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Foundations for Wellbeing

Year 1, lesson 3: Paying attention to pleasant feelings



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QUALITY ASSURED RESOURCE
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Paying attention to pleasant feelings

This is the third of five lessons on self-regulation, mental health and wellbeing, for year 1. This lesson focuses on habitual thoughts and emotions, and how these can be managed or changed.

To encourage pupils to use the self-regulation strategies taught in these lessons more automatically, autonomously and effectively, it is important to revisit and reinforce them regularly, as part of a whole-school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. The extension activities are designed to support this (for more information, see the Teacher Handbook). To learn more, please visit our self-guided online courses, which are available to all School Plus members.

The lesson plan is based on a 45-minute lesson. The timings given are the minimum required to deliver the activities, but you may wish to spend longer exploring each activity.

Learning objective and outcomes

To learn how to pay attention to pleasant feelings.

Pupils will be able to:

- identify pleasant and unpleasant feelings
- explain what can help change less pleasant feelings to more pleasant ones
- describe how the brain helps us pay attention to pleasant feelings

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Flipchart paper and pens
- Persona puppet (or doll/teddy)
- Resource 1: *Kayla's day* [one per pair]
- Resource 2: *Pleasant or unpleasant?* [one per pair]
- Resource 3: *Visual supports* [Support option, as required]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher handbook notes before teaching this lesson. They include guidance on establishing a safe learning environment, supporting pupils with additional vulnerabilities, using assessment and personal reflection effectively, and embedding the learning. They also outline useful subject knowledge on the theory and evidence informing these lessons, self-regulation strategies and relevant neuroscience.

The lesson plans should be used flexibly, and you are encouraged to adapt them to meet the specific needs and abilities of your pupils. It is also important to consider sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. If safeguarding concerns arise during this lesson, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with your school policy.

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Baseline assessment

Introduction (Slides 9-11, 2 mins)

Establish or revisit ground rules. Explain that if pupils have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can speak to you individually or write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Using slide 10, begin by briefly recapping the learning from last lesson.

Introduce today's learning objective and outcomes. Explain that this lesson will be about how feelings can be pleasant or unpleasant, and how we can pay attention to more pleasant ones.

Baseline assessment activity (Slides 12-13, 7 mins)

Use a persona puppet (or doll/teddy) to introduce a character who is going to a new after-school club. Ask pupils to suggest some of the feelings the puppet might have about going to the club?
Answers might include: nervous; worried; happy; excited; scared; shy; interested; curious.

Write their responses on the flipchart or whiteboard in a list. Explain that pleasant feelings might make the puppet feel happy or good inside, and that unpleasant feelings might make them feel uncomfortable or unhappy inside. Ask pupils which of the feelings on the list are pleasant, and which are unpleasant.
For example:
Pleasant: happy; excited; interested/curious.
Unpleasant: worried; scared; nervous/shy.

Refer to the unpleasant feelings and ask pupils what the puppet could do to think differently about going to the club and have more pleasant feelings. Add their ideas to the flipchart or whiteboard.

Pupil responses can be used to gauge what they already know about pleasant and unpleasant feelings, and how they can be changed. Note any misconceptions or gaps in understanding and aim to address these during the lesson. For example, you may want to spend more time on the difference between pleasant and unpleasant feelings using further examples.

Core activities

A day of feelings (Slides 14-15, 15 mins)

Introduce Kayla using slide 14. In pairs, give pupils **Resource 1: Kayla's day** and ask them to identify the nice and not so nice parts of her day. Take feedback and share key learning using slide 14:
Nice: *The weather is sunny, she is looking forward to seeing friends, she has a new scooter, her Auntie helps her up when she falls, she looks at flowers.*
Not so nice: *Falling off the scooter, Kayla's friends already playing a game, Kayla trying to join in but doesn't know how.*

Then, using the storyboard to support them, ask pupils:

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- how Kayla might be feeling during these times
- whether these feelings are pleasant, unpleasant, or a mix of both.

