



Teacher's Guide

to the Magnificent Mei
and Friends Comic Series

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The *Magnificent Mei and Friends Comic Series* and accompanying *Teacher's Guide* were developed as part of the Helping Adolescents Thrive package, initiated by the WHO Departments of Mental Health and Substance Use and of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Aging, and the Maternal Newborn Adolescent Health Unit, Health Section, UNICEF.

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Teacher's Guide to the Magnificent Mei and Friends Comic Series

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Note to teachers

Teachers are among the most influential people in adolescents' lives, with enormous potential to make a positive contribution to promoting and protecting adolescent mental health. Mental health conditions are among the leading causes of illness and disability for this age group, with suicide the fourth-top cause of death in people aged 15-19 years old. Given that half of all mental health conditions start before the age of 14 years, early adolescence represents a crucial time to intervene and prevent the onset of mental health conditions and promote positive mental health.

Teachers are uniquely placed to help students strengthen their social and emotional skills, and to assist them in learning about and caring for their mental health and well-being. These skills, combined with academic knowledge, will help adolescents more effectively navigate school, their relationships, their communities, and other occupations throughout their lives.

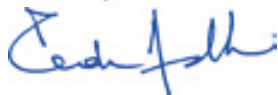
As the transition between childhood and adulthood, the adolescent years represent a window of opportunity for helping young people to recognize and manage difficult feelings, solve problems effectively, maintain healthy relationships, communicate needs and desires and make decisions that contribute to their well-being.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are committed to partnering with teachers to ensure that adolescents have the skills and support they need to thrive in all areas of their lives. The ***Magnificent Mei and Friends Comic Series*** and accompanying ***Teacher's Guide*** are components of the materials developed under the ***WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive Initiative***, aimed at promoting and protecting adolescent mental health.

Both of us aspire to a world where all adolescents have a sense of well-being, believe in their abilities and are able to reach their full potential. We thank you for your support in helping make this a reality.



Henrietta Fore
Executive Director of UNICEF



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General of the World Health Organization

Overview

Purpose

UNICEF and the WHO created the Magnificent Mei comic series and the accompanying Teacher's Guide to support 10-14 year olds in strengthening social and emotional skills. The comic series and teacher's guide, which contains classroom lesson plans, aim to support learning and skills building that can promote psychosocial well-being, prevent mental health conditions, and reduce risky behaviours in adolescents.

The learning and skills building in this series aim to help adolescents positively influence their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and social interactions.¹

Social and emotional skills are especially critical for the positive development, well-being, and educational outcomes of adolescents.

Under the WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) initiative, we tailored these open-access resources for use among adolescents aged 10–14 years to strengthen mental health promotive and prevention interventions.

For more information about the HAT guidelines, visit the website or click on the QR code below.²



- 1 Helping adolescents thrive toolkit: strategies to promote and protect adolescent mental health and reduce self-harm and other risk behaviours. Geneva: World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2021.
- 2 Guidelines on mental health promotive and preventive interventions for adolescents: helping adolescents thrive. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 <<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/336864>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

About this resource

We developed the **Teacher's Guide** for use by professionals in educational settings who work with adolescents aged 10-14 years, including teachers, school counsellors, and mental health professionals, such as psychologists, occupational therapists, and social workers. We designed the guide to be reviewed independently or in a small group setting with other educational professionals.

Part 1

Key concepts (sections 1-3)

This section includes background information on mental health and well-being related to the general population and more specifically to adolescents.

Part 2

Essentials for teachers (sections 4-7)

This section reviews essential information on how to talk about and support adolescent mental health. We cover many topics, including communicating with adolescents, the teacher-adolescent relationship, teacher well-being, and how to help students who need additional mental health support.

Part 3

Lesson plans (sections 8-10)

This section includes short lesson plans and classroom activities for teachers to use with the comic series.

There is self-guided reading and reflection exercises in the first two parts of the guide. This is provided to help you to prepare to effectively guide your students through the short lesson plans, including classroom activities accompanying the **Magnificent Mei and Friends series**. In part 3, you will find content you can use to engage your students.

We created the **Magnificent Mei and Friends series** for young adolescents aged 10-14 years. Through a combination of images and text, comics can engage and shape students' attitudes by promoting empathy and critical thinking.³ As a form of storytelling, these comics present real-life scenarios and situations young adolescents may face in their everyday lives, making the content relatable and relevant. Seeing comparable experiences through fictional characters' eyes can help validate their experiences and let them know they are not alone.⁴ Combined with classroom-based activities and lessons, comics can be an effective tool to support students' social and emotional learning.

What the Teacher's Guide is not:

This resource is not a form of psychological care or treatment for a mental health condition. If you become aware of any of the following needs or circumstances, please consult a specialist promptly and ensure that the adolescent is referred to appropriate mental health and/or social care services:

- An adolescent who has a plan to end their life soon
- An adolescent who is struggling with an existing mental health or substance use condition
- If any protection needs arise – including sexual harassment, abuse, maltreatment, or exploitation

3 Hosler, Jay, and K. B. Boomer, 'Are Comic Books an Effective Way to Engage Nonmajors in Learning and Appreciating Science?', *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 10, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 309–317, <<https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.10-07-0090>>, accessed 16 March 2021; Rizkyanti, Charyna A., and Uswatun Hasanah, 'Correlation Between Reading Motivation and Empathy Among Adolescents in West Java, Indonesia', *Advanced Science Letters* 24, no. 1 (January 2018): 571-573(3), <doi.org/10.1166/asl.2018.12073>, accessed 16 March 2021; Nidhom, Ahmad M., et al., 'Markerless Augmented Reality (MAR) through Learning Comics to Improve Student Metacognitive Ability', 2019 International Conference on Electrical, Electronics and Information Engineering, Denpasar, Indonesia, 2019: 201-205, <doi: 10.1109/ICEEIE47180.2019.8981411>, access 16 March 2021.

4 Gavigan, Karen. 'Caring through Comics—Graphic Novels and Bibliotherapy for Grades 6-12', *Knowledge Quest* 40, issue 5 (May/June 2012): 78-80, <<https://search.proquest.com/docview/1032543822?fromopenview=true&pq-origsite=gscholar>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

Some adolescents who are experiencing declining mental health or high distress may do any of the following:

- Feel very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Try to harm oneself or make plans to do so
- Experience sudden, overwhelming fear for no reason, which sometimes includes a racing heart or fast breathing
- Engage in fights or express a desire to hurt others
- Have out-of-control behaviour that can hurt oneself or others
- Throw up, not eat, or other ways to make oneself lose weight
- Have intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Have extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still, which puts the student in physical danger or causes problems in the classroom
- Use drugs or alcohol
- Have severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Show drastic changes in behaviour or personality



The Teacher's Guide does not provide the training and knowledge needed for you to provide counselling, treatment, or more specialized mental health services to adolescents. It is important to seek additional help if you identify students who seem to be experiencing difficulties with their mental health.

Key concepts

We created this section to provide you with information about mental health (in a general sense and, more specifically, in terms of adolescents) and space for self-reflection.

Understanding mental health

Too often, mental health is a misunderstood topic, surrounded by misconceptions and negative stereotypes. This can lead to stigma and discrimination, and often the person is less likely to get the help and support they need. Our personal biases can influence how we talk about mental health in the classroom, what we do and don't teach about mental health, how we perceive our student's mental health needs, and our expectations of our students.

Examining our mental health perspectives is a good starting point for promoting positive mental health among our students.

The questions below can be used to guide self-reflection or a small group discussion. You may want to keep a pen or pencil and a piece of paper nearby so you can write down your responses to the questions.

Exercise for self-reflection or a small group discussion

- How would you define mental health?
- When your mental health is good, what does that look like for you?
- What does it mean you can do?
- What does it mean you can feel?

Everyone needs to take care of their mental health. Mental health is essential to our overall well-being and is as important as physical health. When we feel mentally well, we can work productively, enjoy our free time, and contribute actively to our communities.



According to the WHO

someone has good mental health when they can:

- realize their abilities,
- cope with the normal stresses of life,
- work productively, and
- contribute to their community.

Mental health conditions include a broad range of mental health problems with different symptoms. They are generally characterised by a combination of difficulties with our thoughts, emotions, behaviours, relationships with others, and capacity to do daily activities.⁵



⁵ Mental health (Fact sheet). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

Myths and facts about mental health

Here are some common misconceptions about mental health. Dispelling myths can help break the stigma and create a culture that encourages people of any age to seek support when they need it.

Myth	Fact
If a person has a mental health condition, it means the person has low intelligence.	Mental illness, like physical illness, can affect anyone regardless of intelligence, social class, or income level.
You only need to take care of your mental health if you have a mental health condition.	Everyone has mental health and can benefit from taking active steps to promote their well-being and improve their mental health. Similarly, everyone can take active steps and engage in healthy habits to optimize their physical health.
Poor mental health is not a big issue for teenagers. They just have mood swings caused by hormonal fluctuations and act out due to a desire for attention.	Teenagers often have mood swings, but that does not mean adolescent mental health is not real. Fourteen percent of the world's adolescents experience mental ill-health. Globally, among those aged 10-15, self-harm is the fifth leading cause of death. ⁶ Half of all mental health conditions start by the age of 14.
Nothing can be done to protect people from developing mental health conditions.	Many factors can protect people from developing mental health conditions, including learning social and emotional skills, seeking help and support early on, developing supportive, loving, warm family relationships, and having a positive school environment and healthy sleep patterns.

⁶ World Health Organization. (2019). World health statistics 2019: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals. World Health Organization. <<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/324835>>. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO, accessed 15 March 2021.

A mental health condition is a sign of weakness; if the person were stronger, they would not have this condition.

A mental health condition has nothing to do with being weak or lacking willpower. It is not a condition people choose to have or not have. In fact, recognizing the need to accept help for a mental health condition requires great strength and courage. Anyone can develop a mental health condition.

Adolescents who get good grades and have a lot of friends will not have mental health conditions because they have nothing to be depressed about.

Depression is a common mental health condition resulting from a complex interaction of social, psychological, and biological factors. Depression can affect anyone regardless of their socioeconomic status or how good their life seems at face value. Young people doing well in school may feel pressure to succeed, which can cause anxiety, or they may have challenges at home.

Bad parenting causes mental conditions in adolescents.

Many factors – including poverty, unemployment, and exposure to violence, migration, and other adverse circumstances and events – may influence the well-being and mental health of adolescents, their caregivers, and the relationship between them. We should not blame parents if their adolescent children have mental health conditions. We should support them, as they play a critical role in their adolescent's growth, development, and recovery from mental illness.

Exercise for self-reflection or a small group discussion

- **Which myths do you feel are most common among your school and parental community?**

Your parental community may include other primary caregivers, such as grandparents and other family members.

- **Which facts did you find most surprising?**

- **What are some ways you can begin dispelling these myths in your school community and among your students?**



Adolescent mental health

The adolescent brain: A second window of opportunity⁷

Here are a few key concepts related to the adolescent brain:

Neuroscience tells us the brain goes through a rapid phase of change between ages 9-14. Early adolescence is a crucial period of brain development when challenges can emerge, including the initiation of risky behaviours, such as unsafe sex, substance use, and other unhealthy habits.

