Your access to PSHE Association materials and intellectual property rights

PSHE education is the school curriculum subject designed to keep children and young people safe, healthy and prepared for life, and work, in modern Britain. The best PSHE education is a partnership between parents/carers and schools — and this includes transparency regarding curriculum content and materials.

We are therefore delighted to provide parent/carer copies of all PSHE Association member materials that cover RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education).

This is an example of such a resource. It has been shared with you as a parent/carer by the school or individual who is a PSHE Association member.

We are happy to grant access on this basis of giving you full, personal access to the resource contents, but appreciate your adherence to the following requirements regarding intellectual property rights given the resource is otherwise only accessible to schools and individuals that subscribe to PSHE Association membership.

Intellectual property rights

We are the owner or the licensee of all intellectual property rights in the materials. These works are protected by copyright laws and treaties around the world. All such rights are reserved.

You may print off one copy, and may download extracts, of any page(s) for your personal use as a parent/carer of a pupil at your child's school.

You must not modify the paper or digital copies of any materials you have printed off or downloaded in any way, and you must not use any illustrations, photographs, video or audio sequences or any graphics separately from any accompanying text.

Our status (and that of any identified contributors) as the authors of the materials must always be acknowledged. You must not use any part of the materials for commercial purposes without obtaining a licence to do so from us or our licensors.

You are not permitted to copy, share — electronically (including social media) or otherwise — any part of our materials in breach of these terms of use. Your right to use such materials will cease immediately upon such a breach and you must, at our option, return or destroy any copies of the materials you have made.

Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

PSHE ASSOCIATION

Foundations for Wellbeing

Foundations for Wellbeing

Year 3, lesson 3: Managing thoughts and emotions



Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025
Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

QUALITY ASSURED RESOURCE
PSHE ASSOCIATION

Managing thoughts and emotions

This is the third of five lessons on self-regulation, mental health and emotional wellbeing, for year 3. 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 about helpful patterns of thoughts and emotions.

Pupils will be able to:

- describe how patterns of thoughts and emotions can affect someone's wellbeing
- explain how the brain can help to shift less helpful patterns of thoughts and emotions
- identify strategies that can be used to manage less helpful thoughts and emotions

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Resource 1: *What part of the brain are you?* [one set, cut up in advance]
- Resource 2: *Marek's morning* [one per pair]
- Resource 2a: *What does Marek do?* [support option, as required]
- Resource 3: *Reflecting on positive thoughts and emotions that could help me* [one per pupil]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance 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.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025
Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

© PSHE Association 2025 | www.pshe-association.org.uk

Baseline assessment

Reconnecting activity and baseline assessment (Slides 9-12, 5 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 write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Show pairs slide 10 and give them each a minute to tell the story to their partner, filling in the gaps to recap on their learning from last lesson.

Ask a volunteer pair to share their story with the class and discuss whether the distraction they chose was helpful or less helpful for Billy.

Briefly share slide 11 to recap the learning from last lesson. Explain that today's lesson will build on distraction by looking at other helpful and less helpful thoughts and emotions.

Using slide 12, introduce Marek, who will be the focus of today's lesson. Explain the thoughts and emotions Marek is having in the run up to an art project and ask pairs to discuss:

- What effect might these thoughts and emotions have on Marek?
- Is there anything Marek could do to help with these thoughts and emotions?

Circulate during this discussion and take some responses to help gauge pupils' starting points and consider any gaps or misconceptions that might need addressing during the lesson. For example, if pupils suggest actions that encourage Marek to ignore his thoughts and feelings, adapt the key learning and questions as needed to emphasise the importance of people acknowledging (rather than ignoring or pushing away) thoughts and validating emotions.

Introduction (Slide 13, 2 mins)

Introduce today's learning objective and outcomes and use the slide to make sure pupils understand the term wellbeing (feeling good, comfortable, happy and able to do things that we enjoy). Explain that this lesson will explore how thoughts and emotions can affect wellbeing, and ways of shifting less helpful thoughts and emotions.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared)
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

© PSHE Association 2025 | www.pshe-association.org.uk

Core activities

How do thoughts and emotions affect people? (Slides 14-17, 10 mins)

Using slide 14, remind pupils that Marek felt worried and hopeless about his art project and explain that he might experience similar thoughts and emotions in the different situations shown. For each situation, ask pairs to discuss what impact these thoughts and emotions might have on Marek.

Take feedback. Answers will vary, but suggestions might include:

- *not playing the game because he doesn't think he will be any good – even if he wants to play*
- *not trying to make a new friend because he doesn't think it will go well*

Emphasise that thoughts and emotions can affect people's behaviour – and over time, their wellbeing too. For example, if Marek often thinks he will 'mess up' the playground game, he might decide not to join in and do something else at playtime. This means he will be missing out on doing something he enjoys and also could be missing out on time spent with friends. Over time, this could affect his wellbeing because he may begin to feel unhappy or lonely.

Show slide 15 and ask pairs to, again, discuss for each situation what impact the different thoughts and emotions shown might have on Marek. Then, show slide 16 and ask the class, what might Marek find fun or enjoyable about these three different situations?

