

ABILITY TO CHANGE 1. THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Objective: Students will distinguish the difference between thoughts and emotions by analyzing different experiences in their lives.

WARM UP

Write some acronyms on the board and ask students to work in pairs and copy them. Explain what acronyms are: *an abbreviation formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word*. Then ask students to work out what the acronyms stand for. To make the warm up more dynamic have them compete by registering which pair finishes first. Consider telling them the first one as an example.

Suggested acronyms:

- 1 NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- 2 ESPN – Entertainment and Sports Programming Network
- 3 NFL – National Football League
- 4 WWW – World Wide Web
- 5 LOL – Laugh out loud
- 6 UFO – Unidentified Flying Object

Invite students to give you other acronyms and write them on the board. It is common for students to use acronyms in text messages and chats. Insist that the acronyms should be in English.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with or you may ask them to copy it in their notebooks.
- 2 In pairs, have students read the introduction of *Thoughts and Emotions*. Consider inviting two different students to read it out loud as the class follows. Then ask a volunteer to read the definition of *emotion* out loud.
- 3 Ask students to work in pairs and encourage them to read the sentences carefully and reflect on them. Explain that they should decide if the sentences are thoughts or

emotions. Read the first one out loud and answer together as a class.

- 4 After they have finished labeling the sentences, have a class discussion about other sentences that we use to disguise emotions. Have students write them on the space provided.
- 5 Ask students to discuss with their pair other emotions they have felt apart from those on the Emotion Thermometer. Then tell them to write a situation in which they have felt the emotions shown on the handout.
- 6 Invite pairs to get together and share their answers and discuss their results.

WRAP IT UP

- 7 *Do you disguise your emotions? Why do you think you do that? Are there any emotions you have a hard time dealing with? Which ones? Why is it hard for you to deal with those emotions? Do you think thoughts can help you deal with your emotions?*

Have students stay in the groups they have formed and discuss the questions. After you allow some time for them to answer them, have a class discussion about the difference between thoughts and emotions and why sometimes we choose to avoid them. Explain that it is important to acknowledge our feelings in order to know the reasons behind them and heal or act accordingly.

TEACHING TIP

In psychology and psychiatry, many acronyms are used. A very smart acronym is *SAD*, which stands for *Seasonal Affective Disorder*. *SAD* is a type of depression that is related to changes in seasons. People will usually start having symptoms in the fall and continue having them during the winter. These symptoms will go away during the sunnier days of spring and summer.

Tell students it is important to keep emotions in check to be able to recognize when they are not feeling well and seek help when need it.

ABILITY TO CHANGE 2. MY TRIGGERS

Objective: Students will be able to identify what is triggering the way they feel at certain times. This will allow them to have more clarity on what they need to do or what they need to ask for to change the circumstances that are making them uncomfortable.

WARM UP

Consider using a watch or a cellphone to time your students. Ask students to work in pairs. Invite them to use scrap paper for this activity. First, tell them they have 50 seconds to find three things they enjoy doing and write them down on the scrap paper. Then tell them they have 40 seconds to find three things they dislike. Lastly, tell students they have 30 seconds to write three things that make them angry. Ask them to compare their lists with another pair. Elicit some examples and have a short discussion about what they feel when the situations they wrote down happen.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with. You can also project the handout and they can answer in their notebooks later on.
- 2 Invite some volunteers to read the introduction out loud. Then, read some of the most common needs that become emotional triggers and encourage students to share their points of view about them.
- 3 You could ask students to get into pairs and discuss if there's an emotional trigger they've ever felt and encourage them to share their experience. Then ask them to write individually other needs they consider should be included. Allow some time for students to do so.
- 4 Focus students' attention on the second chart and ask them to individually answer the first three questions in the handout about a situation that triggered them in the past week. Encourage students to use words from the Common Needs that Become Emotional Triggers chart.

5 Elicit some answers and invite the students to give and receive feedback on them.

6 Allow enough time for students to answer the last three questions. Then invite them to reflect on the situation and share their conclusion after the feedback they received from their classmates. You may ask them if their point of view has changed after hearing others opinions about it.

WRAP IT UP

- 7 *Do you think you overreacted to the situation? Do you honestly think that the person you argued with was intentionally doing something (ignoring, disrespecting, blocking you, etc.) to make you angry? Do you think the situation really had so much value?*

Invite students to discuss the questions in groups. Ask some volunteers to share their answers. Ask them, *why is it important to know your triggers?* Explain the importance of not judging their emotions and instead practice finding out the real cause behind them.

TEACHING TIP

A person's rate of breathing, blood flow, tension in their muscles, and constriction in their stomach represents a pattern identified as a feeling. The sooner a person recognizes they are breathing quickly or not at all, that certain muscles in their bodies tightened, or that they feel a whole in their stomach, the person needs to stop and seek the reason for that feeling, the trigger. Unfortunately, at times a person may have a hard time describing the feeling. However, it is important to acknowledge feelings without judging them or fearing them. Once a feeling is recognized, it is possible to manage it or even change it.

