CROSSROADS

Learning Context:
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Theme:
RESPONDING TO CHANGES AND CHALLENGES
Activity Theme 1: JUGGLING AND TIME MANAGEMENT

→ Focus Area:
Skills and strategies for managing change and challenges

→ Content Focus:
• Time management
• Juggling commitments
• Plans and expectations

→ Outcomes:
5.3 Apply skills and strategies to achieve a positive outcome in a range of different contexts.

→ Skills:
Skills for managing stress – time management, positive thinking, relaxation techniques, seeking help.

WHY
Having time to ourselves and making time for school, family and work all contribute to a meaningful and fulfilled life. It is important to recognise that we need to commit time to all parts of our life and learning about the tips and tools to do this assists us to be successful and happy.
HOW

- Small group
- Whole group
- Individual activities
- Offline + online

**Equipment required:**

- A3 & A4 Paper (at least 1 per student)
- Pens/textas
- Access to the internet and laptop/tablet/phone
- *My life balance worksheet*

WHAT

**MINDMAP: JUGGLING COMMITMENTS & MANAGING TIME WELL**

- Students use A3 paper to record all the events/tasks/activities they have done over the last week.
- Students create a priority list by numbering each of their listed activities, with number one being the highest priority activity.

*For a technology based alternative, Popplet Lite is a free app for iPad and iPhone that allows students to create mindmaps online-available through the iTunes Store.*

**THINK-PAIR-SHARE**

- Students think about the following questions;
  1. How do you manage to remember and complete activities, events and everything you need to do on a weekly basis? What do you use to do this?
  2. What things distract you and prevent you from completing tasks?
  3. What could you do differently to increase your productivity on a weekly basis?
- Students share their answers with a partner.
- As a whole group, record the top 5 ideas.

**GROUP DISCUSSION & DEBATE**

- Debate topic: We should attend school/work for a maximum of 4 days per week.
- Split in two groups and allocate one group to the ‘agree’ and the other to the ‘disagree’ side.
- In these groups, all students record as many dot points for their side of the debate to argue their position. This could be done sing A4 paper or using an online space.
- After two minutes, a coin is tossed to see which group will go first.
- Each student takes it in turns, alternating between each argument group until all students’ dot points have been read out aloud and justified.
• Group debrief using the questions below:
  - Which dot point (it can be your own) do you believe best summed up the argument for each group?
  - Did your opinion differ from your allocated side of the argument? Why?
  - Has your opinion changed after hearing other people's ideas? Why? Why not?

LIFE BALANCE SCHEDULE
• Group discussion:
  - What creates a work/school life balance?
  - What would your week look like if it were balanced between school and your personal life?
• Students complete the following worksheets from the Personal Future Theme (if not already completed)
  - SMART Goals Student Worksheet
  - My Goals Student Worksheet
• Students complete the *My life balance schedule worksheet*. 
My life balance schedule

Using the four tips presented below, fill out your weekly work/school life balance template.

TIPS

1. Write two weekly goals
   • For each goal, list exactly what you need to do to achieve them.

2. Unplug/limit distractions
   • While technology is great, unplugging is an important component of creating a balance in your life. *If you need your laptop/tablet to complete homework/study and assignments, disconnect the internet to increase your focus on a task or just to have a necessary break from being ‘connected’.

3. Exercise and relax
   • Exercise is a well documented stress reliever and relaxing will give your brain the time it needs to regenerate and prepare itself for new information and ideas!

4. Reward your successes (small and big)
   • Did you achieve your weekly goal? Celebrate!

For further information you may like to read these Fact Sheets from ReachOut.com

• Managing your time: http://au.reachout.com/managing-your-time
• Balance study and relaxation: http://au.reachout.com/managing-your-time
• Tips for getting motivated: http://au.reachout.com/tips-for-getting-motivated

Complete the following goals and the life balance schedule over the page, listing all your activities and the time you are going to allocate under each of the four goals (You may also choose to complete your own design or investigate an online solution/app for writing up your schedule)

Weekly Goal 1: ________________________________________________________________

What I need to do to achieve it: ________________________________________________

Weekly Goal 2: ________________________________________________________________

What I need to do to achieve it: ________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Work</td>
<td>Unplug time</td>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Relax</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Theme 2: STRESS MANAGEMENT

→ Focus Area:
Skills and strategies for managing change and challenges

→ Content Focus:
• Stress management
• Being realistic
• Seeking support and help

→ Outcomes:
3.3 Evaluate the skills and actions that could be used in various situations which promote the health, safety and wellbeing of self and other.

→ Skills:
Skills for managing stress – time management, positive thinking, relaxation techniques, seeking help.

WHY

Stress is any change (internal or external) to our body that we have to adapt to and is a natural part of our life. While everyone has a different reaction to stress, if left unchecked, research has shown that stress can lead to things such as anxiety, depression, poor concentration as well as drug and alcohol abuse. It is therefore vitally important that students learn about, and practice stress management techniques to build their resilience for stressful times.

