

Module 1

Resilience Education

Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development. Children who are confident, resilient and emotionally intelligent perform better academically. These skills can contribute to the maintenance of healthy relationships and responsible lifestyles.

Module 1 includes a variety of activities to enhance students' personal and social capabilities and build their resilience through the context of drug education. The supporting student workbook is linked to the activities in this Teacher Resource and will offer opportunities for students to test their drug education knowledge and skills, solve problems using a drug education context, and reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs.

The suggested activities in this module of work can be modified or additional resources sourced to support student needs and the local context. It is recommended that videos be pre-viewed to determine suitability for different student cohorts.

TOPIC 1:

Introduction to resilience and wellbeing

Activity 1 What is resilience?



Learning intention

- Students define resilience
- Students identify personal and social skills that build resilience

Equipment

Photographs from magazines – class set

Small piece of paper – one per student

Be Ready student workbook – one per student

Be Ready student workbook – *Build your resilience* – page 1

Text – *Oh the places you'll go* by Dr Seuss

Family information sheet – *Resilience skills* – photocopy one per student

Teaching tips

Photographs could include landscapes, buildings, people, animals and signs. Source photographs from magazines or internet. Students could also bring a photograph for this activity.

Activities

1. Spread the photographs over the floor and ask students to choose one that they think best relates to the word 'resilience'. List some of the words that students use while sharing their interpretations of the photographs. Have students work with a partner to write their own definition of resilience using the list of words. Listen to some of these and discuss any similarities in the definitions.

Explain that there are many situations in life where a person will need to be resilient so that they can 'bounce back' from setbacks and cope with tough times in their life while maintaining their wellbeing and relationships with others. Explain that resilient people:

- know when and how to use skills such as optimistic and positive thinking, speaking assertively, solving problems, responsible decision-making, and planning ahead
- know how to recognise their emotions and talk about their emotions
- know how to manage their emotional responses to situations
- can move forward with a plan of action rather than dwelling on one emotion such as fear or sadness as this can prevent them from coping with the situation
- know their strengths and use these to deal positively with stressful and difficult situations, and to set short and long term goals.

2. Ask students to think of a person they know who is resilient and what they do that indicates their personal and social competence. Give an example of a resilient person you know or use the example of a new immigrant who has left their family behind and has arrived with very little. They would need to have resilience to be able to manage their new situation. Set up a **circle talk** (refer to page 91) and allocate a timeframe for the inside circle to share their resilience example with a partner then ask the outside circle to do the same. Have students in the outside circle move on several places and repeat the previous step. This will enable the class to hear a range of examples of resilience. Process the circle talk using the following questions.

Ask

- *What were some new ideas about resilience that you learnt from your peers?*
 - *Why is it important for young people to build their skills of resilience?* (Having resiliency skills can minimise the effect of negative and stressful situations. It helps a young person to face challenges, learn from them and apply these skills towards living a healthy life).
 - *Think about your own resilience and some of the skills that you already use when you face a challenge or setback. How did you learn those skills?* (eg watching others such as parents, friends, teachers and role models. Tell students that everyone is capable of developing their resiliency skills however it takes effort and practice).
 - *Is it useful to 'pat yourself on the back' when you do something positive for your own health and wellbeing? Why?*
3. Distribute a *Be Ready* student workbook to each student. Ask them to write their name on the front cover.
 4. Read the book *Oh the places you'll go* by Dr Seuss to the class. As you are reading, ask students to jot down on page 1 of *Be Ready* the skills that the author includes in the story.
 5. Ask students to share the skills they 'saw' in the story. Discuss these skills and add to them if necessary.
 6. Work through each of the strategies that students can use to build their resilience. Ask students to put a tick next to those strategies they may need to work on.
 7. Give each student a copy of the Family information sheet – *Resilience skills* to take home and share with their family. If you are teaching Module 1 in conjunction with Module 2, send a copy of the letter on page 33 to parents.



Resilience skills

Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development. Children who are confident, resilient and emotionally intelligent perform better academically. The skills these children also possess can contribute to the maintenance of healthy relationships and responsible lifestyles.

Research has shown that children who are resilient are also less likely to be involved in problematic alcohol or other drug use, or misbehave in anti-social ways. So resilience and drug education is important as it helps young people to learn the skills that will help them to be more resilient, manage their emotional responses and cope with challenging situations that may come their way.



Tip for parents

Let your children know when you see them using these skills in their daily life and while interacting with other people.