ABILITY TO CHANGE 3. SYNERGY

Objective: Students will learn about the power of team work and understand that being able to effectively work and solve problems as a team is useful for many situations in life.

WARM UP

Tell students you want to make the perfect playlist for a party. As a class, brainstorm all the songs that could go on the playlist. After you have enough songs and all or most of the students have participated, ask them if they think they could have done the playlist on their own in the same amount of time and with the same variety of songs. Explain that team work is an important part of life, that combines abilities to help us find better solutions faster.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with or you may ask them to copy it in their notebooks.
- 2 Ask a student to read the meaning of *synergy* from the handout. Then invite different students to read each of the instructions, make sure everyone understands them. Have students work in groups of three to brainstorm and explain the synergy in a car, a smartphone, a soccer team. Invite one or two students to share their explanations with the whole class.
- 3 Tell students to skim the questions from the handout. Make sure they understand all the vocabulary. Consider explaining the words witness and gender. Then, read the following story and ask them to individually try to answer all the questions.

The story

Sara was driving along Victoria Avenue early in the morning when she noticed two people walking quickly out of a convenience store. She had to stop for a red light. While she was stopped, she saw the same two people get into a small Japanese car and take off very quickly. The car was silver, and its registration was *MFT*

9385. As they drove away, a man came running out of the convenience store shouting and waving his arms. She drove over to the man and learned that he had just been robbed over \$40,000 in cash, 15 bags of chips, four six-packs of soda, a USB cable, and his wallet. When the police arrived a few minutes later, they gave her this list of questions to answer. You also saw everything; can you answer the questions for her?

- 4 Read them the story again. Have students stay in the same teams from step 2, ask them to compare their answers, and reach a consensus among the group.
- 5 Invite students to compare their answers with another team. Then check them as a class.
- 6 Tell students to stay in their groups and examine the discussion points. Discuss their answers as a class.

WRAP IT UP

- 7 *Why is synergy important? Why do you think a team can achieve more if they have synergy? What things can a team do to achieve synergy? Have you ever accomplished synergy while working in a team? If yes, how did you achieve it? If no, how do you think you could have improved?*

Allow enough time for students to read the questions in their groups and answer them. Have a class discussion on synergy and how team work is all about everyone doing their fair share to achieve a better result for all.

TEACHING TIP

Synergy has more to do with increasing the speed in the actions taken by a group and the flexibility to coordinate decisions that seem to be inspired by one another. To make synergy, the members of a team need to let go of any feelings they might have about each other to increase their level of cooperation. By doing this, all members will appreciate and notice one another from a fresh perspective and start making decisions for the good of the team and not just themselves.

ABILITY TO CHANGE 4. RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Objective: Students will be able to give and receive feedback and deal with it by understanding others' point of view and practicing self-regulation.

WARM UP

Write the word *squiggle* on the board. Explain to students what the word means: *a short line that curls and loops in an irregular way*. Make a squiggle on the board. Ask students to use their imagination and invite a volunteer to go to the board and turn your squiggle into whatever they imagine it looks like. Invite other students to turn the same squiggle into something else. Explain how everyone has their own point of view to share. As a class, discuss why it is important to listen to other perspectives.

STEP BY STEP

- 1 Make sure students have the printed handout they need to work with, or you can project it over a suitable area and ask them to work in their notebooks. Read out loud the introduction on the handout about feedback. Further explain the concept if needed.
- 2 Ask students to get into pairs and read the situation. Then invite them to reflect on what they would do and how they would feel if they were in the same situation, both as the person giving the feedback and the one who is receiving it.
- 3 Allow enough time so they can talk about the situation and how not giving Brad feedback can affect their friendship. Invite them to write their ideas on the Notes section. Focus their attention on the real problem and how Brad is unaware of the actual reason his friend has stopped answering his texts. Now, ask students to brainstorm the future implications of not giving Brad feedback and write their ideas on the Notes section.

- 4 Invite students to take a look at the ways Brad's friend has decided to give him feedback. Ask students to individually take a moment and pretend they are Brad and fill in the space for receiving feedback. Encourage them to understand how uncomfortable a situation like that might be but still try to make the most of it.
- 5 In pairs, again, have them write their ideas on how to accept feedback and compare them with another pair. Ask students to share some of their answers and elicit their thoughts and feelings about the situation.

WRAP IT UP

- 6 *Have you ever had to give someone feedback? How did you do it? How did that person react? How do you feel when someone gives you feedback? How do you react? In what situations do you think it's important to know how to give and receive feedback? Why?*

Have students get into groups and discuss the questions. Then, you could ask if anyone would like to share a past situation related to feedback. You may share a personal experience on the subject to encourage students to talk about their own.

TEACHING TIP

As teachers, it is part of our jobs to give feedback to students, and it can be difficult at times. A good way to do so is remembering to not only point out a mistake but to focus on the positive aspects of an action too. For example, explain why they could have done differently but also talk about the effort they made and how they can learn from a mistake.

Feedback should be given in time so students can respond positively and remember the experience about what they certainly learned. However, if we wait too long, the moment is lost, and the student might not connect the feedback with the action.