But it is also a time of opportunity when we can harness those rapid changes to set adolescents on a positive path. For example, building healthy relationships, engaging in learning at school, or establishing healthy physical activity and dietary habits can positively impact an adolescent's well-being now and in the long term.

Puberty initiates intense hormonal changes, and the brain forms faster, stronger connections, improving a teenager's ability to make decisions, solve problems, understand consequences, and gain more control over their emotions and behaviours.

The adolescent brain goes through a period of greater sensitivity to social evaluations and emotional reactions.

Adolescents also begin to seek out sensations, explore their identities and develop more social relations.

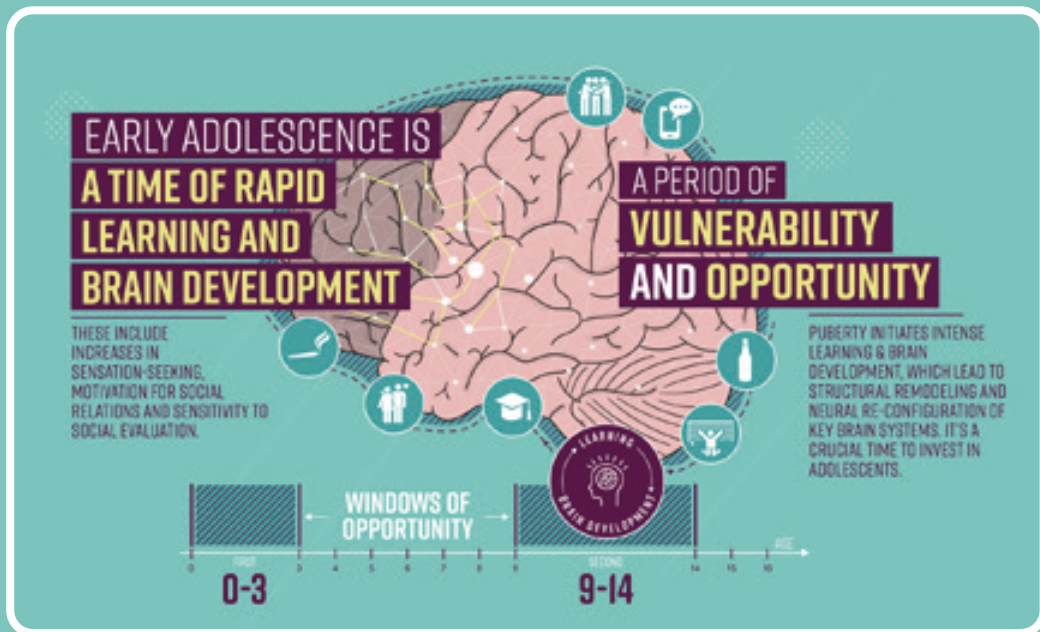
Teachers play an important role in supporting progress and learning during this period of rapid growth and development.

As young adolescents undergo these transitional experiences, they need support from parents, trusted adults, and schools and communities to guide them away from harmful, risk-taking trajectories and towards healthy exploration and learning.

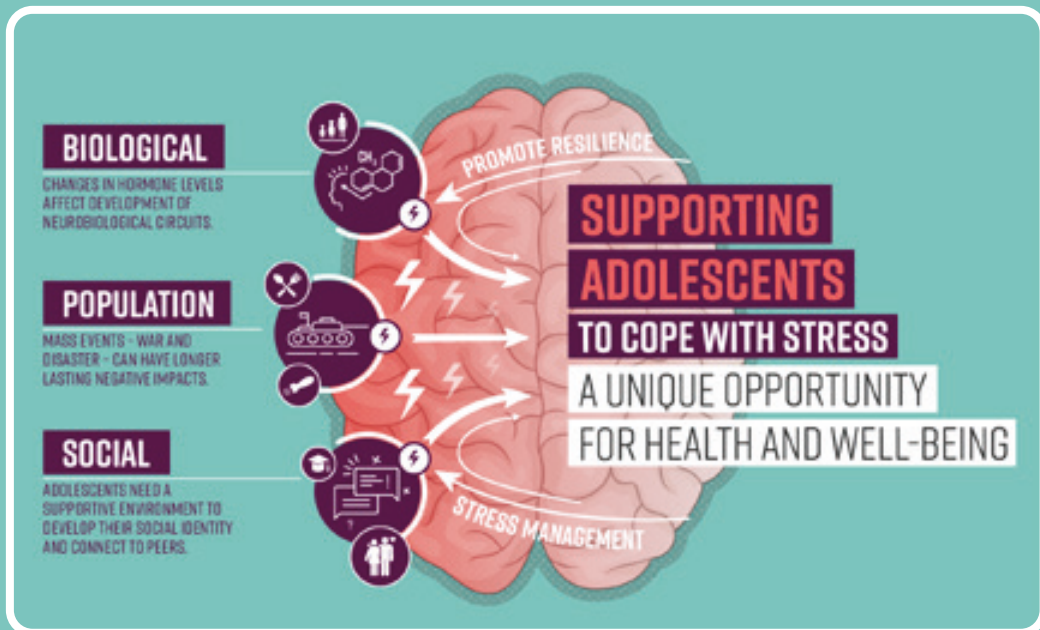
⁷ UNICEF, 'The Adolescent Brain', <www.unicef-irc.org/adolescent-brain>, accessed 16 March 2021.



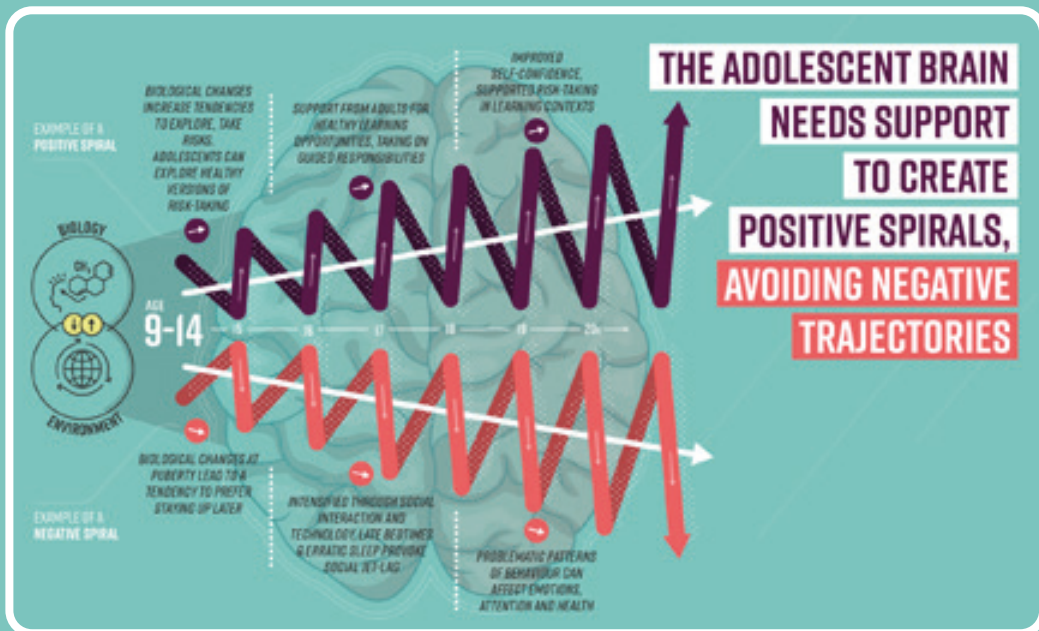
If you have internet access, you can watch the **UNICEF Innocenti** video overview on the adolescent brain.



Positive and negative spirals during adolescent brain development



The adolescent brain: a second window of opportunity



Adolescent brains are sensitive to stressors



<https://www.unicef-irc.org/adolescent-brain>

Risks and protective factors for adolescent mental health

Various risks and protective factors can impact an adolescent’s mental health, including those within the school setting and those beyond the classroom. Being aware of what your students might be going through outside of school will help you better understand how to support them.

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Health and Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical illness Disability Pregnancy Alcohol and substance use (including tobacco) Personal history of maltreatment (physical or emotional abuse, physical or emotional neglect, sexual abuse, violence, or victimization) Orphan, refugee, or migrant background Poor relationship with primary caregiver Child of caregiver with mental health condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy self-esteem Emotional regulation skills Stress management skills Problem-solving skills Interpersonal skills Skills for refusing substances A healthy diet, physical activity, and sleeping patterns
Family	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stressed caregiver or one who is experiencing poor mental health Poor health or death of a family member Family conflict, domestic violence, or separation Parental incarceration Substance abuse Inadequate support from family income Household economic/food insecurity Harsh parenting (including parental criticism) Neglectful parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy communication with caregiver Family cohesion and support Sensitive, caring, and positive parenting Use of non-violent discipline Family structures and routine Parental approval Parental social support

School

Academic pressure and/or failure
Inadequate learning support
Bullying
Use of harsh punishment

School connectedness
Teacher connectedness

Community

Crime, gang, and interpersonal violence
Access to alcohol, drugs, and weapons
Poverty and unemployment
Limited support services
Potentially life-threatening situations, emergencies such as pandemics, or armed conflict
Harmful social and cultural norms and practices
Harmful gender norms

Strong community leadership
Social support and cohesion
Access to support services
Positive activities for youth
Responsive policing and law enforcement
Neighbourhood safety⁸

Peers

Bullying
Negative peer pressure
Conflict in relationships

Friend support
Positive peer relationships
Satisfaction with friends and/or romantic relationships

8 Lake, Lori, and Lucie Jamieson, 'Using a child rights approach to strengthen prevention of violence against children', *South African Medical Journal*, no. 106: 1168-1172, <www.researchgate.net/figure/Common-risk-and-protective-factors_tbl1_311951173>, accessed 16 March 2021; Samuels, F, 'Mental health and psychosocial service provision for adolescent settings', 2015, <www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Mental-health-and-psychosocial-service-provision-Samuels/e8331f575285d1b5c19b877d4a70c93f7e314b33/figure/0>, accessed 16 March 2021; Dooley, Barbara, and Amanda Fitzgerald, 'My World Survey: The first national study of youth mental health in Ireland', September 2015, <www.researchgate.net/figure/1-Selected-risk-and-protective-factors-of-adolescent-mental-health-in-MWS_tbl1_281590810>, accessed 16 March 2021; Dooley, Barbara, Amanda Fitzgerald and Naoise Mac Giollaibhui, 'The risk and protective factors associated with depression and anxiety in a national sample of Irish adolescents', *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* 31, no. 1: 1-13, <www.researchgate.net/publication/272642270_The_risk_and_protective_factors_associated_with_depression_and_anxiety_in_a_national_sample_of_Irish_adolescents>, accessed 16 March 2021; O'Loughlin, K., R. Althoff, and J. Hudziak, 'Health Promotion and Prevention in Child and Adolescent Mental Health', 2018, <www.semanticscholar.org/paper/HEALTH-PROMOTION-AND-PREVENTION-IN-CHILD-AND-MENTAL-0%E2%80%99Loughlin-Althoff/c634401d6d1828e74b7f15f62642937f1261f395>, accessed 16 March 2021; Blum, Robert Wm, Mengmeng Li, and Gia Naranjo-Rivera, 'Measuring Adverse Child Experiences Among Young Adolescents Globally: Relationships With Depressive Symptoms and Violence Perpetration', *Journal of Adolescent Health* 65, issue 1 (July 2019): 86-93, <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.01.020>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

Mental health promotion and prevention

The HAT guidelines on mental health promotive and preventive interventions recommend universal delivery of mental health promotion and prevention interventions to adolescents.