Our class is building on the social and emotional skills that were covered in Year 6 and learning some new skills which include:

- o **Using humour in a helpful way** so when your children experience sadness or bad times, they can laugh at their mistakes or laugh with others to help put things in perspective and feel more positive and hopeful.
- o **Recognising their own strengths and limitations** to bounce back from setbacks and achieve new goals. Some teenagers only see what they can't do not what they can do. Knowing their ability strengths (eg good at running or art) or character strengths (eg fair and honest) can help your children to take steps to overcome problems and set goals.
- o **Using empathy** to help them see a situation from another person's point of view and understand how they are feeling. This will help your children to build positive and supportive relationships.
- o **Using leadership skills** which are the social skills that help to build good relationships. These skills include: being a good communicator, finding the best in others, being adaptable, being able to stand up for their own values, problem predicting and solving, and being enthusiastic and self-aware.
- o **Setting SMART goals** that are specific, measurable, linked to actions, realistic and have a timeframe. Being able to set and achieve short and long term goals can add to your children's health and wellbeing.



The strongest oak of the forest is not the one that is protected from the storm and hidden from the sun. It's the one that stands in the open where it is compelled to struggle for its existence against the winds and rains and the scorching sun.

Napolean Hill,
1883-1970

TOPIC 2

Emotion recognition and regulation

Activity 1 Strategies for coping



Learning intention

- Students identify emotional responses to stressful situations and propose coping strategies for managing these responses

Equipment

Blank cards – at least four per group

Be Ready student workbook – *Clues about coping* – page 2

Teaching tip

Build students' resilience vocabulary by naming and defining emotions. Emphasise that it is important to acknowledge all emotions, even those that may be seen as negative (eg anger, worry), and be able to manage these emotions in a helpful way.

Activities

- Place students in groups of four. Give each group a few blank cards. Explain that groups are to discuss how things have changed for them moving from childhood into adolescence and identify situations that have been challenging or stressful (eg the transition from primary school to high school, having to catch public transport for the first time on their own to get to school, more homework, change in friendship groups). Each situation should then be written on a card. (Ask the class not to include physical changes of puberty).

Complete a **card cluster** (refer to page 91) to sort the cards using headings such as social, responsibilities and activities. It may help students talk about the emotions connected with these experiences (it may help to make a list of these). Explain that it is normal to experience emotions such as worry and anxiety when changes or problems occur in our life and that having a set of coping strategies can be useful.

- Have students read and discuss the coping strategies identified on *Clues about coping* on page 2 of the student workbook. In groups, have students **brainstorm** (refer to page 91) other coping strategies that they have used successfully or have seen others use. Remind students that during the brainstorm all ideas should be considered.

Listen to some of the coping strategies identified by each group. Explain that everyone will have preferred ways of coping and that some will always be useful and others may only be relevant in certain situations. However it is always worthwhile considering new strategies and having these at our disposal. Have students select some of the strategies generated in the brainstorm and write these in the blank spaces on their workbook page.

- Distribute one or two cards from the card cluster activity to each group. Explain that students are to

choose strategies, from either *Clues about coping* or the brainstorm, that would be useful for coping and managing each situation. Have one group read out their card and the coping strategies they identified as useful. Other groups should check these against the strategies they chose for other situations. This will highlight to the class that there are some strategies that will always be useful (eg talking to someone else, looking at the problem realistically and setting goals). Use the following questions to process the activity.

Ask

- What might stop someone from managing and coping with a challenge?* (eg unhelpful or negative self-talk, influences from others, being unrealistic or catastrophising the situation).
 - If talking to someone you trust is a useful strategy, what might stop a person from doing this?* (eg worried they will be judged, not sure how to start the conversation).
 - When you have asked someone to listen to your problem in the past, how did you start that conversation?* (Suggest that students might feel more comfortable if they take a walk with their confidante, as side-by-side conversations can sometimes be easier than face-to-face. Writing down the problem and taking their notes along to use in the conversation, can also be useful).
- Have each student write down the names of three people they trust and would go to for advice or help on page 2 of their workbook.

