

### EMOTIONAL REGULATION 1. THE BIGGER PICTURE

**Objective:** Students will be able to understand the importance of focusing on the whole situation and not just on one part of it, in order to control their reactions and reach a specific goal.

#### WARM UP

Write on the board the following as a list: *What do you do when you get angry? a) scream and shout, b) storm off and slam doors, c) throw things, d) hold a grudge and not speak to a person, e) apologize and make up, f) stay calm.* Ask students to work in pairs and talk about their usual reactions when they get angry. Tell them to think of other things they do when they get angry. After a few minutes, discuss their answers as a class.

#### STEP BY STEP

- 1 First, make sure every student has a copy of the printed handout to work with, or you can also project it. Then ask a volunteer to read the instructions out loud as the class follows the reading silently. Explain that this is a socio-emotional experience that helps them train their self-regulation, so that they learn how to be aware of their reactions and control them.
- 2 Focus their attention on the chart. Ask them to read the examples in the table of the handout. Make sure all students understand the examples.
- 3 Ask students to fill in the table with their own feelings and reactions. Explain that they need to think of a moment when they felt sad, angry, or happy, and start by filling in the first row. Then, they have to fill in the rest.
- 4 Have students work in pairs to share what they wrote. If necessary, ask some questions to help students with their conversations, such as: *Do you have similar reactions when you are sad, angry or happy? Do you have any tips for your partner to help with his / her reactions?*

#### WRAP IT UP

- 5 *On a scale from 1 to 10 how difficult was it to acknowledge your feelings and personal emotions? Why? What can you do better to acknowledge your feelings and personal emotions? How could analyzing the bigger picture help you react in a better way?*

Ask them to keep working in the same pairs to read and answer the questions. Walk around the class making sure everyone is on task. Invite students to get together with another pair and have them discuss again, this time with a different perspective. Have some volunteers share their answers and experiences in a whole-class discussion. End the class by explaining how when we think of the bigger picture, we can focus on the final result and that helps us control our impulses.

#### TEACHING TIP

A good way to help students remember what they learn is by having them discuss it with their peers. Always keep in mind the importance of group work. It fosters practice and improvement, offers the opportunity to hear and learn new ideas from a peer (who may be able to explain something in a way that makes more sense than a teacher's explanation), and allows collaboration and cooperation, which produce better results. Finally, working in groups is a valuable life-long skill that is searched for in most workplaces.



## EMOTIONAL REGULATION 2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

**Objective:** Students will be able to acknowledge and understand their emotions in order to be able to manage them in a better way.

## WARM UP

If you have enough space, have students walk around the classroom for this activity; if you do not, ask students to follow the instructions standing by their seats. Ask students to stand up and stretch out. Then give the following instructions, allowing enough time for students to act on them. You could say: *Act like you are very tired, act like you are very happy, act like you are very sad, act like you are very worried, act like you are very ashamed, act like you are having a lot of fun*, etc. As you give the instructions, follow them along with the students. Ask them to stretch out again before they go back to their seats.

## STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure all your students have a copy of the printed handout. Invite one of them to read the definition of emotional intelligence out loud. Then ask a volunteer to read the instructions, so students know what will be expected from them in this activity. Help students with challenging vocabulary.
- 2 Explain that this activity helps them strengthen their character by helping them accept and understand their feelings. Ask them to get into pairs. Have them look at the words in the table together and try to guess the meaning of the ones that are new to them. Encourage them to circle or highlight the words they do not understand. Explain any new vocabulary.

- 3 Invite a student to read the texts in the graphic organizer out loud. Explain that they will briefly write about their experience using words from the table. Allow enough time for students to individually fill in the organizer.
- 4 Ask students to share their organizers in pairs and to ask questions. Give them some ideas of questions they can ask.

## WRAP IT UP

- 5 *What can we do to address these emotions in an intelligent way? How has acknowledging your emotions, even the negative ones, helped you in any way? How easy is it to relate (emphasise) to the stories from your classmates? Why?*

Ask a volunteer to read the questions. Have students get together with another pair and ask them to discuss the questions. Give them some time and then have some students share their conclusions with the class.

## TEACHING TIP

Identify positive and negative emotions from your students during your teaching sessions. Consider asking them how they feel so they become aware of those emotions. Suggest that every time they feel a negative emotion, they try to remember a positive one in order to change their mindset. Explain that the ability to increase self-regulatory practices needs to be done constantly so it can become a habit, or something that they will eventually do in a natural way.