Prevention focuses on avoiding poor mental health, while promotion is about improving mental well-being. **Prevention in mental health** aims to stop mental illness from happening by reducing an individual's exposure to risks and strengthening their ability to cope.

Mental health promotion increases the individual's exposure to protective factors by reinforcing their healthy behaviours and improving their psychological well-being. Promotion and prevention are overlapping, complementary activities.⁹

Learning social and emotional skills is recognized as one way to promote positive mental health and prevent poor mental health conditions. The HAT initiative supports **social and emotional learning, including emotional regulation, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, mindfulness, assertiveness, stress management, and the reduction of risky behaviours**. By engaging in learning opportunities and practicing these skills, you will be more equipped to help adolescents develop resilience and cope with life.

In addition to social and emotional learning and psychosocial interventions with adolescents, the HAT strategies also emphasize actions towards:

- Ensuring laws and policies are in place to protect and promote adolescent mental health, including providing adolescents with access to evidence-based promotive and preventative mental health interventions
- Ensuring that adolescents live, study, work, and socialize in supportive, healthy, safe environments that promote and protect their mental health and reduce their engagement in risk behaviours
- Ensuring that caregivers have the knowledge and skills to promote adolescents' mental health, healthy caregiver–adolescent relationships, and the support they need to protect their own mental health and well-being

⁹ World Health Organization. (2004). *Prevention of mental disorders: effective interventions and policy options: summary report / a report of the World Health Organization Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse; in collaboration with the Prevention Research Centre of the Universities of Nijmegen and Maastricht*. World Health Organization. <<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43027>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

For more information about the HAT strategies¹⁰



**HAT
Toolkit**

<https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789240025554>



**HAT
Guidelines**

<https://www.who.int/publications/item/guidelines-on-mental-health-promotive-and-preventive-interventions-for-adolescents>

10 Guidelines on mental health promotive and preventive interventions for adolescents: helping adolescents thrive. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 <<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/336864>>, accessed 16 March 2021.

Exercise for self-reflection or a small group discussion

- **What are two ways you feel you could contribute to reducing mental health risks among your students?**
- **What are two ways you could contribute towards positive mental well-being among your students in the classroom or at school?**

Essentials for teachers

Communicating with adolescents

Teachers play a crucial role in creating a safe, open classroom environment, which is particularly important for promoting positive mental health and communicating about this topic with adolescents. Before introducing the HAT social and emotional learning content, here are a few important considerations.

Build rapport

Establishing a connection and relationship with your students is the basis for effectively supporting their mental well-being and social and emotional learning.



Here are some tips

- **Show an interest in what is important to your students, and let them know you care about them.**
- **Share a bit about yourself, and find ways to make connections with them while keeping in mind that it is essential to maintain professional boundaries with your students.**
- **Ask them about their opinions, views, and perspectives, and seek to understand how they feel by putting yourself 'in their shoes'.**

Active listening

An active listener is engaged, caring, non-judgemental, and empathetic, even when (and especially when) they don't agree with others views or behaviours. While some of your students' beliefs or opinions may differ from your own, you need to respect and value their views. When we apply active listening, we can help students feel heard, understood, less alone, and calmer. By contrast, if we don't listen well, we risk making them feel as though we are brushing off their concerns and invalidating their feelings. This can leave them feeling defensive, frustrated, alone, or hurt.

→ **Show attentive body language.**

Maintaining eye contact, giving affirming nods, a look of concern, or encouraging smiles are all small gestures that let them know you are paying attention. Even without using words, you can communicate you are listening and that what the adolescent is saying is important.

→ **Ask open-ended, clarifying questions**

to gain a deeper understanding of how your students feel. These questions have no right or wrong answer; they simply help you gain insights into what your students think. For example, you could try any of the following questions: "Could you explain what you mean by..."; "Why do you feel you got upset when..."; or "How do you think you would have felt if..."

→ **Mirror what your student is saying**

by restating and paraphrasing what they conveyed. For example, you could say, "What I hear you saying is that..." or "Am I correct in understanding that you feel..."

→ **Express positive feedback.**

Giving specific immediate praise can help build adolescents' confidence and self-esteem and encourage them to continue those same behaviours. For example, if someone shares that they have been feeling very stressed, you could respond by saying, "Thank you for being brave and sharing how you're feeling right now" or "It can be hard to tell others when we are feeling stressed. Well done for sharing it with me."

→ **Validate what they are expressing.**

This can help teenagers accept their emotions and feel safe to express themselves. For example, you could say, "It's understandable that you're feeling so angry right now"; "Thanks for sharing that with me. It can be hard to share with others when we are feeling sad"; or "Sorry to hear you're feeling stressed. I would feel that way too if I were in your shoes."

Understanding the teacher-adolescent relationship

A positive teacher-adolescent relationship has been shown to impact a student's level of engagement, learning, and behaviour. It has also been recognized as an important factor in the mental well-being of adolescents. Here are two key pillars in the teacher-adolescent relationship that can impact your student's engagement with social and emotional learning content.

Maintaining clear communication and fairness

- Communicate sensitively and clearly with all adolescents about your role in helping them get support if you are concerned about their safety regarding any imminent risks, including whether or not they might end their own life.
- Communicating sensitively and clearly with all adolescents about your role in supporting them if they face any situations in which someone might be harming them.
- Communicate and engage with all students the same way.
- While delivering the lessons in this guide, you may learn some personal information about your student. This information mustn't bias your interactions.

Creating an emotionally safe space for learning

- Respond to student questions and comments with patience and respect to create an open learning environment where different experiences, opinions, and ideas are equally valued.
- When it comes to a student and a teacher, the person in a position of power is almost always the teacher. Consider this when delivering the lessons in this guide and make sure you do not force a student to complete any activities.
- Make sure the classroom is an emotionally safe space where students feel comfortable. Create a classroom that is nurturing and encourages learning. Students should only share what they are comfortable with – disclosing too much personal information may be more suitable for a different setting.

Exercise for self-reflection or a small group discussion

Think about how you might respond to the following scenarios:

Scenario 1

Imagine that while discussing the comic and short lesson, you learn that one of your students is experiencing strong feelings of fear and worry. You mark their test and give them back their results.

How might you consider responding?

- A** Change their marks, so they have a better score
- B** Say you have lost their test and do not give it back to them
- C** Give it back to them as marked
- D** Ask them to redo the test another time when they are feeling better

It is important that you treat this student fairly and sensitively but do not change their academic marks. You should give back the test to them as marked (option C), but you can also let the student know you are there for them and that together you can work through what feels challenging to them. Try speaking with the student in a confidential or private setting about how they might be feeling and how you might support them in easing their worries and fears.

Scenario 2

Imagine that while discussing the comic and short lesson, a student sits quietly and does not complete any activities.

How might you consider responding?

- A** Tell them they must complete the activities, just as you would if they did not complete other schoolwork.
- B** Tell them that if they do not complete the activities, there will be a negative consequence.
- C** Do not speak to them individually. Encourage the class to complete the activities.
- D** Do not speak to them individually. Encourage all students to ask you any questions about the activities.
- E** If the opportunity arises, ask the student individually if they would like some help with the activities, but do not force the student to complete them.

It would be best for you to respond by taking actions C and D. While it is useful to encourage all of your students to complete the activities and assist them with any difficulties, it is important not to force them to participate. You must respect a student's desire not to disclose information about the problems they may be experiencing.

Managing your own well-being

As teachers, you face many demands and expectations from your school administration, students, and parents. On top of this, teachers can carry stresses and burdens from their life outside of work just like everyone else. In the same way that it is important to protect and promote your students' mental health, it is also essential to look after your mental well-being.

Everyone has their own approach to maintaining their well-being; there isn't a one-size-fits-all prescription for taking care of yourself. Here are some mental health tips to consider for teachers, by teachers:

- Take time to regularly connect and have conversations with your colleagues and friends outside of work. Let people know how you are doing and feeling, and check in to see how they are doing. Having a good support network can have a significant impact on your mental well-being.
- Do something physically active to help your mental wellness and de-stress. This could be taking a walk, biking to work, or maybe doing some form of exercise or sport you enjoy. Anything to get your body moving can help.
- Celebrate your successes! Take the time to recognize any successes you achieved, no matter how big or small they may seem. Perhaps it's a moment of kindness, a breakthrough with a student, a good day in the classroom, or finally finishing grading those exams. A teacher's to-do list can be endless, but so can the positive impact you have on your students every day.
- Make time to do things you enjoy or that are meaningful or satisfying for you. Teachers work hard and are constantly giving. Your work often doesn't end once you leave the classroom. Making sure you have time for yourself during the week and on the weekend will make a big difference.
- Seek support if you notice yourself experiencing strong feelings of distress. Teachers often experience stress or emotional exhaustion from the intense nature of their work. If you find yourself struggling to keep up with daily activities or cope with everyday challenges, try to speak to someone you trust or seek support from your school administration, health facility, a place of worship, or even online.

Some available online resources include



WHO

Mental well-being resources¹¹



WHO

Doing What Matters in Times of Stress: An Illustrated Guide¹²



IASC

How to take care of yourself during stressful times¹³

11 Mental well-being: resources for the public. Geneva: World health Organization; <www.who.int/news-room/feature-being-resources-for-the-public>, accessed 16 March 2021.

12 Doing what matters in times of stress: an illustrated guide. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

13 Voices of Youth, 'How to take care of yourself during stressful times', <www.voicesofyouth.org/campaign/mental-health-wellbeing-guide-how-take-care-yourself-during-stressful-times>, accessed 16 march 2021.