Activity 2 Thoughts and feelings influence behaviour



Learning intention

- Students recognise the link between positive self-talk, feelings and resulting behaviours
- Students examine influences on and consequences of their emotional responses
- Students identify alternatives to negative self-talk statements

Equipment

Be Ready student workbook – *Thoughts, feelings, action!* – page 3

Be Ready student workbook – *Turn on Channel O* – page 4

Activities

- Explain to the class that if we change the way we think about a situation by using positive self-talk rather than negative self-talk, we are more likely to behave in a way that will result in a positive outcome. Use the example of the two Year 7 students shown in the table on page 18 and in *Be Ready* on page 3 to explain the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Event or situation	Thoughts	Feelings	Actions or behaviour
Billy is in Year 7 and has moved into a new form class with not one friend	Billy uses negative self-talk "I don't want to be in this class. Why me? Everyone else stayed in their same form. I'm going to hate school this year."	Billy feels worried, angry, anxious and stressed.	Billy treats the other students disrespectfully, stares at the teacher a lot, and is often late to class and gets detention. (After 3 weeks Billy has not made any new friends)
Bobby is in Year 7 and has moved into a new form class with not one friend	Bobby uses positive self-talk "This is a bit scary but it's exciting too. I wonder if anyone in this class likes surfing. Great, now I can make friends with some other people at my school."	Bobby feels excited, energised, and just slightly anxious.	Bobby makes conversations with other students, finds others in the class with similar interests, and greets the teacher. (Bobby is invited to a new friend's home for a BBQ)

Ask

- Was the way Billy behaved prompted by different emotional responses to the situation? (Yes, Billy's feelings of anger, stress and anxiety lead to his negative self-talk which blocked him from being able to see some of the positive opportunities of the situation).
 - Why might Billy and Bobby think differently about the same situation? (There are many unhelpful ways of thinking about situations and these can lead us to misinterpret situations and to say very unproductive things to ourselves. Bobby may also have developed more resilience skills than Billy. Billy may also be more naturally anxious so positive self-talk is important).
 - Why was it more useful to have positive thoughts about this situation? (The students had no control over the situation but they could control the way they reacted to it).
 - Why do we need to use helpful or positive self-talk? (eg it has a vital role building and strengthening emotional and mental wellbeing, it encourages us to try new things, and assists us to put things in perspective even if they don't turn out as we'd like).
 - Would you rather be around a person who is a positive self-talker like Bobby or a negative self-talker like Billy? Why? (Talk about how relationships with others can be affected when a person is constantly negative about situations).
2. **Brainstorm** (refer to page 91) some situations and ask students to come up with their own event or situation to write in the blank section of page 3 of *Be Ready*. Once they have chosen their situation, get them to work through the situation using both positive and negative self-talk. Discuss the student scenarios.
 3. Have students indicate if these are examples of positive self-talk using **thumbs up, thumbs down** (refer to page 96).
 - Nobody likes me (*negative self-talk*)
 - There's no point me trying out for the team (*negative self-talk*)
 - I can give it a go (*positive self-talk*)
 - Everyone gets nervous about exams (*positive self-talk*)
 - I'm useless at everything (*negative self-talk*)
 - I might not do everything well but at least I try (*positive self-talk*)

- My last results were not great, but I am improving (*positive self-talk*)
- All the teachers hate me (*negative self-talk*)

Explain that challenging negative self-talk is valuable and that students can learn how to do this through practice. Place students with a partner. Read aloud one of the negative self-talk statements listed and explain that each student must challenge the statement by saying an alternative helpful thought to their partner. For example:

- Nobody likes me – *It doesn't matter if I'm not liked by everybody*
- Nobody likes me – *I have one really good mate who likes me*

Repeat this with the other negative self-talk statements then process the activity using the following questions.

Ask

- Will our feelings about a situation be different if we use positive self-talk?
 - Can challenging unhelpful self-talk change how we feel and consequently what we do? (Yes. While we don't have control over events in our lives we do have some control over the way we think about them. Using positive self-talk will in most cases result in a more helpful way of coping with the situation).
 - Why is it important that we learn to control the way we think about situations? (It influences how we feel and behave in response to the situation and this can affect relationships with others).
4. Using page 4 of *Be Ready*, read the information at the top of *Turn on Channel O*. Discuss.
 5. Ask students to read the optimistic ways of thinking in the 'bubbles'. Once you have read these and discussed them, ask students to add in their own optimistic ways of thinking. Discuss these.
 6. The key messages for students are:
 - everyone has bad times that don't last for ever
 - everyone has bad things happen to them that they can't change
 - everyone makes mistakes at some time in their life
 - everyone feels rejected, lonely or sad at some time in their life.

