

## Emotional awareness program

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### About the EAP

Emotional dysregulation has emerged as one of the most pressing issues in today's ever-changing world. As humankind evolves from survival to innovation and evolution, life changes from survival instincts to grounds for more complex emotions that require evolved regulation strategies. Strategies that are not taught, and intuitively unknown that stem a host of behavioral issues and impulsive behavior. The best way to target this problem is also the simplest: to meet the problem at its source and teach the future of tomorrow reliable, simple strategies to create a healthy system of self-regulation.

In order to achieve this, the EAP proposes a multi-lesson plan targeted towards enabling emotional awareness, strategies for self-regulation and enables a more holistic understanding for emotions as a whole. Teaching young learner's strategies for emotional self-regulation is the best way to create a stronger, smarter and healthier tomorrow.

In this program, there are lessons designed to address different disruptive behaviours. Each lesson will address a particular behaviour, explaining the activity and its intended effect.

The sections will be as follows:

1. Dealing with extreme emotions
2. Active self-regulation
3. Empathy building
4. Self-esteem building
5. Refocusing

Inevitably there will be overlap between lessons and which area they target and subsequently can be used within.

Table of strategy applications

Purpose	Lesson number
Dealing with extreme emotions	5, 6, 9
Active self-regulation	6,9,8
Empathy building	7
Self esteem building	2,3
Refocusing	1

### Lesson 1: Grounding techniques

Materials required: relaxing music playing in the background.

Aim: To enable children to refocus their attention.

Duration: 5 minutes per method.

In this lesson we will be focusing on grounding techniques. There are multiple grounding techniques available online, however the two techniques explained in this section are hailed as the most effective at dealing with anxiety and refocusing attention.

You can choose any 2 of the three methods to share with the class.

Activity	Instructions	Skill
i. 4-7-8 method	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have the children sit down in a comfortable position.</li><li>2. Play some soft music in the background.</li><li>3. Everyone should close their eyes.</li><li>4. Inhale for four counts, hold for seven counts, and exhale for eight counts.</li><li>5. Repeat 3-4 times, and instruct children to use it when necessary, however many times they may need it.</li></ol>	This helps children ground themselves and become more present in the moment. In times of inattention, distractions, or being overstimulated simple breathing techniques help the mind focus on the present situation by forcing the individual to become present.
ii. Box breathing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In this technique the key number is four.</li><li>2. Inhale for four counts, hold for four counts, exhale for four counts and hold for four counts.</li><li>3. Repeat as many times as necessary.</li></ol>	

iii.     5-4-3-2-1 Method	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask everyone to take a deep breath.</li> <li>2. Focus on 5 things they can touch.</li> <li>3. 4 things they can hear.</li> <li>4. 3 things they can see.</li> <li>5. 2 things they can smell.</li> <li>6. 1 thing they can taste.</li> </ol>	
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## Lesson 2: affirmations

Materials required: pen, pencil and paper

Aim: To inculcate the habit of positive self-talk and increase self-belief.

Duration:

Activity	Instructions	Skill
Writing down and practicing affirmations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have the children write down the following sentences: <i>I know who I am.</i> <i>I love who I am.</i> <i>I love the way I am learning from my mistakes.</i> <i>I can't wait to see who I am going to become.</i> <i>I believe in myself, and I trust myself.</i></li><li>2. Read the affirmations out together as a class</li></ol>	<p>These affirmations help create a foundation for more positive self-talk and increased self-belief. Over 60% of children between the ages of 6-12 have some form of a struggle with being self-conscious and becoming increasingly insecure. The best way to deal with the issue is also the simplest: to create a strong sense of self and introduce the concept of self-love at a young age.</p> <p>According to 'the power of your subconscious mind', a lot of processing, awareness and self-realization happens at a subconscious level. Affirmations work in a similar manner, affecting the way one perceives and treats themselves subconsciously which creates the possibility of a bigger-greater impact.</p>

### Lesson 3: Positive self-talk

Materials required: paper, pencil/pen

Aim: To help create a shift from negative self-belief to positive self-belief.

Duration: 15 minutes

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Begin with a classroom discussion on how children react to high-stress situations. Help them realize the kind of language they use when speaking to themselves.</li><li>2. Pick three common sentences from the class discussion that reflect a poor sense of self and rephrase them to allow more space and grace for mistakes. Have the children write down these phrases for themselves and continue the list if they have more ideas.</li><li>3. If there are no phrases brought up naturally during the discussion, here are some default phrases to use: A. It's all my fault; I can't do anything right. → I made a mistake that I am going to learn from. Everyone makes</li></ol>	<p>This subtle rephrasing stems from the understanding that the way one speaks to themselves has a very real impact on their perception of their abilities. Highly negative self-talk is a precursor to often feeling overwhelmed, insecure and left behind. The concept of positive self-talk stems from CBT [cognitive behavioural therapy] in which the power of thoughts and perception is explored in the context of self.</p> <p>Positive self-talk helps prepare students with the reality that they will make mistakes, and helps them learn how to move on from that rather than making one negative experience final in their mind.</p>