Exercise for self-reflection or a small group discussion

- **What is something you accomplished this week for which you feel proud or grateful?**
- **When was the last time a colleague or friend checked in to ask how you were doing?**
- **When was the last time you checked in to see how they were doing?**
- **When was the last time you did something you enjoyed or found meaningful or satisfying? Reflect on what the activity was and what effect it had on your mood.**

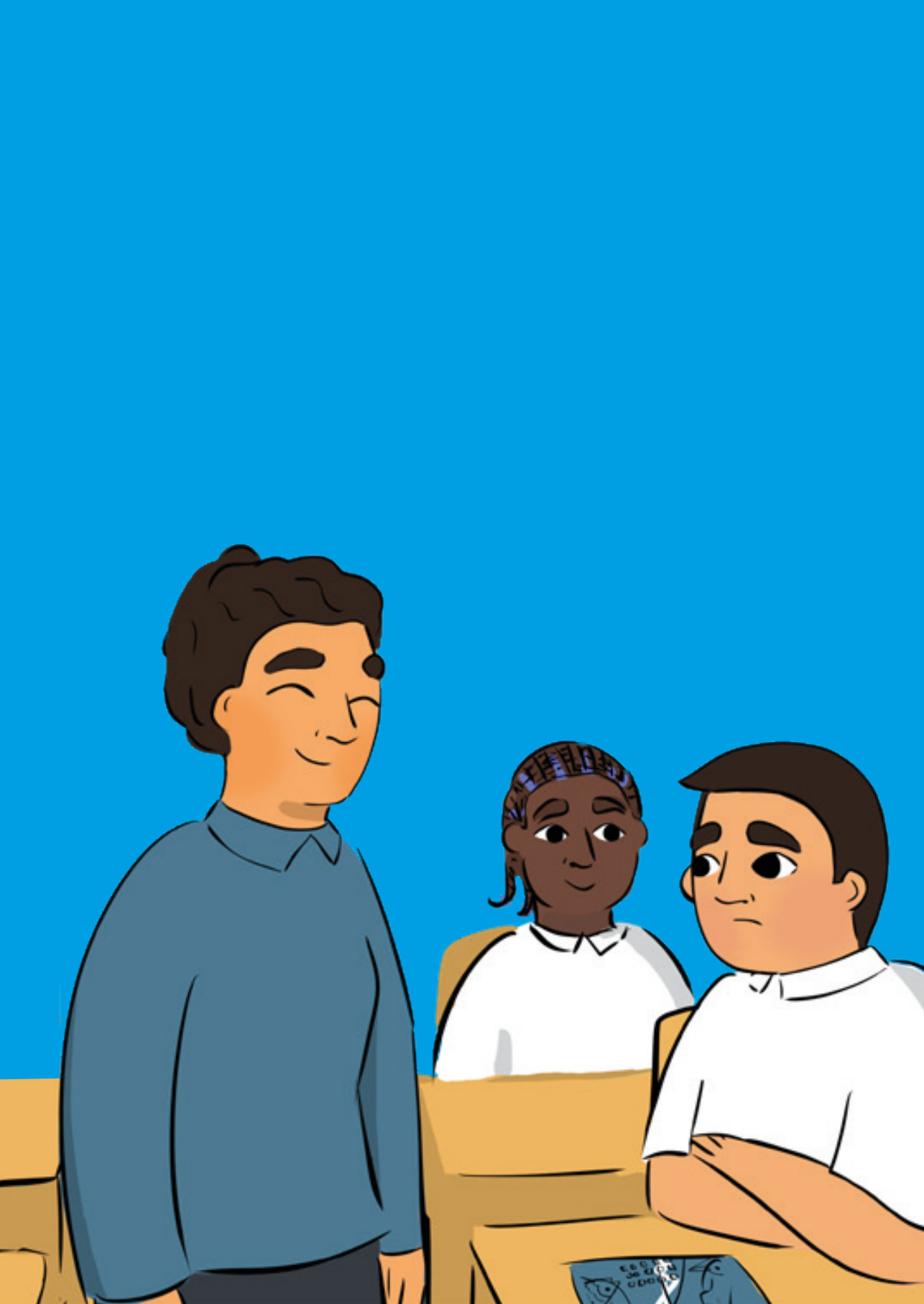
Helping students manage difficult feelings

When students feel worried, sad, angry, or upset, it becomes more difficult for them to learn and participate in school. Helping students manage their feelings is an important part of what teachers can do. If students indicate such feelings, here are some helpful things you can do and say:

1. Remind them that all feelings are ok and that you are there to support them.
“All of us might feel _____ sometimes, and that is okay. One thing you can do when you feel that way is share how you feel with someone you trust. You can always come speak with me or write me a note.”
2. Acknowledge and empathize with how the student is feeling before asking questions or taking any actions.
“It seems like you are feeling _____ right now, and I can imagine that is not easy.”
“I can see you are feeling _____ right now. I’m sorry you are feeling that way.”
3. Try to understand the cause of their feelings. It is best not to make any assumptions about why the student is feeling the way they do.
“I’m wondering if something happened that’s making you feel this way?”
“Can you help me understand why you might be feeling this way?”
4. Encourage the student to express their feelings. Students can express themselves in different ways.
“When we have difficult feelings, letting them out can help us feel better. There are different ways we can do that such as talking to someone, writing our thoughts down, practicing slow breathing, or moving our bodies around. Do you think doing any of these things might help you right now?”
5. Refer your student to additional support according to your school protocol if the feelings of distress persist over time or are preventing them from participating in normal class activities.

See page 30 for more details.

If the student discloses a situation where they have been harmed or are at risk of harm, follow your school protocol to refer students for additional support. If you are unsure of the school’s protocol, speak with your school principal.



When to support your students in seeking additional help

There are times when you may notice changes in your students' behaviour, mood, or ability to function. Some of these changes may be related to usual developmental stages. Still, if these changes remain for a few weeks and interfere with their everyday functioning, it is important to seek help. Additionally, classroom learning and discussions about mental health-related topics can potentially trigger difficult emotions, thoughts, or behaviours in students.

If you have any questions or concerns about your student's behaviour or emotions, you should follow your school's protocol and/or speak with either a school counsellor, school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, or principal.

If you notice one or more of the following behaviours in your student, you should consult with your school counsellor, school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, or principal:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Trying to harm oneself or making plans to do so
- Experiencing sudden, overwhelming fear for no reason, which sometimes includes a racing heart or fast breathing
- Engaging in fights or expressing a desire to hurt others
- Out-of-control behaviour that can hurt oneself or others
- Throwing up, not eating, or other ways to make oneself lose weight
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still, which puts the student in physical danger or causes problems in the classroom
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in behaviour or personality

When supporting a student you notice is struggling with any of the above, be sure to give them assurance, encourage them to seek help, and ask them for permission to seek additional help. You can do so by saying things like:

- “It’s really good you told me about this. Together, we are going to get you some more help so that you don’t have to keep feeling like this. Would you be okay with that?”
- “I notice you haven’t been yourself lately, and with everything going on, that is totally understandable. I know someone I trust who could hopefully help you feel better. Would it be okay if we find a time for you to meet with them?”

If the adolescent refuses to give permission, you are still obligated to seek help, but you should carefully consider why the adolescent may be refusing permission and if there are any associated risks.



Teachers should follow the school’s protocol on informing and engaging with caregivers on any required student support.

Classroom lesson plans and activities

The lesson plans and activities in this section accompany the **Magnificent Mei Comic Series**. Here are some considerations for using the lesson plans:

→ **Preparation**

Please review each comic and its accompanying lesson plan carefully before teaching the lesson. Be sure to note any activities that require advanced preparation or materials and try to anticipate any participant questions.

→ **Where**

You can deliver the lessons in a classroom setting or any safe, comfortable space in person or online.

→ **When**

We recommend transitioning to these activities when appropriate to discuss mental well-being, such as at the start of the school day.

→ **How**

We designed the comics and lessons 1.1-1.3 to be delivered consecutively, as it fits your classroom schedule and curriculum.

→ **Who**

Students can review the lessons with the class as part of a large group, in smaller groups, or individually.



Being familiar with each short lesson's content and staying as close to the guide as possible will help ensure your students complete the activities based on the intended learning objectives. It can also help ensure that activities do not go off-topic or lead to extremely sensitive or difficult discussions.

However, as the teacher, you are best placed to make modifications based on time, cultural context, and other sensitivities of which you are aware.



Feelings Chart

The Feelings Chart can be used to help students identify how they're feeling at a particular moment or to routinely check in about how their day or week is going. It can be any illustration of different emojis, drawings of faces, or pictures of people with different facial expressions indicating specific feelings. The chart below is one example.



sad



worried



afraid



angry



...



...



happy



silly



excited



calm



...



...

Building Emotional Vocabulary

With each lesson, we will aim to increase the vocabulary students have to express themselves by adding emotions to the Feelings Chart as they are reflected in the comics. You can always ask students to share additional feelings they wish to add to your classroom chart.

Having the right words to describe and express what they feel can help them better manage difficult emotional responses. For example, being able to differentiate between feeling angry and frustrated might help a student more clearly understand what they need. It can also help you understand how to respond. If a student is angry, they might need a moment to calm down in a quiet environment. If they are frustrated, something might not be going the way they wanted it to, and they might need your help on a specific task.



Understanding emotions

1.1

Comic: Stuck at home

Learning objective

To strengthen an adolescent's knowledge about emotions.

Key messages

What are emotions?

What are the different emotions we may feel?

All emotions, including   , are okay.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  5 minutes

Say

"Okay, everyone, we're going to spend some time learning about our mental well-being. First, let's start to think about how we're feeling right now. Feelings are our brain and body's natural reaction to situations that happen around us. I'm going to show you something called a 'Feelings Chart', and I want you to silently decide for yourself where you are right now on the chart. For example, I might think, 'right now, I'm feeling silly and excited.'"

Show or point to the Feelings Chart

This could be displayed or drawn in the classroom where all of your students can easily see it. While this chart is meant to include basic feelings, it is important to acknowledge that one can experience a wide range of feelings that may not be on the chart.

Say

"Would anyone like to share what they are feeling right now?"

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes.

Feelings Chart is a well-researched tool that aims to help children and adolescents identify basic feelings. It can help children and adolescents evaluate situations around them, build self-awareness, and connect their thoughts, feelings, and actions.



sad



worried



afraid



angry



happy



silly



excited



calm

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

"Let's read a comic together." Alternatively, you can ask the students to read the comic to themselves.

Read the comic book.

Step 3

Student activities  7 minutes

Necessary materials. If you are in the classroom, please be prepared to provide your students with markers, pens, or pencils, and a piece of paper. If you are teaching them virtually, ask them to have the supplies ready.

Say

“What do you think Mei might have been feeling as she packed her school bag? Use the Feelings Chart to write or draw her face. Draw or write down one clue from Mei’s facial expression, body, or self-talk that made you think she was feeling this way.”

Discussion questions

“Draw or write what Mei said, how she acted, or what facial expressions she used that tell us she was feeling a certain way. How is this different from how she felt after she talked to her grandmother? Share your thoughts with the person sitting next to you (or with the class as a group).”

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts  4 minutes

Say

“Think about a time when you felt like Mei as she was packing her bag. What would you call this feeling? What made you feel this way? Would anyone like to share?”

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes.

 **Say**

“Thanks for participating and sharing, everyone! Today we’ve spent some time learning about the different feelings we experience. All feelings can be helpful at different times, even the ones that are uncomfortable or painful to feel. It’s useful for us to practice and learn how to identify our feelings so that they don’t become too big or overwhelming. When feelings become too big or overwhelming, they can control how we act towards ourselves and others. If we can identify our feelings, we can also identify safe, healthy ways to manage them. This helps us have a better understanding of ourselves and the people around us. Any questions?”

Step 5

Practice  4 minutes

 **Say**

“Now I’d like all of you to draw an empty bag. Then choose a day (write this down now) to practice identifying what feelings you’re carrying in your bag and write or draw these feelings inside the bag. For each feeling, reflect on how much space it is taking up in your bag. For example, if you feel annoyed most of the day, you might choose to write or the word ‘annoyed’ or draw an annoyed face many times in the bag. You don’t need to show this to anyone else. It’s just for you. Any questions?”

