PLANNING

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

2.3

Exploring Emotions in Action

As students begin to understand that their thoughts are linked to their emotions they can begin to reduce their emotions control over their lives and make better choices and decisions.

DISCOVERING 8 MINUTES

Tell students that they are going to focus on understanding their emotional responses to difficult situations in order to make better decisions. This year they will build on their emotional literacy to become more aware of what they are thinking when they feel strong emotions and to use their thoughts to respond more positively.

Display Discovering Projectable 2.3.1, which asks students to examine the strongest emotion(s) they experienced last week and then to respond as to how their body reacted and what thoughts they were having. Ask for volunteers to share their responses to the questions.

ASK: How did you respond to the emotion(s)? Did you respond negatively, positively, or neutrally? How might you have responded differently to the emotion?

SAY: There is a very strong connection between how we feel about a situation, how we think about it, and how we act on it. To better understand emotions and learn to manage them, we need to peel back the surface of the emotion to identify the thoughts that triggered it.

CONNECTING 10 MINUTES

SAY: Thoughts often precede our emotions (our feelings). Thoughts and feelings (emotions) often play a large role in how we behave. Responding negatively to our thoughts and feelings often leads to negative behavior, which can cause problems. Here’s an example of a thought vs. a feeling: EXPRESSING A THOUGHT: “I feel like you always want to put me down.” EXPRESSING A FEELING: “I feel angry.” See how the thought might relate to the feeling.
Display Connecting Projectable 2.3.2 which asks students to identify items as either thoughts or feelings and give a reason for their answer. Lead the class through the exercise helping them to understand the difference and connection between thoughts and feelings.

**Discuss students’ responses**

**ASK:** Why is it important to think about your thoughts and how they influence your actions? For example, if you’re mad and thinking bad thoughts about someone, what can happen if you’re not careful?

**ASK:** What are situations that you have been in that might have had different results if you had thought before you acted? Some ways to control your thoughts are: do not react right away; take a deep breath; talk to someone you trust; be aware of the events that trigger negative and positive thoughts; and accept that some things are out of your control. These are just a few techniques that you can use to control your thoughts before taking action. After what we’ve discussed, what might you have done differently in the situations you described earlier?

Tell students that non-action is also a choice, and an appropriate response to certain situations, like when someone “baits” you. When we let other people trigger us, we give them control.

**PRACTICING 20 MINUTES**

**Activity 2**

Practice understanding feelings

Use your creative grouping strategies to organize the students into small groups. Distribute Student Handout: Practicing and review the directions with the class. As the students complete the activity ask for volunteers to share some of their responses and discuss the importance of turning negative thoughts about difficult situations into more a more positive response. Help them think through how a positive spin will lead to less negative feelings and actions.

**Reflecting**

Display Reflecting Project 2.3.3 Students use their class notebooks to reflect individually and as a class on what they learned in this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>What is the connection between your thoughts, feelings, and actions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So What?</td>
<td>What can happen when you react to negative situations too quickly without thinking things through?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now What?</td>
<td>In what area(s) of your life would you like to have more self-control?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**A APPLYING 2 MINUTES**

Over the next day or two ask students to notice when their thoughts are feeding their emotions in unhelpful ways. Have them use the format from the Practicing Handout to turn negative thoughts into positive thoughts, feeling, and actions. Have them record their responses and assign it as homework or have a short discussion at the beginning of the next lesson.

**ASSESSING**

**PRACTICING (INFORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT)** During the discussion of the Practicing Activity check to determine if students’ have a basic understanding how to turn a negative thought into a positive thought.

**APPLYING (FORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT)** Review the students’ responses to the Applying Activity to assess how well students are able to put a positive spin on a negative situation.

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**BUILDING SKILLS BEYOND THE LESSON**

**Draw It!**

**PRACTICING** Have students draw a three or four panel comic strip which illustrates one of the situations from the Practicing Handout and then have them illustrate an additional situation/negative thought/positive spin they’ve observed or experienced.

**Face Disappointment!**

**APPLYING** Read aloud or write this quotation on the board: *When you lose, don’t lose the lesson.* —H. Jackson Brown Jr.

As students what they think the quotation means.

**Discuss It!**

**APPLYING** Reinforce the connection between thoughts, feelings, and actions in situations by having groups review their Practicing Handout experiences and discuss what they felt, what they did, and the result.

**Identify It!**

**PRACTICING** Have students identify the one or two situations that seem to occur repeatedly that make them angry or upset. Have them identify positive thoughts they can use to help them deal with these reoccurring experiences.