Explain that by using helpful thinking students will be able to maintain a sense of wellbeing to:

- stay happy and positive
- have strong healthy and supportive relationships with friends and family
- bounce back when they have to deal with setbacks and problems.

Activity 3 Using humour in a helpful way



Learning intention

- Students understand that having a sense of humour and positive outlook can help to manage stressful or embarrassing situations

Equipment

Be Ready student workbook – *Look for the funny things in life* – page 5

Don't worry, be happy by Bobby McFerrin – song and lyrics (optional)

Teaching tips

Look for ways to encourage humour in the classroom. Set up a 'laugh it up' board and encourage students to display funny cartoons, jokes and riddles (check for racism, sexism or offensiveness). Have a 'laugh it up' session where students read funny stories or play funny games.

Activities

1. Tell the class a joke or funny story (to promote laughter) then ask the students to share how they are feeling after having a laugh. Explain that laughter has many positive effects as it causes the brain to release endorphins that relax our body and lower our heart rate. The good feeling that we get from laughing can remain long after the laughter subsides.

Explain that being able to laugh about an event or situation can help us to put things in perspective and contribute to us having a positive, optimistic outlook when we experience sadness, anxiety or bad times. For example, when someone does something silly we will often make a joke about it. Another example is clown doctors who use humour to take children's minds off their illness while in hospital. This doesn't mean that the problem will go away but it can give a person the courage and strength to find new sources of meaning and hope, and make a person feel better and be more hopeful.

Ask

- *Why do we like to laugh with our friends?* (eg we get to share something special, it relaxes us, we laugh more than when we are alone).
- *Are people who smile a lot and laugh, good to be around?* (Yes, because they seem more friendly, confident and relaxed to be around).
- *How does laughing, when you do something embarrassing or make a mistake, help to make things seem better?* (Laughing distracts attention from the embarrassing thing or the mistake. It shows you can cope and it attracts support from others).

- *Why do you think humour that puts people down or hurts them is unhelpful?* (eg form of bullying, lacks empathy).
- *Is laughing when someone else does something embarrassing or makes a mistake always helpful?* (Not always. If we laugh to humiliate the person further it's not helpful but if we laugh with them to show the funny side of their misfortune or to make them feel better, then it can be helpful).
- *Why do you think acting in a silly way and pretending that you don't have a problem or you don't feel sad or worried is unhelpful?*
- *Is it helpful to say "We'll laugh about this next week/year" as a way of dealing with stress or sad times? Why?*

2. Set up two concentric circles and conduct a **circle talk** (refer to page 91) using the following questions that focus on the benefit of using laughter as a coping strategy.

Ask

- *Tell your partner about something that has happened to you (no name rule) that still makes you laugh when you think about it.*
- *Tell your partner about someone who did something (no name rule) that still makes you laugh when you think about it.*
- *Do you think it would be useful to think of this person or situation when you are feeling sad? Why?*
- *Tell your partner about a time when you coped better with something upsetting or worrying because you found the funny side to it, either at the time or afterwards.*

3. Explain to the class that research suggests that taking time to reflect on some of the good and funny things that happen to us in our lives can contribute to our wellbeing and can also help us to focus on what is going right, as well as wrong, in our lives. Have students keep a humour diary for a week using *Look for the funny things* on page 5 of *Be Ready*. Offer a few examples of funny things that have happened recently in your life such as hearing a joke or riddle, watching a comedy show or cartoon, seeing a pet or sibling do something cute or weird, or just having a good time and laughing with a friend. Have students share their completed diary with others in the class by either using their written entries or by creating a PPT that includes photos to illustrate the funny situations.

Ask

- *How do you feel when you look back at the things that made you laugh each day?*
- *What did you learn about yourself from keeping this diary?*
- *How could you use humour to help you get over a mistake or something embarrassing?*

4. Listen to the song *Don't worry, be happy* by Bobby McFerrin and discuss the lyrics. Have students write their own verse to the song that promotes using humour and laughter as a coping skill.



Assign one of the tasks listed on *Look for the funny things in life* page 5 of *Be Ready* to each group to complete.

Activity 4 Recognising and respecting others' feelings



Learning intention

- Students recognise empathy as an enabler to effective communication and positive relationships
- Students practise using reflective listening and expressing understanding skills

Equipment

Activity sheet – *Showing empathy* – photocopy one card per group

Old pair of shoes (optional)

Access to the internet

Teaching tips

When we put ourselves in another person's shoes, we are often more sensitive to what that person is experiencing and are less likely to tease or bully them. By explicitly teaching students to be more conscious of other people's feelings, we can create a more accepting and respectful school community. However increasing students' capacity for empathy is complicated by the fact that most young adolescents experience an extended inward period of development in which individual identity is an important focus. Find ways to embed empathy activities into daily situations such as commenting when a student demonstrates empathy to another student or reading stories and poems with an empathy focus.