You do not need to ask to see the outline or ask them if they completed it. It is up to your students to decide if they want to do it.

How our feelings affect our body

1.2

Comic: Back to school

Learning objective

To enhance an adolescent's ability to identify how their emotions impact their body.

Key messages

Feelings can affect our bodies in different ways.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  5 minutes

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Step 2

Comic book reading  5 minutes

Say

"Let's read a comic together." Alternatively, you can ask the students to read the comic to themselves.

Read the comic book.

Step 3

Student activities → 7 minutes

Necessary materials. If you are in the classroom, please be prepared to provide your students with markers, pens, or pencils, and a piece of paper. If you are teaching them virtually, ask them to have the supplies ready.

Say

- “Using the Feelings Chart, what do you think Addo felt when he first saw his friends? What would you call this feeling?”

- Spend a few minutes drawing the face. When you’re done, please hold up your drawing and look around to see what your classmates have drawn.

- If your pictures look different, ask them why they chose to draw Addo’s face that way.”

Say

“Draw an outline of a body. Then draw what is happening to the body when Mei sees her friends and feels worried about going to school. Be sure to include what could be happening to Mei’s:



heart rate



breathing



brain/thinking



sweating/blushing

face, palms, underarms



stomach

butterflies, aches, knots



shoulders/neck/head

aches, pains, tension

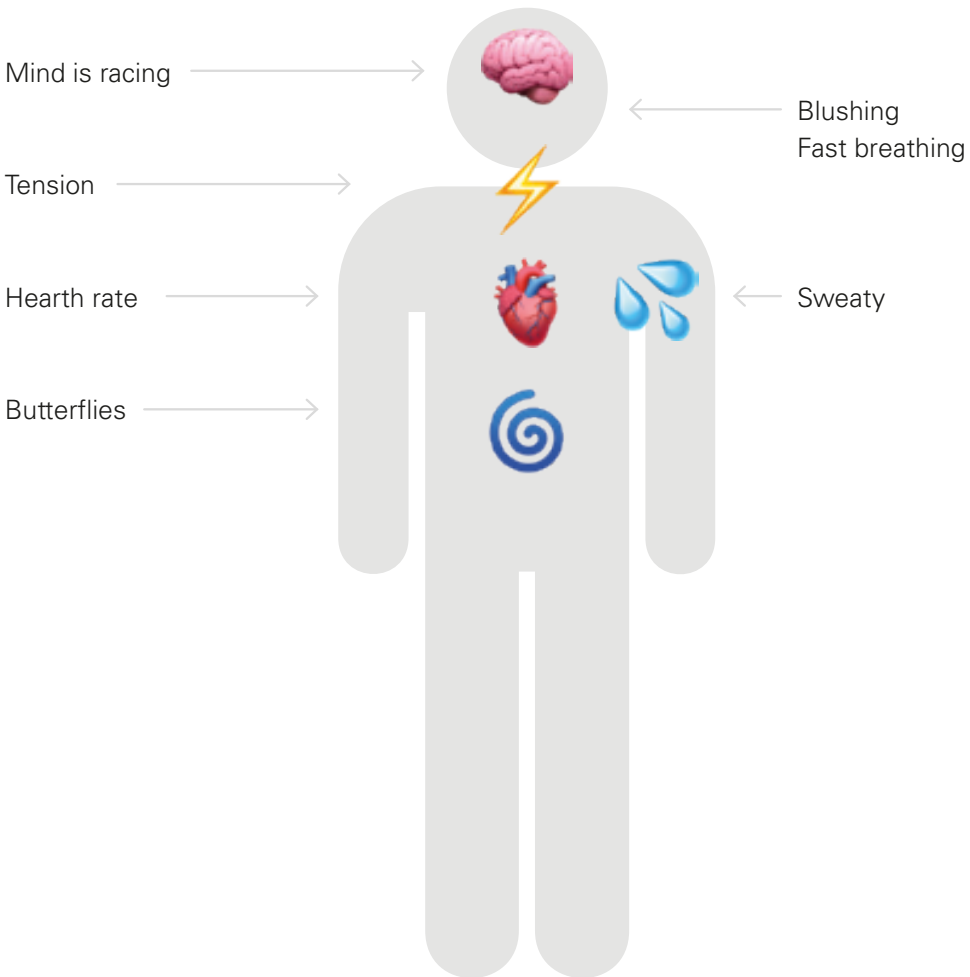
Say

“Once you’re finished, do the same for Addo.”

Say

“Can someone please explain their picture of Mei’s body? Can someone please explain their picture of Addo’s body?”

Here is a completed example for Mei (worry)



Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts —————> 1 minute

Say

Thanks, everyone! Today we've spent some time learning how different feelings can affect our bodies and brains in different ways. This is our body's way of telling us if we're feeling unwell and dealing with uncomfortable or painful emotions. It's useful for us to practice and learn how our bodies react to our feelings so we know why we may experience new things like our hearts racing, our faces turning red and hot, or our stomach aching. We also gain a better understanding of ourselves and the people around us. Any questions?"

Step 5

Practice —————> 4 minutes

Say

"Now I'd like all of you to draw another body outline. Then, choose a day (write this down now) to practice identifying what feelings you're experiencing and what you notice in your body. Then write and/or draw these inside the outline. You don't need to show this to anyone else. It's just for you. Any questions?"

You do not need to ask to see the outline or ask them if they completed it. It is up to the students to decide if they want to do this activity.

Taking care of our feelings

1.3

Comic: The way I feel

Learning objective

To teach adolescents helpful ways to identify and manage their emotions.
To explore helpful ways to look after our mental and physical health and well-being.

Key messages

We all have mental and physical health, and it is important to look after both. It is important to practice and learn how to identify our feelings. Learning to be aware of how we feel is the first step to managing our feelings. We should always talk to a trusted adult when we feel we may need help managing our feelings.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  5 minutes

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Step 2

Comic book reading  5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read a comic together.” Alternatively, you can ask the students to read the comic to themselves.

Read the comic book.

Step 3

Student activities → 7 minutes

Necessary materials. If you are in the classroom, please be prepared to provide your students with markers, pens, or pencils, and a piece of paper. If you are teaching them virtually, ask them to have the supplies ready.

Say

“Looking back over the three comic stories we read, write or draw all the signs that Addo needed some extra help managing his feelings.”

Ask

“Can someone please share their ideas with us?”

Be sure to cover the following ideas if your students don't mention them:

- Finding it hard to get out of bed (more tired than usual)
- Withdrawal and avoiding friends (when walking to school)
- Loss of interest in usual activities (going to school and playing soccer)
- Difficulty concentrating and irritability
- Feeling sad most of the day, nearly every day
- Experiencing any of the above for more than a few weeks

These six signs are important for adolescents to recognize so that if and when they or their peers need extra help, they can reach out to a trusted adult. If these signs last longer than a few days, that is a strong indicator that the adolescent may need additional support.

Say

“We all need to look after our physical and mental health. Write or draw three things you do to look after your physical health. Then write or draw three things you do to look after your mental health.”

? After a few minutes, ask

“Does anyone feel comfortable sharing their ideas? If so, please come and write or draw them here.”

Say

“Does anyone want to tell us more about a time when they tried these tips? Or do you see any new tips here that you’d like to try?”

Afterwards, please add the following tips if the students have not mentioned them:

Physical health tips

Try to get the right amount of sleep*

Eat regularly and try to make healthy choices about the food you eat*

Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water

Stay active – exercise!*

*This looks after your mental health, too!

Mental health tips

Recognize how you are feeling

Be kind to yourself

Do activities you enjoy and/or that give you satisfaction

Connect with your loved ones

Talk about your feelings with someone you trust

Seek help from someone you trust or a professional if you feel stuck or overwhelmed

Step 4

Revision of main concepts → 1 minute

Say

“Thanks, everyone! Today we’ve spent some time learning about how important it is to look after our physical and mental health. It is important to recognize the signs our body and brain give us when we experience certain feelings. This way, we know when to ask for extra help from someone we trust or reach out to a friend who may need some support. This helps us gain a better understanding of ourselves and the people around us.”

Step 5

Practice → 4 minutes

Say

“I’d like all of you to write or draw three signs you notice in yourself when you know your feelings are becoming too big or overwhelming. What are these feelings? Then write or draw three things you can do to help. Be sure to include talking to someone you trust, like a trusted adult or friend. You don’t need to show this to anyone else. It’s just for you. Any questions?”

You do not need to ask to see the list or ask them if they completed it. It is up to the students to decide if they want to do it.

Understanding stress

2.1

Comic: Mei's homework stress

Learning objective

To understand what stress is and how it can affect us

Key messages

Stress is a natural part of everyone's life, and many things can cause us to feel stressed.

Stress is how we feel when we are worried. We all experience stress differently; it can show up in people's thoughts (as worries) and in people's bodies by affecting them in different ways.

It is normal to feel stressed at times, but too much stress at once or feeling stressed for a long time can leave someone feeling overwhelmed.

It is important to learn how to cope with stress.

Slow breathing is one way to help our minds and bodies feel less stressed and more relaxed. You can also try exercise/sports, talking to someone you trust, or listening to music.

Total time

20 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

"Today we will talk about what stress is, how it can affect us, and how something called 'slow breathing' might be helpful to us. But first, let's start by checking in with how we feel."

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Feelings to consider adding to the chart: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes. You can do this as a class or in pairs, or you can allow students to reflect on their feelings silently.

Say

“Whatever you are feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way, and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Read comic 2.1 together or ask the students to read comic 2.1 in pairs or alone.

Step 3

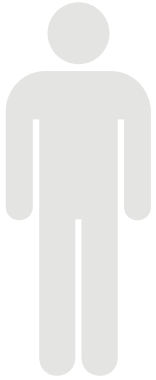
Student activities → 5 minutes

Say

“It’s normal to feel stressed at times, but too much stress at once or feeling stressed for a long time can affect us. Feeling stressed for some may mean having lots of worrying thoughts, while others might feel their heart start to beat faster. These are just some examples of how stress could affect us.”

Body Mapping

Draw a body and label some of the things that happen to Mei and her father when they're stressed. Try to show how stress might affect their bodies, feelings, or thoughts.



Body

(e.g., upset stomach, fast breathing rate, heart beating fast)

Thoughts and feelings

(e.g., sad, overwhelmed, helpless, worrying thoughts or having a hard time concentrating), May have thoughts such as, "I'll never get this homework done," "What if I fail?" or "What's wrong with me?")

Behaviors

(crying, avoiding people or putting things off, restlessness)

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts → 5 minutes

? Ask

"When you're stressed, how does it make you feel?"

Allow students to discuss in pairs, small groups, or as a class.

Step 5

Practice → 2-3 minutes

! Say

"Taking slow, deep breaths is one way to help our minds and bodies feel less stressed and more relaxed. Let's try practicing this together now. Take a deep breath in for 1,2,3... and breathe out for 1,2,3. This might feel strange at first, and that's okay. The main idea is to focus on slowing your breathing down."

Practice a few times.

Learning objective

To identify ways to help manage stress and understand when/how to get help.