	<p>mistakes and I did too. It's okay.</p> <p>B. I'm never going to be able to finish this. It's too much work! → I have a lot to do, so I am going to try and start step by step and figure I out. I can do whatever I put my mind to, I just need to think calmly.</p> <p>C. Talking in superlatives. Any statement that has finality. If you mess up in a subject, automatically saying you are the worst in that subject→ I did not understand something and that is okay. I will learn from what I didn't understand and do better next time.</p>	
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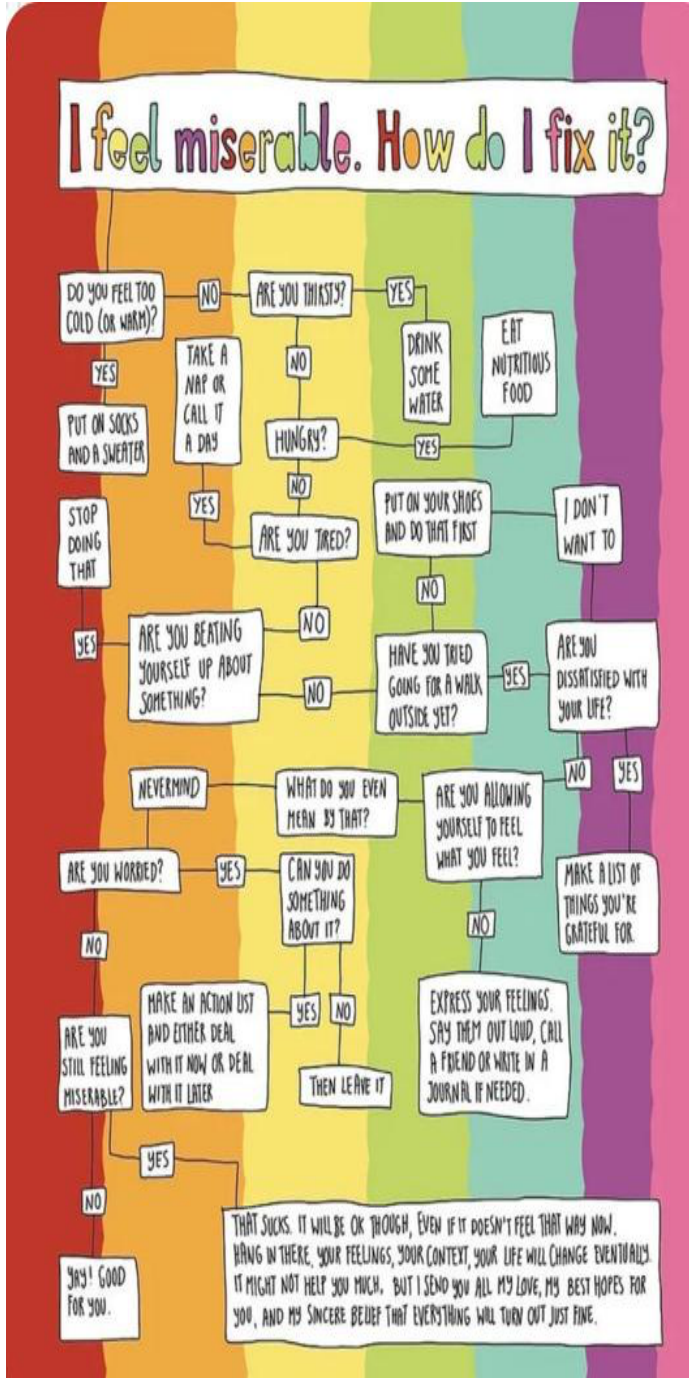
Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ2YQp3judg>

## Lesson 4: 'How do I fix it' chart

Materials required: basic stationery

Aim: To create positive internal dialogue and healthy coping strategies.

Duration: 15 minutes

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have the children identify one problem statement collectively as a class. [for example: I am sad/ I am angry].</li> <li>2. Follow a similar phrasing pattern as a reference. you can stop after four or five sentence-solutions.</li> <li>3. Exemplar phrases you can include → solution: Are you hungry? → ask for a snack.</li> </ol>	<p>It helps children isolate where impulsive emotions start from and serves as a distraction helping them focus their energy on understanding <i>why</i> they are feeling the way they are feeling. This helps break the cycle of giving in to powerful emotions and creates a medium through which space for processing those emotions as one experiences it.</p>



## Lesson 5: expression

Materials required: paper, pencils/colour pencils

Aim: to create healthy means of expression

Duration: 15 minutes

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have the children draw or write about one experience they've had during the day.</li><li>2. Set a time limit beforehand and encourage them use the time as an opportunity to express themselves, especially if they feel overwhelmed.</li></ol>	This exercise gives children a healthy medium of expression, especially to process feelings they don't yet comprehend that can be affecting their behavior.

## Lesson 6: visual representation

Materials required: nothing

Aim: To enable students to use visual representations as a way to healthily deal with emotions.