Activities

1. Have students use a **one minute challenge** (refer to page 93) to tell their partner about a happy, sad, frightening, embarrassing or annoying incident they have experienced without actually saying how they felt when this happened. Explain that partners are to listen to the story being told and should try to guess how the student telling the story must have felt. Students then swap roles. (If students are not comfortable sharing a real-life experience, suggest that they pretend to be a fictional character and tell his/her story using a scene from a movie or a book).

Ask

- *Was it easy to recognise how your partner was feeling in the situation they shared with you? Why?*
- *How did your partner show you that they understood your feelings?*
- *How did this make you feel?*
- *What would you have liked your partner to have done differently?*

Explain that:

- When we try to work out how somebody is feeling and try to understand that feeling or try to see something from another person's point of view, we are using the skill of empathy.
- Being empathetic is the ability to recognise another person's feelings and respond accordingly and respectfully and is a character strength that we can develop and practise.

- Showing empathy is a skill that assists resilience as it helps to build and maintain strong supportive relationships.

2. Ask students to consider each of the following statements and answer yes or no and keep their answers in their head.

Statements to consider

- I often think about other people's feelings.
- I don't make fun of other people because I can imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes.
- I listen to others about what they are going through.
- I try to understand other people's point of view.
- I am aware that not everyone reacts to situations the same way that I do.

Explain that if students answered 'yes' to each statement their empathy skills are well developed and a strength of their character. If students answered 'no' to some or all of the statements, suggest that they need to practise being empathetic more often.

3. Draw a **Y chart** (refer to page 97) and brainstorm what empathy might look like (eg body language and nonverbal communication); feel like, and sound like. For example: empathy looks like laughing with someone when they are happy or nodding your head while listening to them, and sounds like statements such as: *"I'm so happy for you"*, *"I understand why you feel that way"*.

Explain that there are skills that are used to let people know that you are listening and respecting their feelings. These skills include:

- reflective listening – such as encouraging actions (eg a nod, smile) or words (eg *"okay, that's interesting"*)
- expressing empathy – accepting the validity of the other person's feelings whether you agree with them or not, and indicating understanding of what they are feeling.

Use the example of Tom (on the activity sheet) to explain this.

Tom is awarded the 'best and fairest football player of the week' for the first time all year.

A team mate tells Tom that he only got the award because everyone else had already won one.

This statement is not empathetic.

What empathy statement could you use in this situation?

"Tom, I think it's great that you won the award. You must be feeling really happy."

4. Give each group one of the scenario cards from the activity sheet *Showing empathy*. Explain that students must consider the scenario and write their answers to the following before sharing their responses with other members of the group.

- Describe what the person might be feeling or thinking.
- Describe how the other person showed a lack of empathy.
- Write how the person would show that they were really listening.
- Write what you could do or say to show empathy ie that you understand how they are feeling.

Have groups create a **role-play** (refer to page 94) that illustrates their scenario and shows the skill of empathy being used. After the role-play, interview the character who was treated with empathy and find out how this made them feel and if it changed the way they intended to behave. Use the following questions to further the discussion on empathy.

Ask

- *Is empathy the same as sympathy?* (No. Sympathy is when you feel sorry for someone, and can sometimes make the person seem inferior. Empathy is when you understand the other person's feelings and situation).
- *How can becoming more empathetic help you to have better relationships with your family and friends?* (You can understand people less fortunate than you or those who need help. You can better deal with disagreements because you can see both sides and being kind to someone who is angry helps them 'cool' down. You're less likely to harm or bully someone, be a 'know-it-all' or judge other people).
- *Do you think if all students showed more empathy there would be less teasing and bullying in our school?* (Research shows that when we practise empathy we are less likely to be mean to someone else and more likely to act to prevent or show support to a student who is being mistreated).