Teacher further reading:
• Edutopia article – Can stress help students? http://www.edutopia.org/blog/can-stress-help-students-renee-jain
HOW

• Small group
• Whole group
• Individual activities
• Offline + online

Equipment required:

• Butchers paper
• Pens/textas
• Access to the internet and laptop/tablet/phone
  - Eustress – Distress clip – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWwG25sCRwA
  - Dave Levin at Character Lab – WOOP method – https://vimeo.com/109847825
  - WOOP – http://www.woopmylife.org/
• Small balls such as nerf balls (soft)
• WOOP Worksheet downloadable from https://characterlab.org/goal-setting

WHAT

GROUP DISCUSSION – EUSTRESS VS DISTRESS

• Whole group brainstorm.
  - What is stress?
  - What causes stress?
• Students watch the YouTube clip – Eustress – Distress https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWwG25sCRwA
• The clip explains different types of stress – Eustress and Distress.
• Students record as many interesting facts they find throughout the clip.
• Students discuss their interesting facts they found with the whole group

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: WAYS OF COPING WITH STRESS

• Students work in groups of 3 to record all the positive and negative ways people cope with stress. Each group has 6 minutes to complete their lists.
• Students then combine 2 small groups to create a larger group to share their answers.

WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION: HOW DO YOU COPE?

• As a whole group, students share at least one strategy they have used or would use to cope with stress.
• Guiding points:
  - What was the cause of the stress?
  - What strategy/ies did you use?
  - Describe how this strategy worked for you.

BALL TOSS: PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS
• This activity is designed to give students an example of a physically based stress relieving activity.
• Students stand in an open area (move chairs/tables if needed to create an open space).
• Using a soft ball such as a nerf ball, students throw the ball underarm around the room in silence.
• Rules:
  - Everyone must be silent.
  - Underarm throws only.
  - You cannot throw the ball back to the student who you received it from.
  - If you miss the ball or make a sound you are out until the next round.
  - Game continues until there are only 2 students remaining.
  - For increased difficulty, use two or more balls.

• Discussion questions following activity:
  - Physical activity is great for relieving stress. What’s your favourite physical activity?
  - How does your body feel physically when you are stressed?
  - How does your body feel when you are relaxed?

INDIVIDUAL TASK: VISUALISING YOUR GOALS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT
• Teachers: Prior to this activity, to gain an understanding of WOOP, view this short clip: https://vimeo.com/109847825
• Visualising our goals is one way that we can manage stress as we seek to stop, think in the moment, be realistic and put plans in place to achieve them.
• ‘Mental Contrasting (the Wish, Outcome, and Obstacle part of WOOP) is a visualisation technique that helps people to gain insight into their wishes and to clearly identify the obstacles that stand in the way of realising these wishes. WOOP is an evidence-based self-regulatory strategy that people can use effectively on their own to change their behaviour across everyday life (e.g., health, school, work, play, relationships).’ (information from http://www.woopmylife.org/)

WOOP:
• Students head to the website http://www.woopmylife.org/ to read and understand WOOP.
• Students complete a WOOP.
• If using mobile devices, students can download the free app WOOP to and through college from iTunes or on Google Play and complete their first WOOP.
• If students do not have access to mobile devices, a WOOP worksheet is available for download here https://characterlab.org/goal-setting.
GRAFFITI WALK: EXPLORING STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Place 6 large pieces of butchers paper around the room with the following headings:
  - Stress strategies
  - Beating exam stress
  - Helping a friend with stress.
- Students work in 6 groups.
- Each group starts on a graffiti sheet.
- Students spend 2 minutes at each graffiti sheet and move around the room recording as many ideas as they can at each graffiti sheet, until each group has completed answers to each of the three themes.
- Invite each student to explore further ideas for the theme of their choice using the following fact sheets from ReachOut.com;
- *Prior to session, these factsheets can be downloaded and printed from ReachOut.com if students do not have access to mobile devices, laptops or desktop computers.

MINDFULNESS

- Explain to students that mindfulness is all about focusing on the present and allowing thoughts, emotions and worries to pass through.
- Students work through the following two practical mindfulness activities.

1. **Smiling Mind**

Exploring the breath:

- Options for conducting this session include:
  - Use a mobile device (tablet/phone) by downloading the free Smiling Mind app (available through iTunes or Google Play)
    - Use the app as a whole group with a speaker attached to the tablet/phone
    OR
    - Individual students use the app using mobile devices and headphones.

Reflection Activity:

- Students complete a Think-Pair-Share activity using the following questions as prompts.
  - What are your first impressions of Smiling Mind?
  - Would you promote Smiling Mind to your friends? Why? Why not?
  - Have you participated in mindfulness previously? If so, what was the program/app/technique? How does it compare to Smiling Mind?
2. Mindful Colouring

• Free Mindful Colouring Sheets can be downloaded from http://www.education.com/worksheets/mandalas/

• Students work alone to complete at least 20 minutes of mindful colouring using one of the downloaded colouring in pages.

• Remind students while colouring that they are to focus their attention (be mindful) on;
  - completing the colouring-in in silence
  - choosing which colour pens/textas to use
  - colouring in each component &
  - the sounds they can hear