## EMOTIONAL REGULATION 3. EUSTRESS AND DISTRESS

**Objective:** Students will be able to understand the difference between eustress and distress. Additionally, they will realize how eustress can work in their favor and help them achieve their goals.

## WARM UP

Explain to students that you are going to play a game that prohibits them from saying *yes* or *no*; therefore, they must think of other ways of conveying an affirmative or a negative answer. Before they begin to play, elicit from them different ways of saying *yes* and *no*. Tell students they cannot repeat the same answer over and over again. Then ask some *Yes / No* questions related to stress and have students answer them randomly.

## STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure every student has a copy of the printed handout. Ask a volunteer to read the introduction about eustress and distress out loud and the definitions in the Step by Step section.
- 2 Have students get in pairs. Ask them to look at the pictures, go over the characteristics of eustress and distress, and discuss the differences between them.
- 3 Ask students to keep working in pairs and decide if the situations listed in the handout are examples of eustress or distress.
- 4 Then ask them to brainstorm different difficult situations they have lived that have caused them a lot of stress. Invite students to reflect on those situations and the way they felt. Ask them to write down five of them and decide whether they were eustress or distress. Finally, have them discuss their answers with another pair.

## WRAP IT UP

- 5 *Do your bodies react the same ways when in similar stressful situations? Give an example. Do you think it is possible to change distress into eustress? How? How knowing the difference between eustress and distress can help you in general?*

Have them answer the questions in groups. Then invite volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class. Consider having some students write some situations on the board and discuss whether they are eustress or distress. It is likely that in some cases students will have a hard time deciding which type of stress the situations cause. End the activity by telling them that depending on our culture, age, and personal beliefs and experiences, the same situation may fall into the eustress category for some people, but into the distress one for others.

## TEACHING TIP

Teenagers often struggle coping with distress. They can be particularly overwhelmed when their stress is connected to a traumatic event, a natural disaster, family loss, or community violence. One way to help is to encourage them to keep a routine that includes time to sleep, relax, and exercise. They should wake up, go to sleep, and eat meals at regular times as this will provide them with a sense of control and stability.

## EMOTIONAL REGULATION 4. EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT

**Objective:** Students will reflect on past reactions and emotions so they can recognize, accept them and learn how to control them effectively.

## WARM UP

Start by having a volunteer read the text on the handout about emotional restraint. Then have a class discussion about any situation they might have had in which their emotions took over. Ask them how did they feel then and why do they think they felt that way. End the discussion by asking the students if they think it is helpful to acknowledge their emotions and why.

## STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure all your students have the printed handout to work with. You can also project the handout and they can answer in their notebooks later on.
- 2 Have students work in small groups and read the situation introduced in the handout. Tell them to share a similar experience they have had and how they reacted to it. Also, invite them to reflect on their reaction, you could ask them if they think they overreacted to that circumstance or if their response caused them any difficulties. Make sure they write the past situation on the space provided.
- 3 Remind students of what they have learned in previous activities. Ask them to get together with a different group and further discuss the reactions they wrote. Have some volunteers share their answers and invite them to reflect on them. Then, you may ask which one they can use to their advantage. You may allow other students to respectfully advise how to react with emotional restraint to the classmates that shared their work.

## WRAP IT UP

- 4 *Have you been able to apply emotional restraint in everyday life? How? Do you think that being emotional restraint can help your relationships with family members, friends, teachers, etc.? Do you think that emotional restraint can help you achieve your goals?*

Invite students to discuss the questions in the same groups they worked with. Limit their discussion time so that they have time to share their conclusions with the class. Lead them to realize that they can control their feelings if they take their time to acknowledge them. Explain that it is important to recognize our feelings and accept them without judgement, only then can we move past them and make decisions without having our emotions take over.

## TEACHING TIP

Teenagers tend to have negative reactions to failure more often than not. You can help them by using different strategies. For example, next time they are about to judge themselves harshly tell them to try and treat themselves how they would their best friend. Have them reflect on why we tend to be more severe with ourselves. If we try to talk to ourselves the way we talk to people we care about we would see a change in our reactions to different situations. It is important to be kind to oneself in order to be able to be kind to others.