Ask pupils to write their responses into the grid on **Resource 2: Pleasant or unpleasant?** and take feedback.
Pupils might suggest:
Sunny weather – relaxed, happy – pleasant.
Looking forward to seeing friends – excited, happy – pleasant.
A new scooter – excited, happy – pleasant.
Falling off the scooter – shocked, upset, scared – unpleasant.
When Auntie helps Kayla up – happy, relieved but also shocked from falling off – mix of both.
Looking at flowers – relaxed, happy, calm – pleasant.
Kayla's friends are already playing a game – sad, upset, jealous – unpleasant.
Kayla tries to join in but doesn't know how – frustrated, angry – unpleasant.

Support: To help identify how Kayla is feeling, ask pupils to use **Resource 3: Visual supports**.

Pleasant feelings (Slides 16-18, 10 mins)

Using slide 16, read the conversation between Kayla and her auntie with pupils.
Ask pupils to help answer Auntie's question: Next time, if your friends are playing a game and you want to join in, what might help?

Pupils might suggest that Kayla could: ask them to explain the game so she knows what to do; stand back for a while and try to follow the game; play with her friends and not worry too much about getting it 'right'; remember how it feels to play the game and the pleasant feelings she could have.

Next, show Kayla feeling happier on slide 17. Ask pupils, what helped Kayla to have more pleasant feelings?
Take feedback. Pupils might suggest: talking to Auntie about what happened, Auntie asking Kayla about pleasant things that happened that day, Auntie saying well done, Kayla thinking about what she could do differently next time.

Highlight that, like Kayla, everyone experiences both pleasant and unpleasant feelings sometimes. Explain that the brain helps us to notice pleasant feelings and things, and that with practice, the brain will become better at paying attention to these.

Share the new scenario about Kayla on slide 18. Ask pupils what Kayla could do to help with the unpleasant feelings and pay attention to pleasant ones?
Pupils might suggest: talk to Auntie about how she is feeling; talk to Auntie about buying her friend a present and giving it to her another time; focus on how pleasant it will be to celebrate with her friend another time; think about the nice things to do at Grannie's house.

Challenge: Ask pupils to discuss what Kayla's friends could do to help her next time she wants to join in but is finding it difficult to? *Pupils might say: stop the game for a moment and give Kayla a chance to join in, explain what is happening in the game so she feels more confident to join in, show her that she is welcome to join in by talking to her or smiling.*

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Reflection and Endpoint assessment

Reflection and Endpoint assessment (Slides 19-20, 8 mins)

Ask pupils to think about something that they might not enjoy. For example, an activity that they might find difficult or boring. What could help them to have more pleasant feelings about the activity? As this is a personal reflection, they do not need to share their responses with the class.

Refer to the list of pleasant and unpleasant feelings from the baseline assessment and ask pupils to suggest other feelings to go under each heading, based on their learning in the lesson. Next, ask them to add or change their ideas about what could help the puppet pay attention to more pleasant feelings, including how the brain can help. Write pupils' suggestions in a different colour pen, so that you can see their progress, and use this to inform future teaching.

Pupils might suggest: think what could be fun about the group and how this might make them feel; talk about the unpleasant feelings with a friend or trusted adult; take a teddy/soft toy so if they feel worried they can hold/cuddle it; wear their favourite t-shirt or top so they feel comfy; take a tasty snack to the group, with practice the brain will get better at paying attention to more pleasant feelings.

Check the question box and respond to any remaining questions.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 21, 3 mins)

Remind pupils that everyone has unpleasant feelings sometimes, but if they find them difficult, or they are having lots of unpleasant feelings a lot of the time, it's important to speak to a trusted adult at home or at school. Pupils can also contact Childline: 0800 1111.

Closing the lesson (Slide 22)

Finally, using slide 22, reinforce the key learning by summing up for the class what they have achieved in today's lesson.

Activities to extend and embed the learning

Encouraging pleasant feelings (Slide 23)

Encourage paying attention to pleasant feelings by listening to soothing sounds, such as audio of rainfall, or by drawing things from nature, such as a flower or leaf.

Draw a place (Slide 24)

Lead pupils in an art activity where they draw or paint a place with things that cause them to experience pleasant feelings. For example, a park with a pond or a play area with their friends.

Having pleasant feelings (Slide 25)

Ask pupils to write a list or draw pictures of things that have happened that day or week that have caused them to have pleasant feelings.

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