Key messages

Developing habits to take good care of ourselves can help keep our stress levels low.

Everyone needs support from others to manage with their stress at times - this is okay, and we are not alone

No matter how small or big the issue, if you ever feel overwhelmed, afraid, or stuck, you should talk to someone you trust.

Total time

20 minutes

Step 1

Introduction → 2-3 minutes

Say

"Today we'll talk about some daily habits to help you manage stress. Let's start by checking in with how we feel."

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes. You can do this as a class or in pairs, or you can allow students to reflect on their feelings silently.

Say

"Whatever you are feeling right now, remember that it's okay to feel that way, and that I'm here to listen if you need to share how you're feeling."

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings like sadness, anger, or worry from time to time.
See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Read comic 2.1 together or ask the students to read comic 2.1 in pairs or alone.

Step 3

Student activities → 5 minutes

What can help?

Say

"In the comic, the students are asked to share some of the ways they cope with stress. Can you write or draw their ideas on a piece of paper?" (or turn and talk in pairs)

Possible answers

Yasmine: "Going out for a walk with my mother or doing something physically active helps me. Sometimes painting and drawing calms me down, too."

Addo: "Spending time talking with my friends helps me when I'm stressed."

Dahn: "Playing soccer helps me. Anything active! Listening to music at the same time helps me, too."

Mei: "A breathing exercise. Playing with my cat Lulu also helps me."

Ask

“What were some of Ms. Kim’s suggestions?”

Possible answers

Exercise, spending time with loved ones, spending time doing activities you enjoy, a balanced routine, getting the right amount of sleep, eating enough food and trying to have food that’s healthy, limiting screen time, and checking in with your Feelings Chart.

Say

“In a later lesson we’ll look at ways that can help us solve some of the issues that might be causing us stress, but having ways to help us manage stress is also important.”

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts → 5 minutes

Ask

“What are some of the things that you sometimes do to help you cope with stress?”

Allow students to share for 2-3 minutes.

Say

“When you feel overwhelmed or have a lot of worries, who are the 2-3 people you trust who you might talk to?”

Help students brainstorm and identify different people who can be trusted.

Some students might find it difficult to identify someone they can trust and might need additional support. Let them know they can trust and turn to you or another school staff member.

Step 5

Practice  2-3 minutes

Say

“Let’s try practicing slow breathing again today. Take a deep breathe in for 1,2,3... and then breathe out for 1, 2, 3.”

Learning objective

To identify and apply steps to help students solve problems:

“Stop, Think, Go.”

Key messages

We all face problems in life.

Problem-solving is an important skill we can all practice and get better at.

There are different ways to solve problems, and we might need to try different solutions until we find one that works.

Total time

20 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we’ll talk about facing different problems in our everyday life and how we can get better at solving these daily problems. But first, let’s check in with how we feel.”

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish or they can reflect on their feelings silently.

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 3.1. together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 3 to themselves.

Read Comic 3.1

Step 3

Student activities → 5 minutes

Say

“A problem is a challenge or a situation we experience that requires us to think about what we should do about it. We all face problems from time to time; some are big, and some are small.

Yasmine experiences a problem, and her older sister asks her to try the ‘Stop, Think, Go’ steps. Let’s start by drawing a traffic light. Red is ‘Stop’, orange is ‘Think’, and green is ‘Go’. Can you remember what Yasmine’s problem was? Write it down next to your red light, and try to be really specific.”

Allow students to write down or share their thoughts.

 **Say**

“Next, ‘Think’! Write down all the ideas Yasmine came up with next to your orange light. And if you think of any more ideas for her, feel free to add these, too!”

Allow students to write down or share their thoughts.

 **Say**

“Next is ‘Go’! Write down what she decides to do first next to the green light.”

Allow students to write down or share their thoughts.

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts  2-3 minutes

Discuss in pairs or small groups, or as a class.

 **Ask**

“Sometimes we all experience different problems. ‘Stop, Think, Go’ can help us solve problems – but what happened when Yasmine’s first attempt at problem-solving didn’t go as planned?”

Allow your students to share their thoughts for 2-3 minutes.

(After sending a note to her friends, she decided to speak to them, which included offering them an apology.)

 **Say**

“Yasmine’s story is something we might all face from time to time. Sometimes we have to think of various ways to approach a problem. Some ways might be more useful than others. Some might solve a problem faster or with less conflict, some might get a better reaction from others, and some might be impossible to actualize. So, on a daily basis, when we face problems, we have to ‘Stop’ to understand what the problem is, ‘Think’ to consider what we can do about it and consider which reaction would be best, and then ‘Go’ by acting on what we think is the best solution.”

Step 5

Practice  5 minutes

Say

“It is important to learn how to manage the problems we face. Problem-solving is one exercise we can try. Imagine you’re one of Yasmine’s friends, and you’re feeling as though you might need to solve the problem of leaving her out of the group. Can you explain how you might go about solving the problem using the ‘Stop, Think, Go’ steps?”

Allow students a moment to write down their answer or share in pairs.

Stop: Say/write down the problem.

The problem is that _____.

Think: What were some solutions or ideas you could try?

The ideas I have are _____.

Go: What would you do?

Say

“Remember, when you’re facing a problem, going through the ‘Stop, Think, Go’ steps might be helpful.”

Handling problems that are difficult to solve on our own

3.2

Comic: What's the problem, Pablo?

Learning objective

To understand how to ask for help and where to seek support when facing a difficult problem

To identify some ways to support your friends when they are facing a difficult problem

Key messages

Some problems are more difficult to solve than others.

If you feel stuck or overwhelmed, know that it is a sign of strength to ask for help from someone you trust.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction → 2-3 minutes

Say

"Today we'll talk about facing difficult problems in our everyday lives and how we can get help when facing problems that feel very big. But first, let's check in with how we feel."

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to for 2-3 minutes, or let them reflect on their feelings silently.

Say

"Whatever you're feeling right now, remember that it's okay to feel that way and that I'm here to listen if you need to share how you're feeling."

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings like sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 3.2. together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 3.2 to themselves.

Read Comic 3.2

Step 3

Student activities → 5 minutes

Say

“We all experience different problems, and some can be more difficult to solve than others. Some problems take time to solve and/or can’t be solved alone. What problem was Pablo facing? How did Pablo feel about the problem?”

Allow students a moment to reflect and share.

(Pablo’s father lost his job. He was feeling worried, afraid, stressed, nervous.)

Ask

“What helped Pablo feel better about this difficult problem?”

Allow students a moment to reflect and share.

(Pablo was not able to solve the problem of his father losing a job, but talking with Addo and Ms. Abadi helped him feel less alone in facing it.)

 **Say**

“When we experience a problem that’s difficult to solve, it can make us feel alone and powerless. Having the support of others during times like this is important, and asking for help is a sign of strength.”

 **Ask**

“You may have experienced a problem that was difficult to solve, too. How did it make you feel?”

Allow students a moment to write down their answers or share in pairs.

 **Say**

“When you’re facing a difficult problem, who are some of the people in your life who you can talk to about it?”

Allow students a moment to write down their answer or share in pairs.

 **Say**

“Remember, I am also someone you can turn to when you are facing a difficult problem. Or you can talk to another staff member at school with whom you feel comfortable.”

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts  2-3 minutes

 **Say**

“What are some problems you faced over the past week that you solved on your own? And which problems did you ask for help to solve?”

Students can write down:

Two problems I faced this past week that I solved on my own:

Two problems I got help solving:

Allow your students to share their thoughts for 2-3 minutes.

Step 5

Practice  5 minutes

Say

"Imagine you were in Pablo's shoes, and you were feeling very worried and afraid. Who might you go and talk to? What could you say to express that you'd like some support?"

Allow students a moment to write down their answers or share in pairs.

Some phrases to go over with students:

"I'm feeling worried/afraid/upset because _____."
"I don't know what to do, and I need some help."

Say

"Imagine that you were in Addo's shoes, and a friend like Pablo came to you with a difficult problem. How could you help them get support from an adult?"

Allow students a moment to write down their answer or share in pairs.

Some phrases to go over with students:

→ "What you're telling me sounds really difficult. I want to help you. Should we go talk to the teacher together?"

→ "I'm sorry this is happening. It seems like a problem that an adult could help with. Is there an adult you want to talk to? Do you want me to go with you to ask them for help?"

 **Say**

“If you feel stuck or overwhelmed by a problem, you shouldn’t feel embarrassed or afraid to ask for help. I know it isn’t easy to ask for help, and that’s why we can also support our friends to get help when they need it. ”

Communicating what we feel and need

4

Comic: I have something to say

Learning objective

To understand the difference between assertive, aggressive, and passive ways of communicating

To understand the vocabulary and words we can use to communicate assertively

Key messages

It is important to be honest about what we feel, need, and want.

You can express yourself by using “I” statements.

There are respectful ways to say “no” if you disagree.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction → 2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we’ll talk about communicating what we feel and need to others in a respectful way. But first, let’s start by checking in with how we feel.”

Allow your students to share their feelings for 2-3 minutes.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 4 together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 4 to themselves.

Read Comic 3.2

Step 3

Student activities → 10 minutes

Write

Assertive, passive and aggressive on the board.

Say

“Today we are going to compare three communication styles. Assertive communication is clearly saying what we feel and want in an honest, respectful way. Passive communication is not saying or being unclear about what we feel and want. Aggressive communication is saying what we feel and demanding what we want in an unkind or disrespectful way.”

Ask students to describe what assertive, passive, and aggressive communication looks like (what their characteristics are) and write it on the board. Or provide them with a list of characteristics and ask them to sort them into the right categories.

Question prompts: “When someone is communicating aggressively, what might they say? What tone of voice might they speak with? What kind of facial expressions might they have? What kind of body language might they use? What about if they were communicating passively? What about assertively?”

Assertive (Addo/Yasmin)

1. Saying what you feel and want
2. Using eye contact
3. Giving the other person a chance to say what they feel and want without interrupting them

Passive (Mei)

4. Not saying anything
5. Looking down
6. Letting the other person get their way
7. Letting others be disrespectful or hurt you

Aggressive (Dahn)

8. Saying mean words
 9. Physically hurting others
 10. Interrupting others
 11. Yelling or raising one’s voice
 12. Criticizing or blaming others
 13. Threatening others
-

 **Say**

You can communicate assertively by using an “I” statement. An “I” statement lets others know what you feel, what happened that made you feel that way, and what you need or would like them to do differently. Let me give you some examples:

- I feel hurt when you say “shut up” to me.
Next time please ask me nicely to be quiet.

- I feel frustrated when you keep interrupting me.
Could you please let me finish talking before you say something?

- I feel stressed because I don't understand the math problem.
I would like your help figuring this out.

Ask students to think about a time when they may have responded aggressively or passively.

Ask students to think how they might have responded differently if they were to use assertive communication.

I feel _____ when _____.
Could you please _____?

I feel _____ when _____.
I need _____.

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts —————→ 2-3 minutes

Ask

How did the way Dahn, Mei, and Addo/Yasmine communicate make the others feel?
How does talking like this affect their relationships with the others?

Allow your students to share their thoughts for 2-3 minutes.