- *There is a proverb that says, 'Don't criticise a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes.' What does this proverb mean?*
 - *What things can you do to help you 'walk' in someone else's shoes or be empathetic?* (eg remember a time when you felt the same way as the other person, remember what you have seen or read about how this person might be feeling, remember how other people said they felt in a similar situation to this person, try to predict how you might feel if you were in this same situation).
 - *Why do you think it's easier for some people to empathise than others?* (Empathy is a learned and practised skill. Some people have practised this skill more than others and know the benefits of showing empathy).
5. Have students make a list of ways to show empathy to other people in their life (eg family members, friends, classmates and teachers). Display these ideas with a pair of old shoes that are labelled 'walk in my shoes'.
6. Students choose one of the following tasks to complete:
- Find a story, poem, song, or scene in a story that portrays empathy (eg *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen or watch the youtube clip *The Breakfast Club* by Pitt River Middle School, USA).
 - Create an announcement to be aired on the school PA that encourages students to be empathetic toward one another.
 - Design a poster that symbolises empathy and reminds your classmates to show compassion toward one another.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lj5pWWA_MY



Showing empathy



Adam's parents separate the weekend before he is meant to be going away on holiday with his friend.

When Adam tells his friend he can't go on the holiday, his friend gets really angry with him and says, *"Who cares, I'll have a great time without you"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?

Dan gets his maths test back and finds that his results aren't that good.

A classmate next to him grabs the test from his hand, waves it around and teases Dan about his poor results and says, *"What a loser, only 10 out of 20!"*

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?



Tom is awarded the 'best and fairest football player of the week' for the first time all year.

A team mate says to Tom, *"You only got the award because everyone else had already won one"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?

Micah has been invited to a pool party but is worried because she can't swim.

Micah tells her friend she is really nervous. Her friend says, *"Stop worrying you're just being stupid"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?



Sean lets his friend Hal play his new computer game. Sean has bought the game with his own money after saving his pocket money for several months.

Hal loses the game and says, *"It's no big deal. It was a dumb game anyway"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?

Jenni hates talking in front of the class and has been practising her speech at home but she still goes really red and stumbles over some words.

Some kids in the class roll their eyes and giggle behind their hands. One student says to Jenni, *"You looked so stupid"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?



Sarah is really excited about going to her first party on Friday night and really wants to borrow her sister's top.

Her sister says "no way" and won't budge even when Sarah says she can borrow anything of hers.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?

Chris breaks her wrist just before the end of term music concert and can't play in the concert.

All her friends are playing in the concert and keep talking about how great it will be. None of Chris' friends ask how she is feeling.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?



Rani is a refugee who has only been in Australia for a couple of weeks and is very nervous about being at a new school.

One of the kids makes a joke about her and says she's stupid because she can't speak English properly.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?

Howard usually stays outside the footy club because his dad often gets drunk.

Howard tells his friend that he feels embarrassed about his dad's behaviour. His friend says, *"No-one else cares so stop worrying"*.

What empathy statement would you use in this situation?



TOPIC 3

Self-knowledge

Activity 1 Recognise personal qualities and strengths



Learning intention

- Students make a realistic assessment of their personal strengths and qualities

Equipment

Be Ready student workbook – *Test of strength* – pages 6-7

Family information sheet – *Building your teen's character strengths* – photocopy one per student

Teaching tips

Have students create a scrapbook that includes photos, certificates, cards, letters and drawings to showcase their own ability and character strengths.

Activities

- Have the class discuss the statement – ‘*Strength is about being physically strong*’. Explain that we all have strengths and qualities that make up our character and personality. These can be grouped into ability strengths (eg being a good runner or artist) or character strengths (eg being honest and fair). Have students complete *Test of strength* on pages 6-7 in *Be Ready*. Ask the class to be honest with their appraisal and explain that they do not have to be ‘strong’ in all areas.

Have students score their strengths and share the results with a partner. Also ask students to share an example of where they have recently displayed one of their strengths. For example: *One of my strengths is thankfulness. I set myself a goal this year to find one thing to be thankful for every day and so far, I'm on track.* Use the following questions to process this part of the activity.

Ask

- Were you surprised by any of your results?*
- What are some other ways you can work out your strengths?* (eg look at test scores, listen to feedback, look at what you really like doing, compare yourself to others in this area).
- Can you also use these ways to identify your challenges or limitations?* (Yes).
- Why is it important to look for this sort of evidence?* (eg knowing your strengths and challenges or limitations can help you to achieve your goals).
- What can you do to overcome or get around your challenges?* (eg ask for help, practise the skill more, put more effort into learning the skill, accept and focus on other strengths).
- Can knowing what we are good at help us to cope when times are unhappy?* (Yes. Often doing activities that involve our strengths help us to ‘be in the zone’ and forget about unhappy things for a while. We also learn things more quickly when we are using our ability strengths and this can give us more meaning and purpose).