Duration: 5 minutes [7 if the video is played]

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make everyone close their eyes and take a deep breath.</li><li>2. Ask them to remember the last they felt very angry/hurt/sad. Where did they feel it? [if there is no consensus or answer, feel free to follow the flow of the video]</li><li>3. Ask them to imagine that feeling as a tiny rope only they can see and quickly pull it all out.</li><li>4. Fold it into a little ball in their hands, and get ready and throw it as far away from themselves as they can.</li></ol>	<p>Visualization is a very powerful tool used by people across all age groups. In this context it helps children playfully interact and regulate their emotions.</p> <p>Changing emotions from an intangible state of being to a tangible state of being helps provide a visual manner of processing difficult, heavy or complex emotions.</p>

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKD4Mg3nbnY> [till 1:10]

## Lesson 7: empathy

Materials required: None

Aim: to help create the idea of holding space for other individual's' points of view.

Duration: 10 minutes

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduce a situation in which there is an adult and a child. The adult and child are in a state of conflict, and as a result the adult has done something the child dislikes.</li><li>2. Go through the situation with the children and ask them to try imaging themselves in the other persons shoes. Ask pointed questions such as:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. what would <i>you</i> do in this situation?</li><li>b. what do you suggest should happen?</li><li>c. do you understand why the decisions were made the way they were?</li></ol></li><li>3. Repeat the exercise with a conflict in peers, and exercise children's imagination by encouraging them to, once again, "imagine themselves in the other persons shoes".</li></ol>	Empathy is one of the most integral skills one can learn. It allows for greater trust and connection with others, leading to more meaningful conversations and a sense of belonging. Empathy also enhances individual well-being by contributing to emotional regulation and increasing feelings of happiness and self-worth by fostering understanding and compassion.

## Lesson 8: challenge jar

Materials required: paper, pencils, a jar/storage container.

Aim: to create a matrix of challenging and fun activities.

Duration: 20 minutes

Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask students to divide the paper in half lengthwise, and then five times breadthwise. This should leave 10 boxes.</li><li>2. In 5 of these boxes have the children write down leisure/hobby activities. i.e: play with a friend, read a book, etc. [something they enjoy].</li><li>3. In the other 5 boxes have the children write down 5 challenging things. i.e: do homework, practice an instrument, etc.</li><li>4. Cut up these pieces, fold them and put them in the jar.</li><li>5. Ask the students to diligently follow the jar for 10 days, and note down their experiences.</li></ol>	<p>A challenge jar creates a healthy balance between play and effort. By deciding their own tasks and setting the difficulty level in a more personalised manner, problem areas are self-targeted and there is a greater feeling of control. This in turn makes challenging activities more <i>fun</i> and <i>enjoyable</i> as it is presented in a playful and voluntary manner.</p>

## Lesson 9: embodied cognition

Materials required: any device/ system that plays music

Aim: to provide a quick mood stabilizer and recenter and refocus the students.

Duration: 1 minute, longer depending on the setting.


Activity	Instructions	Skill
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Set a timer for 30 seconds/ to a minute.</li><li>2. Play a fun, well recognized song that is fairly upbeat. [for example: can't stop the feeling, better when I'm dancing,etc]</li><li>3. Have everyone stand up and mark out a 'movement square'. This will be their full range of movement, to ensure there are no injuries/ clashes.</li><li>4. Start the timer and the music!</li></ol>	<p>A 'dance break' serves as a perfect short, refocusing tool. For a lot of students sitting in one p[lace for extended periods of time is tedious and causes them to lose focus. This is primarily because learning at younger ages is done through all five senses, and sitting in one place often becomes under stimulating.</p> <p>Dancing provides audio, visual and kinesthetic stimulation, while simultaneously giving students a 'boost of energy' helping them bring their focus back to balance and creating a more engaged group of young learners.</p>

## Lesson 10: emotions wheel

Materials required: paper and basic stationary. (Pencils, erasers]

Aim: To create a healthy understanding of emotions.

Duration: 10- 15 minutes.

Activity	instructions	skill
<p>Creating an emotions wheel.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw a circle, divide it into 6 parts and try to fill in those 6 parts with any emotions.</li> <li>2. Draw a circle outside of the circle with the emotions. In the outer circle, write an experience in each corresponding section to the emotion. For example: if the emotion in the inner circle is happy, write an experience in the outer circle when you have felt happy.</li> </ol>	<p>The aim of this lesson is two part: primarily it aims to help children learn how to self-regulate. When going through the activity it is important to remind the children that there is no such thing as a bad emotion, but if there are emotions that feel draining to you; i.e. make you less excited, you can always use the emotions wheel to focus on experiences that bring you more joy, and replicate them. The goal is to create a small, foundational system of routine coping mechanisms to help children return to an emotionally neutral healthy normal. Secondly, this lesson also aims to destigmatize emotions. Emotions such as anger and guilt are deemed 'negative' and thus perceived as a personal short-coming or repressed. This repression is what leads to outburst and sudden erratic behavior.</p>