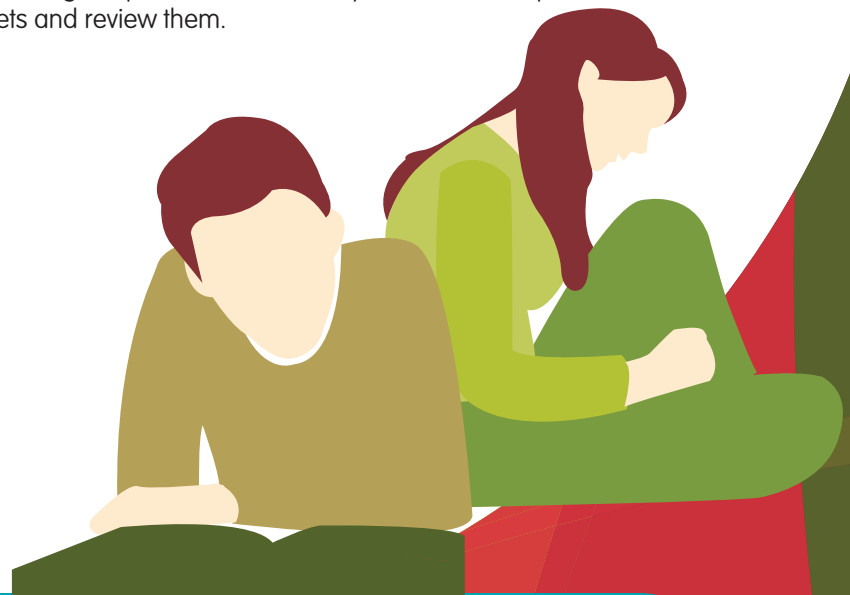
- Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making: Sequence, order, classify and make comparisons.
- Self Management: Set personal targets and review them.
- Communication

Learning Experiences

- Active and hands on
- Positive reinforcement
- Ongoing reflection

Attitudes and Dispositions

- Personal responsibility
- Commitment, determination, resourcefulness
- Integrity, moral courage



Resources

- 'Who Is Responsible?' (Resource 3)
- 'Personal Responsibility Cards' (Resource 4)
- 'Personal Charter' (Resource 5)

Methodologies

- Worksheet
- Pair work
- Class discussion
- Card sort
- Personal Reflection

Personal Responsibility and Self Management

Activity 2: Personal Responsibility

Responsibility is something we learn - often we are rewarded for being responsible. However, being responsible is not always the most enjoyable option (alcohol use is a classic example of this). Also, sometimes young people receive approval from their peers for being irresponsible.

The pupils will benefit most from this activity if they are encouraged to consider the negative, as well as positive, sides of responsibility. You also need to choose, and time, prompt questions appropriately to steer the discussion towards the greater benefits of being personally responsible.

2.1

Pupils individually complete Resource 3 'Who is responsible?', and then discuss their answers in pairs or small groups. Ask the groups to feed into a whole class discussion and review the different opinions.

For each statement on Resource 3, the primary responsibility lies with the individual. However, encourage discussion about the secondary responsibility of parents, positive support of family and friends etc. Possible prompt questions are:

- How does responsibility change with age?
- How do other people's opinions influence how responsible we are?
- Why are we sometimes tempted to be irresponsible?
- What are the consequences for others when we are not responsible?
- Can we be too responsible?



Opportunity for Afl Effective questioning

2.2

This activity gives pupils an opportunity to consider attitudes of personally responsible individuals. Using Resource 4, 'Personal Responsibility Cards', pupils decide whether each statement displays personal responsibility or not by sorting the cards into two piles.

Lead a discussion on the exercise, using the prompt questions:

- Which group of cards show people who see themselves as victims of their circumstances?
- How could this affect their personal happiness?
- What are the benefits of positive self management?

In their personal journal, pupils reflect on commitments they want to make to improve, or maintain, their personal responsibility to themselves. They could also complete the Personal Charter in Resource 5 and stick this into their personal journal or in a sealed envelope to refer to later.



Opportunity for Afl Self-assessment

4 Self Concept

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Coping Under Pressure

Activity 3: Finding Another Way...



Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- identify situations in which they feel under pressure, how they presently cope with these situations, and the appropriateness of responses they use;
- explore and share alternative responses to stressful situations;
- learn from and build on others' experiences;
- adapt behaviour and language to suit different people and situations.



Opportunity for AfL Sharing learning intentions and success criteria



Skills and Capabilities

- Being Creative: Learn from and build on others' experiences.
- Working with Others: Adapt behaviour and language to suit different people and situations.
- Communication



Learning Experiences

- Challenging and engaging
- Positive reinforcement
- Supportive environment



Attitudes and Dispositions

- Concern for others
- Community spirit
- Tolerance
- Respect

Resources

- 'Trying To Cope' (Resource 6)
- 'How I Cope' (Resource 7)

Methodologies

- Group work
- Class discussion
- Self reflection



Coping Under Pressure

Activity 3: Finding Another Way...

When discussing situations of pressure and how to cope, it is important not to judge the seriousness of someone else's 'stressful situation'. Telling someone that they are worrying about nothing will not stop them worrying and can often make them feel worse. It is important to stop pupils judging each other or rating how 'serious' each stressful situation is.

All coping strategies give some sort of relief from our difficult situation - otherwise we wouldn't use them. However, many coping strategies that work in the short term can actually be damaging to us in the long term. Alcohol and drugs is a perfect example, or keeping our distance from people to avoid being criticised or hurt. The long-term disadvantage to this is loneliness and isolation. Refer to Feelings and Emotions, Activity 4, which covered the use of positive thinking as a coping strategy.

3.1

In small groups, ask pupils to:

1. Share examples of their experiences of stressful situations.
2. Consider how they presently cope with them.
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of their ways of coping (consider short term and long term).

Possible situations could be:

- Starting a new job/school etc.
- Problems at home.
- Problems at school.
- Problems with friends.
- Low opinion of physical appearance.
- A physical disadvantage, such as epilepsy, wheelchair-bound, or acne.
- An emotional disadvantage, such as shyness, quick temper, or nervousness.
- Pressure to behave a way you don't want to behave to fit in.

Provide an opportunity for pupils to share their examples with the rest of the class. Draw out the main types of responses to these situations, such as aggressive, angry, passive, anxious, withdrawn, and negotiating. Alternatively, write these words on the board and ask pupils to decide which category they think their example fits into.



Opportunity for Afl

Effective questioning and formative feedback

3.2

Pupils are now going to consider alternative responses to stressful situations. Working in small groups, they consider the examples given in Resource 6, 'Trying to Cope'. For each example, pupils consider:

- How the person is presently coping with their situation.
- The advantages and disadvantages of this way of coping.
- Alternative, healthier ways of coping that the person could try.
- What may stop the person from doing this? (Is it fear of failure/rejection/loneliness, worry about losing face, losing hope, feeling sorry for themselves?)
- What can the person do to help cope with overcome these obstacles? (Helpful personal attitudes and ways of thinking.)

Allow time for class feedback and discussion.

Coping Under Pressure

Activity 3: Finding Another Way...

3.3

Pupils individually reflect on stressful situations in their lives in their personal journals, or using Resource 7, 'How I Cope'. Ask pupils to think about one or two situations where they feel under pressure. For each situation, they consider a number of questions to help them think about the advantages and disadvantages of their way of coping, and how they can find better strategies.

Provide an opportunity for whole class discussion. Pupils may want to keep their reflections private, or simply discuss it with one person.



Opportunity for AfL Pupil reflection