- How can knowing limitations in your character help you in your learning?* (Knowing your limitations can let you know where you might need a bit more work, practice or perseverance, and where you may need to be gentle on yourself).
- How can knowing your character strengths help your learning?* (They let you know why you might find it easier to do things and help you to praise yourself for a job well done).

- Have each student choose their three most developed strengths (ie those that scored highest) and write these on the board. Process the information using the following questions.

Ask

- How can knowing the strengths of other students in our class help you?*
 - Would knowing a person's character strengths help you decide if you want to build a relationship with that person?*
 - Which of these character strengths would you value in a friend? Team mate? Teacher? Family member? Why?*
 - What character strengths do you think the Prime Minister of Australia should have? Why?*
 - Would they be different to the character strengths of a lion tamer or pirate? Why?*
- Use a **think-pair-share** (refer to page 96) and have students describe a time when they used one of their strengths to help someone and how they felt when doing this. For example: *I'm good at drawing so I helped my little sister draw the pictures to illustrate her project.* Stress that these kind acts help the giver and receiver to feel good, and they also give our lives a sense of meaning and purpose.
 - Ask students to write a job application that focuses on their strengths. For example: *I have strong written communication skills and have been the winner of several essay competitions at school.*
 - Send home a copy of the Family information sheet – *Building your teen's character strengths* with each student to share with their family.

FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET



Building your teen's character strengths

In the classroom, your child has been learning about how to build skills such as decision making, goal setting and predicting problems. Skills that all contribute to their resilience.

Character strengths such as self-regulation, perseverance and love of learning are not only the foundations of positive youth development and thriving, but are related to school success, life satisfaction and wellbeing. You can play a key role in building your children's character strengths.

Give meaningful and specific praise

When your child does something noteworthy, let them know by using comments that target the particular character strength shown.



You showed great leadership today when you encouraged your team to do their best even when they were down by 20 points.

I'm really proud of the way you supported your friend when they were being bullied by those other kids.

Telling me about your friends smoking cannabis took a lot of courage. I appreciate you being honest with me.

Help your teenager to recognise the character strengths they possess

Sometimes teenagers can become focused more on what they can't do than what they can do. Tell your child the strengths that you know they have (be honest) and how these strengths make them the wonderful person they are. Ask your child if there is a strength that they would like to have and work out a plan together to help them start practising this strength more often.

Help your teenager recognise character strengths in others

Not only is it important that your child becomes aware of their own character strengths but they also need to recognise and acknowledge strengths in others. Try reading books or watching movies where strengths are used by the characters. Have conversations and ask questions to develop your child's awareness of the strengths shown by fictional and real-life characters. For example: *What strengths did the characters show? How did the characters use their strengths to overcome challenges and obstacles? How was this character like you? How was this character not like you? Would you like to be more like this character? Why?*

Encourage your teenager to say positive things about themselves

What we think in our minds will eventually become what we believe. This is why it is so important that we start saying positive things about ourselves many times each and every day. Have your children write a list of at least 10 positive statements to say to themselves each day.



Write these on a list stuck to the fridge

<i>I am important.</i>	<i>I matter.</i>
<i>I am worthwhile.</i>	<i>I am unique.</i>
<i>I will be what I want to be.</i>	<i>I know what I can do.</i>
<i>I can handle things.</i>	<i>I am strong.</i>
<i>I accept myself.</i>	<i>I can change my life.</i>

perseverance
good friend
open-minded
courageous
self-disciplined
leadership
forgiveness
kind
creative
fair
humour
optimistic
honesty
modesty
empathy
curious
thankful

Activity 2 Identifying leadership strengths and qualities



Learning intention

- Students identify leadership strengths and qualities
- Students practise negotiation and communication skills

Equipment

4 caps each with the name of a famous leader attached
Be Ready student workbook – *Leaders make a difference* – pages 8-9

Teaching tip

Choose famous leaders from different aspects of society (eg science and health, sport, the arts, technology) and that students know well eg Barack Obama (USA President), the Queen, Steve Smith (Australian Cricket Captain).