Say

“The more we practice communicating assertively, the better we get at respectfully standing up for what we need and want while also maintaining positive relationships.”

Step 5

Practice  5 minutes

Say

"I'm going to provide you with a few different situations. Try to come up with an assertive response to each. Using an 'I' statement can be one way of respectfully say 'no.' When considering your response, take time to think about what you feel and need or want in these situations."

1. Your classmate asks, "Can you show me your answers to the homework assignment last night? I didn't have time to do it."

Ex: I don't feel good about sharing my answers.
Can I help by explaining anything you don't understand?

2. Your best friend asks, "I know you're supposed to go home soon, but can you just go home late this once? I don't want to be at this party without you."

Ex: I feel bad leaving you here at the party, but I need to get home on time.

3. Your brother is playing music so loudly that you cannot concentrate on your homework.

Ex: I feel annoyed because the music is so loud I can't concentrate on my homework. Could you please turn it down a bit?

4. You play on a soccer team and have an important soccer match tomorrow, but your mother asks, "I need you to stay home and watch your sister for me tomorrow."

Ex: I feel like it isn't fair because I have been practicing hard for this match, and my team is counting on me to be there. Can you find someone else to watch my sister tomorrow?

How alcohol, drugs, and tobacco can harm us

5.1

Comic: The class trip

Learning objective

To understand how substances can be harmful

To understand why substance use is bad for teens

To identify the risks and consequences of substance use

Key messages

Alcohol, tobacco products, and drugs are harmful to children/teen, and can also be harmful for adults.

There are different reasons why one might start using substances.

Substance use can put you physically at risk and also negatively impact your personal relationships, social life, academic performance, and future.

Total time

30-35 minutes

Step 1

Introduction → 2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we will talk about reasons why teens may initiate substance use and the possible harmful effects of using substances. But first, let’s start by checking in with how we feel.”

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to for 2-3 minutes, or they can reflect on their feelings silently.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Add: guilty, regretful, bored, relieved

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 5.1 together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 5.1 to themselves.

Read Comic 5.1

Step 3

Student activities → 15 minutes

Say

“Harmful substances include alcohol, tobacco products, and drugs. Although you might be tempted to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco, and might experience pressure to try these substances, it’s important to recognize the potential dangers so you can make informed decisions. Using these products can affect us in many ways.

From the story, what were some of the physical reactions Dahn and Pablo had when they drank alcohol? How did drinking and smoking affect how well they could do basic things like see, hear, talk, and walk? How did it affect how well they could control their emotions, make decisions and get on with their friends?"

Give students a couple of minutes to discuss and write down their answers.

Possible answers include:

- Dahn and Pablo stumbling down the hill/nearly falling,
- Lack of mental clarity on the bus, not knowing where they were
- Feeling drowsy and sluggish
- Feeling unwell (dizzy, nauseated, headache, coughing)

Ask

"What were some of the reasons Dahn and Pablo tried drinking and smoking?"

Give students a couple of minutes to discuss and write down their answers.

If not mentioned by the students, summarize the following points:

- Curiosity (Pablo)
- Wanting to do what their friends are doing (Pablo)
- To help relax (Dahn)
- Culture/family/media exposure (Pablo)
- To feel more grown up (Dahn/Pablo)
- To improve their reputation (or so they thought) (Dahn/Pablo)

Say

"It's common to be curious about some of these substances. It's also common to want to do what our friends are doing. But young people often think their peers use substances more than they actually do. Did you know that 70% of teens do not use alcohol? Sometimes using alcohol, drugs, or tobacco also makes young people feel more grown up. Some people feel like they benefit from using substances, but this comes with many risks. When you're thinking of trying a substance, it's important to consider the risks that come with it."

Ask

“What made it easy for Dahn and Pablo to start using substances? What kept Mei from trying substances? What protected Pablo and Dahn from continuing to use substances?”

Give students a couple of minutes to discuss in pairs or write down their answers.

If the students do mention the following risks, you can summarize them:

Risks	Protection
Negative influence from friends (Dahn pressured Pablo and Mei)	Positive influence of peers (Pablo stopped Mei, Yasmin and Mei made an agreement, Karina’s advice to Mei, Pablo talked with Dahn)
Dahn’s parents had beer and cigarettes at the house	Parental guidance (Pablo’s father)
Mei was feeling stressed with school and thought that substances might help her cope with stress or negative feelings	Guidance from other adults (Dahn’s coach)
Not knowing how harmful substance use can be to you	Information about the possible harmful effects of substance misuse

Say

“Now, take a moment to think about your own life. What might make you want to use substances? What might protect you from using them? You don’t have to share these, but I want to give you a minute to think about this.”

Allow your students to share their thoughts.

Substance use can make us unable or not interested in doing the things we normally do. It can make us avoid our friends, lie to others, skip social events, miss school or important responsibilities, change friends, fight with family members, and even put ourselves at risk of physical harm.

Prompt questions:

1. What if Dahn had fallen down?
He could have physically injured himself.
2. What if Dahn kept missing all his classes?
He could risk failing the class and not passing to the next grade with his friends.
3. What if Dahn continued missing all his soccer practice?
He would miss out on doing something he was good at and really enjoyed.
4. Did smoking and drinking make Dahn feel better about himself?
Or did it actually make him feel worse over time?

 **Say**

“Substance use can lead to many consequences that could affect us right now and in our futures.”

Step 5

Practice  5 minutes

 **Say**

“What are three ways substances could affect you or young people your age?”

Give students 2-3 minutes to write down three consequences of substance use.

 **Say**

“What can you do if you feel pressure to try substances, or if you’re already using them? How might you access support? It’s okay to seek out help from adults, including teachers like me.”

Note: It is important to have contact numbers for local resources available. You can write these on a blackboard as the lesson ends.

 **Say**

“You can also approach counselors or other support services anonymously to seek help. Remember: if you’re using a substance and you’d like to stop, you do not have to do it alone.”

Refusing alcohol, drugs, and tobacco

5.2

Comic: Dahn makes risky choices

Learning objective

To identify ways to refuse/avoid substance use

To know when to get help from a trusted adult

Key messages

Knowing and practicing what to do and say when offered alcohol, drugs, or tobacco ahead of time can help you avoid making bad choices in the moment.

If you struggle with alcohol, tobacco, or any kind of substance use, getting help from others is important.

Asking for help is a sign of strength – it shows self-awareness and courage to overcome something difficult.

Total time

35 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we’re going to learn about how to say no when feeling pressured into using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco and how to seek guidance from adults. First let’s start by checking in with how we feel.”

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to, or let them reflect on their feelings silently.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Add: guilty, regretful, bored, relieved

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings like sadness, anger, or worry from time to time.
See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 2-3 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 5.2 together. It is a continuation of comic 5.1.”
Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 5.2 to themselves.

Read Comic 5.2

Step 3

Student activities → 15 minutes

Say

“Knowing what to do and say when you’re offered alcohol, tobacco or drugs is important. Put yourself in the shoes of Mei and Pablo how might you have responded if Dahn was offering you potentially harmful substances?”

Give students a few minutes to share their thoughts.

Say

“There are a number of possible responses you can use if you don’t want to join someone who is pressuring you to use a substance that might be harmful. These are called refusal skills, and they can be helpful if you find yourself in a situation like this.

“The first refusal skill is centered on understanding why someone might be using a substance in the first place and why they might be asking you to use it. Knowing this can help you respond better to the person.”

Ask

“Think about how Dahn was pressuring Pablo. Why do you think Dahn was smoking and drinking? Why was Dahn asking Pablo to try smoking and drinking?”

Give students a few minutes to share their thoughts.

Why do you think Dahn was smoking and drinking?

Some possible answers:

- Dahn wanted to seem cool
- Dahn wanted to feel grown up.
- Dahn was feeling bored and wanted
- to do something exciting.

Why was Dahn asking Pablo to try smoking and drinking?

Some possible answers:

- He wanted to do something exciting with his friend.
- He thought smoking and drinking with Pablo would make it more fun.

Given these reasons, how could Pablo have responded to Dahn?

- “Dahn, what exactly is so cool about smoking? I don’t get it — it’s really not as cool as you think. ”
- “I want to do fun, exciting things with you, but I just don’t find smoking and drinking fun or exciting.”

Examples:

 **Say**

“Another refusal skill is to consider the consequences and share your thoughts about them with the friend who might be pressuring you.”

 **Ask**

“Think about what Karina said to Mei about her experience of drinking alcohol. What kinds of consequences did she talk about?”

Examples:

- The effect drinking had on her body and her mind (making her dizzy, making her thoughts less clear)
- Losing out on the lead in her dance recital
- The danger to others that drinking might cause

 **Ask**

“What are some of the other consequences of drinking that you can think of?”

Give students a few minutes to share their thoughts.

 **Say**

“Another refusal strategy would be to suggest alternatives. For example, think about Mei, who was tempted to try cigarettes on the school trip as a way to relax. What alternatives could she try instead?”

Give students a few minutes to share their thoughts.

Examples:

- She could watch TV.
- She could listen to music.
- She could hang out and talk with a friend.

 **Ask**

“What are some other alternatives to smoking that you can think of to help with relaxation?”

Give students a few minutes to share their thoughts.

 **Say**

“These are all useful strategies for when you want to say ‘no’ to someone who might be pressuring you to use potentially harmful substances. Now let’s practice these strategies. Pair up with a classmate, and one of you can play the role of Dahn while the other is Pablo. Dahn will pressure Pablo, and Pablo will practice refusing using the techniques we’ve just explored.”

Allow students to role-play in pairs.

 **Say**

“Saying ‘no’ can be very hard, and that’s why knowing what you’ll say and practicing ahead of time is important. This can help us feel more confident in using our refusal skills when we’re in an unsafe or uncomfortable situation. The more we practice, the better we’ll be at using these refusal skills.”

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts  2-3 minutes

 **Say**

“Saying ‘no’ isn’t always easy, and you may have to try more than one refusal strategy. If you feel like you’re in one of these situations or if you use any kind of substances, we encourage you to seek help from an adult you trust. Remember: there’s no shame in seeking help or admitting that a substance might be causing harm to you or others. Asking for help is a sign of strength — it shows self-awareness and courage to overcome something difficult.”

 **Ask**

“Who are some of the adults in your life you could talk to if you have questions about substance use or need help?”

Give your students 2-3 minutes to share their thoughts.

 **Say**

“Adults who could help you might include parents, teachers, coaches, or other family members. And, remember, you can also always come to me.”

Note: Wherever possible, it is essential for you (as the instructor) to be able to identify a child helpline or other community-based resource that adolescents can approach anonymously. You should provide the details of this service here and also write it on the blackboard.

Say

“There are also some ways to seek more information or help anonymously. Remember: if you’re using a substance and you’d like to stop, you don’t have to do it alone.”

Step 5

Practice → 10 minutes

Say

“Having a refusal strategy means you have a plan for responding if you find yourself in a situation where you are offered harmful substances. Coming up with a plan that works for you is important. Let us take a few minutes to think about and write down our personal refusal strategies.”