Take feedback and emphasise that these thoughts and emotions could have a positive impact on Marek because he acknowledges that there are some feelings of nervousness or apprehension, but that he can still give these different things a go – and there may even be something to enjoy! For example, he might learn some new things by doing the art project, making mistakes in the game could make Marek giggle, and it could be fun to get to know someone new. Over time, thoughts and emotions like this might make Marek more likely to try new things – which could help his wellbeing as he finds activities he enjoys and people who he likes doing those activities with.

Finally, show slide 17 and ask, which pattern of thoughts and emotions is helpful? Which is less helpful?

Establish that the first pattern is less helpful, while the second is more helpful. Emphasise that everyone has different patterns of thoughts and emotions (both helpful and less helpful). With practice, people can start to notice and shift less helpful patterns of thoughts and emotions – and today, we're exploring strategies for this.

Marek's amazing brain (Slides 18-22, 7 mins)

Explain that you are going to look in more detail at Marek's unhelpful thoughts and emotions about making a new friend and explore what is happening in the brain. Gather four volunteers at the front of the classroom and give each of them one of the signs from **Resource 1: Which part of the brain are you?** to show which part of the brain they will be acting out: amygdala, Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC), Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) or Ventral Striatum (VS). Use slide 19 (or the Amazing brain poster, Appendix 2 in the Teacher's Handbook) to briefly explain or recap what these parts of the brain do. Using slides 20-21, talk through how Marek could notice and shift his unhelpful thoughts and emotions about making a new friend. When the last box appears on the slide, the pupil who is playing that part of the brain will need to act out what it is doing, using the information on the slide as a prompt.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use; not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

Emphasise that the more Marek practises using the ACC, PFC and VS in this way, the stronger those parts of the brain will become and the easier it will be to use them in future.

Before moving on, check pupils' understanding by asking them to respond to the questions on slide 22 – they could note their answers on mini whiteboards. Use the slide animation to reveal the correct answers. Emphasise that it is OK if pupils cannot remember the names of the parts of the brain. The most important thing for them to understand is that the more Marek practises strategies to notice and shift his unhelpful thoughts and emotions, the stronger these parts of the brain will get, and the easier it will be for him to use the strategies again in future.

Strategies for Marek's morning (Slides 23-24, 8 mins)

Give each pair a copy of **Resource 2: Marek's morning** and ask them to underline or circle anything Marek does that helps him notice less helpful thoughts and emotions, and shift to more helpful patterns of thoughts and emotions. You may wish to read the story aloud to the class, pausing to allow pairs time to underline or circle any strategies.

Take feedback and use slide 24 to make sure pupils have identified all the strategies. Explain that all of these actions can help Marek to manage thoughts and emotions, by beginning to shift his attention to more positive thoughts and emotions. Highlight that lots of these are simple, everyday actions that people can do almost anywhere! Click to reveal the 'Did you know?' box and emphasise that with practice, the hippocampus in the brain will help Marek to remember these strategies – and so they will become easier to use.



Support: Use **Resource 2a: What does Marek do?** and ask pairs to tick the strategy that Marek has used.



Challenge: For each strategy they identify, ask pupils to discuss what emotion(s) they think Marek was experiencing before the strategy. What emotion do they think he would have experienced after the strategy? Can they use key terms from lesson 2 (like pleasant, unpleasant, energy) to describe any change?

Reflection and signposting support

Reflection and signposting support (Slides 25-26, 10 mins)

Emphasise that the strategies Marek used can be helpful for pupils too – but they might look a little different for each of them. Make sure pupils understand this is a silent reflection task that is not to be shared. Give them **Resource 3: Reflecting on positive thoughts and emotions that could help me**, allowing them time to fill this in with responses that are personal to them. For the first question (a positive thought or phrase), you may wish to give pupils some examples of the kinds of things that might be useful – such as 'Trying your best is what counts'. Once pupils have completed the sheet, you could emphasise that just by reflecting on positive memories, the VS in the brain will be activated.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

Pupils could keep their reflections in their drawer or bag in school or take it home to refer back to in the future.

Using slide 16, remind pupils that everyone has different patterns of thoughts and emotions – both helpful and unhelpful. If pupils are finding their patterns of thoughts and emotions difficult, it's important that they speak to a trusted adult at home or at school who can help. Pupils can also contact Childline: www.childline.org.uk/kids.

Endpoint assessment

Endpoint assessment (Slide 27, 3 mins)

Remind pupils that today's learning outcomes explored how patterns of thoughts and emotions can impact people's wellbeing, and strategies for managing less helpful thoughts and emotions. With this in mind, give pairs a minute to tell each other the story on slide 25, filling in the gaps to recap on the learning from the lesson. This activity is an opportunity to evidence pupil progress, and highlight any gaps that may need addressing in future lessons.

Check the question box and respond to any remaining questions.

Closing the lesson (Slide 28)

Finally, using slide 28, 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

What brings us joy? (Slide 29)

Ask pupils to think about one activity they enjoy (with your knowledge of your pupils and their interests and hobbies, you may want to put some initial ideas on the board). Can pupils reflect on what it is about this activity that brings them joy?

Alternatively, give pupils additional time to draw and colour the image they started in **Resource 3: Reflecting on positive thoughts and emotions that could help me.** This should be done as a private reflection activity.

What could help me? (Slide 30)

Encourage pupils to use the strategies on **Resource 3: Reflecting on positive thoughts and emotions that could help me** when they notice they are having less helpful thoughts and emotions. Can they aim to use one of these strategies at least three times before the next lesson?

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025