Activities

1. Have four student volunteers sit at the front of the class. Give each student a cap without them seeing the name of the famous leader. Explain to the volunteers that they are to try and guess the name of the famous leader (shown on their cap) by asking questions. If the answer to their question is 'yes' they may have another turn. Continue the game until all names have been revealed. Talk about the way these people have demonstrated their leadership abilities and why people may admire them.
2. Ask each student to write a list of five qualities or strengths that they think any leader should possess (eg empathy, positive attitude, compassion, and problem-solver). Place students with a partner to share their list and then **streamline** (refer to page 95) these into one list of five qualities or strengths. Stress that the list must be reached by negotiation and consensus. Have each pair then partner up with another pair, and repeat the process of sharing lists and streamlining to create a final list of five leadership qualities or strengths. Have each group share their list and give two or three reasons why they chose the particular qualities or strengths for a leader.

Ask

- Did everyone in your group have similar ideas about leadership strengths and qualities? Why?
 - What commonalities did you find when creating your lists?
 - What skills did you practise to create your final list? (eg negotiation, decision making, communication, team work).
 - Did you feel that your opinion was valued when creating your final list? Why?
3. Ask students to turn to page 9 in the *Be Ready* student workbook. Thinking back to the last activity they completed, ask students to complete the quiz, *Using my leadership skills*.

Ask

- Think about the leadership qualities and strengths you decided upon in your group. Is this the kind of leader you aspire to be? Why? (Point out that leadership can be at many different levels such as motivating and influencing only one other person through to leading a team to conduct a whole school event).
 - Which of these leadership qualities and strengths do you currently possess? (Remind students they do not have to have all of these qualities and strengths and that they can be learnt and practised over time).
 - How do you show others the leadership qualities and strengths that you already possess?
 - Which of these leadership qualities and strengths would you like to develop? (Talk about how others can help students to build their leadership qualities and strengths).
3. Ask students to look at the characteristics written around the edges of page 8 and 9 of *Be Ready* in the green colour band. Read through the characteristics and ask students to circle the three characteristics that they think are most important for a leader in the 21st century.

Emphasise that students need to continue to develop their leadership skills and be willing to learn and practice new skills.

Activity 3 Using self-knowledge to set goals



Learning intention

- Students use personal ability strengths and demonstrate leadership skills
- Students analyse their leadership skills and set a SMART goal

Equipment

Be Ready student workbook – *Kick a SMART goal* – page 10

Be Ready student workbook – *Leaders make a difference* – pages 8-9

Teaching tips

Enlist the support of a teacher who works with younger students or a buddy class before conducting this activity.

3. Explain that students are to form groups according to the ability strengths they identified on *Test of strength* on page 6 of the student workbook (ie word, logic and maths, space and vision) and then choose one of the leadership activities listed on page 8. (Alternatively groups may select another activity that demonstrates their ability strength). Groups are to write a SMART goal that will result in them conducting the activity they have chosen. Discuss each group's SMART goal and provide feedback on page 10 of *Be Ready*. Set aside time over the next two weeks for students to implement their plans and monitor their goal. Organise a time with a buddy class of younger students or within the class, so students can conduct their activities.
4. Have students reflect on the skills they used to plan and conduct their leadership activity by completing the reflection questions on page 10 of their workbook.

Activities

1. Explain that people who know their strengths and limitations can use this self-knowledge to set worthwhile and achievable goals. For example, a person who is able to solve maths problems easily and loves working with computers may set their goal to become employed as a financial banker or accountant. However, goals don't always have to have a long term focus such as choosing a career path, they can also be short-term such as getting homework finished on time or saving money for a special event. Explain that goal setting is a skill that can also help people to stay happy and positive, and can stop them from giving up when faced with setbacks and problems.
2. Read *Kick a SMART goal* on page 10 of *Be Ready* and explain the acronym SMART ie specific, measurable, action-orientated, realistic and timeframe. Stress that setting a SMART goal will increase the likelihood of students achieving a goal. Use the following example to show students how to set a SMART goal.

Specific – I want to save \$60 in 4 weeks to buy a ticket to the concert all my friends are going to on 2 July.

Measurable – I will achieve my goal by 30 June and buy my ticket on 1 July.

Action-orientated – I will work two shifts at my part time job each week to earn \$40. I will wash dad's car twice to earn \$20. I will put the money in my account as soon as I earn it. I will check my bank balance at the end of each week.

Realistic – My boss has already approved me working two shifts each week. Dad has agreed to pay me \$10 for a car clean.

Timeframe – I will have \$30 in my bank account by 15 June and \$60 by 30 June.