My Refusal Strategy

Three reasons why I don’t want to use tobacco, alcohol, and drugs:

→ _____
→ _____
→ _____

Examples:

- I know it’s bad for my body and my brain.
- I don’t want to feel sick.
- I don’t want to risk hurting myself.
- I don’t want it to negatively affect my schoolwork.
- I don’t want it to negatively affect my relationships.

Three ways I can refuse substances if I'm offered them:

→ _____
→ _____
→ _____

Examples:

Say 'no' directly and firmly.

Ignore the question, and walk away.

Stick with a friend who I know also wants to say 'no.'

Talk to an adult.

Two people I can turn to if I have questions or need help:

Say

"Some of you might have a hard time coming up with two people, and that's okay. I want you to know that I'm always available if you have questions or to help you brainstorm about other people you can turn to."

→ _____
→ _____

You can leave this part for students to do individually.

Optional question

"How might you share this information or help a friend who could be at risk or is using substances?"

Building positive relationships

6.1

Comic: Are you listening to me?

Learning objective

To identify helpful and unhelpful behaviors in relationships

To identify how to be an active listener

Key messages

Building relationships with others is important for our well-being.

Active listening is an important skill that helps us build and maintain relationships.

Total time

25 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we’ll talk about the importance of building relationships. But first, let’s start with checking in on how we feel.”

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to, or let them reflect on their feelings silently.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Add: guilty, regretful, bored, relieved

Add: awkward, unheard, joyful, safe

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way, and I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 6 together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 6.1 to themselves.

Read Comic 6

Step 3

Student activities → 15 minutes

Say

“A relationship is the connection we have with someone else. We have different relationships with family members, friends, teachers, or other people at our school or in our community. Having positive relationships is important for our well-being, but sometimes we may also experience relationships that don’t make us feel good or that are difficult to manage. Today, let’s focus on managing relationships with others and on ways we might be able to manage our feelings related some of our relationships.”

Ask

“How did Dahn and Pablo feel when they were not getting along? How did they feel after they had a talk?”

Give students 2-3 minutes to share their thoughts in pairs.

? Ask

“What were some of the ways in which Dahn, Pablo, and Yasmin were behaving that were not helpful to their relationships? In what ways were their behaviors helpful to their relationships?”

Here are some points you may want to review with your students:

Helpful	Unhelpful
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen and talk to one another• Ask someone to help if you are unable to talk to one another calmly• Take responsibility for your own actions, and apologize when you have done something wrong• Be honest with the person about what you need and want• Show you respect and accept someone for who they are• Show gratitude and express appreciation for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignore/avoid each other• Do something to physically hurt others• Blame one another• Focus on who is right and who is wrong• Name calling

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts \longrightarrow 5 minutes

! Say

“Think of a relationship in your own life that has some helpful characteristics. How does this relationship make you feel?”

Allow your students to share their thoughts in pairs for 2-3 minutes.

! Say

“Relationships can make us feel safe, less alone and happier, and it’s important that we make an effort to build these kinds of relationships. We can help build them through our

behaviors and actions. But not all relationships make us feel good, so it's also important to remember that it can be natural to feel difficult feelings about some relationships. I don't want to make you feel like all of your relationships must be positive all the time, but I do want to support you to manage your relationships and some of the feelings they bring about."

Step 5

Practice → 10 minutes

Say

"Being a good listener was one of the things that helped Dahn and Pablo manage their problem. Draw or write down two things you can do to show someone you're listening to them."

Prompt questions

"What could you say?"

"How might you act to show you're paying attention?"

Possible answers

1. Don't interrupt
2. Put any distractions aside
3. Ask follow-up questions about what the person is saying
4. Nod your head and make eye contact (looking at the person while they're speaking)
5. Summarize what you've heard them say (e.g., "It sounds like you were worried about what Dahn thinks of you. Is that right?")

Say

"Turn to the person sitting next to you and have a conversation about what you did over the weekend. Be sure to demonstrate some of the listening skills we just discussed while listening to them."

After the discussion, say

"I hope this was a useful exercise for you. Listening to each other and paying attention can be very useful ways to manage our relationships. Thanks for taking the time to practice these skills."

Managing conflict with others

6.2

Comic: Mei works things out with mom

Learning objective

To identify helpful ways to react when experiencing conflict with others
To understand that how we react to conflicts with others impacts our relationships

Key messages

Using the skills we learned about how to take care of our feelings, communicate what we need and want, problem-solve, and be a good listener can help us manage the way we react in challenging situations. How we react to conflict with others can impact our relationships

Total time

20 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

“Today we’ll talk about the importance of how we react when we find ourselves in conflict with others. But first, let’s start by checking in with how we feel.”

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to, or they can reflect on their feelings silently.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Add: guilty, regretful, bored, relieved

Add: awkward, unheard, joyful, safe

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way, and I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 6 together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 6.2 to themselves.

Read Comic 6

Step 3

Student activities → 5 minutes

Say

“Conflict in our relationships with others happens from time to time, and how we react to conflict can affect our relationships.”

Ask

“How were Mei and her mother each feeling when they had a disagreement about Mei getting her own mobile phone?”

Possible answers

1. Mei felt unheard, misunderstood, angry, sad, or that things were unfair.
2. Her mother may have felt frustrated and hurt by Mei's words and request for a mobile phone.

? Ask

"In what ways were Mei's reactions unhelpful? In what ways were her mother's reactions unhelpful?"

Possible answers

1. Mei called her mother mean, raised her voice, and ran away.
2. Mei's mother did not ask questions to understand why Mei wanted a phone or give her a chance to explain. Mei's mom only listed the reasons why she thought Mei should not have a phone and raised her voice at Mei.

? Ask

"What did they do differently in the end that helped them resolve the conflict? How did this affect the connection between them?"

Possible answers:

1. Mei respectfully told her mother that she was feeling angry and needed some time to calm down before talking to her. Mei talked to her grandmother to help calm herself down. Mei also apologized and made an effort to listen to what her mother had to say.
2. Mei's mother asked if Mei was ready to talk and gave her 15 mins of alone time to calm down. She apologized and asked questions to understand why Mei wanted a phone and how Mei was feeling. Mei's mother still stated that she did not want Mei to have a phone yet but also tried to find a way to address how Mei was feeling (let Mei use her phone sometimes so she wouldn't feel left out among her friends).

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts → 5 minutes

Say

“Think of a recent time when you had a conflict with someone. How did you feel? How did you react?”

Allow your students to share their thoughts in pairs for 2-3 minutes.

Say

“Disagreements are a part of our everyday lives. Many people experience a lot of difficult emotions because of difficulties with their relationships. We can’t always control the way others behave, but sometimes we can develop skills that will help us manage our relationships. If you are having difficulty managing a relationship, it’s not a bad idea to ask for support or advice from someone you trust.”

Step 5

Practice → 10 minutes

Say

“In pairs, choose any of the following conflict scenarios. With your partner, act out the situation using some of the unhelpful reactions we discussed. Then try acting out the scenario again using helpful reactions. What was the difference in how things ended up?”

Scenarios to choose from:

1. You are two good friends who normally spend time doing a lot of things together. One of you starts spending more time with another friend. The other one is feeling upset about it.
2. One classmate constantly makes fun of the other classmate in front of other students. The classmate being made fun of is tired of it.

3. You ask your friend to hang out with you on the weekend, and they say they can't because they have to study. You later find out that your friend was hanging out with other people and didn't invite you.
4. In the middle of watching your TV show, one of your parents comes in and turn off the TV, saying you need to go do your homework. You want to finish watching the show, but they say no.
5. You had plans to go out with your friends but suddenly your parents said you have to help them at home and can't go out anymore. You feel very upset.

Understanding what others feel

6.3

Comic: Here for each other

Learning objective

To understand that empathy means understanding what the other person is feeling

To recognize that empathy is an important part of relationships

Key messages

It's important to feel understood in a relationship.

It's important in our relationships to understand how others might be feeling.

Empathy leads to action or behavior that is helpful to others.

Total time

30 minutes

Step 1

Introduction  2-3 minutes

Say

"Today we'll talk about the importance of understanding each other and how this can help us to be better friends and have good relationships. But first, let's check in with how we're feeling."

Allow your students to share their feelings if they wish to, or they can reflect on their feelings silently.

Start the session with the Feelings Chart activity introduced in the comic 1.1 lesson.

Add: annoyed, hopeful, helpless, stressed

Add: lonely, hurt, determined, thankful

Add: confident, satisfied, embarrassed, ignored

Add: guilty, regretful, bored, relieved

Add: awkward, unheard, joyful, safe

Say

“Whatever you’re feeling right now, remember that it’s okay to feel that way and that I’m here to listen if you need to share how you’re feeling.”

It is to be expected that some students may indicate feelings such as sadness, anger, or worry from time to time. See page 28 for more information on how to help students manage difficult feelings.

Step 2

Comic book reading → 5 minutes

Say

“Let’s read comic 6.3 together.”

Alternatively, you can ask the students to read comic 6.3 to themselves.

Read Comic 6.3

Step 3

Student activities → 5 minutes

Say

“Being able to understand how another person is feeling is a skill called empathy. We can practice empathy by considering how others might be feeling and what they might be thinking. Empathy can lead us to take action and behave in a way that helps others.”

Ask

“What makes you feel like someone understands what you’re feeling or going through?”

Examples/ways to prompt:

1. When someone reflects back to me what I've said to them.
 2. When someone says they might know how I'm feeling and then identifies that feeling.
 3. When someone does something to show they care about me when I'm going through a difficult time.
-

Step 4

Reflection and revision of main concepts → 5 minutes

Say

"Let's look at comic 6.3. Can you identify where Addo and friends are practicing empathy? What do they say or do that makes you think that?"

Allow your students to share their thoughts in pairs for 2-3 minutes.

Examples/prompts:

1. When Addo says, "Yeah, she must be having a hard time."
 2. When Addo thinks: "How might grandmother be feeling right now?"
 3. When Addo and friends understand that Mrs. Basu might feel lonely, they think of ways to help her feel less alone, like going to tidy up on her garden.
 4. When Pablo says, "When I walked by, she seemed sad and lonely."
-

Step 5

Practice → 10 minutes

Ask students to pair up.

Say

"Imagine that your friend is having trouble with homework and is stressed out about it. When they tell you about it, what are some examples of responses that do not show empathy?"

Answers:

1. OMG, you didn't finish your homework yet?!
2. The homework was so easy for me, I don't know why you're having trouble with it.
3. That's your problem, not mine.
4. It's just homework; it's not a big deal. Why would this be causing you stress?

 **Say**

"Now, what are examples of responses that show empathy?"

Answers

1. When I have a hard time with homework I feel stressed out, too.
2. I'm sorry you're having a hard time with this homework. I understand why this is stressful for you.
3. I'm sorry you're stressed out about the homework. Is there something I can help with?

 **Say**

"Can anyone think of a time when someone has empathized with them?"

Allow students 2 minutes to write or share in pairs or as a group.

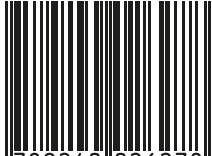
 **Say**

"Can anyone think of a time when they have empathized with someone else?"

Allow students 2 minutes to write.



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