



BREAK THE CYCLE

Relationship with Emotions

"I have come to the terrifying conclusion that I am the decisive element within the classroom. My personal approach that creates the climate, my mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture, or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate, or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanised or de-humanised." - Haim Ginnott

Positive emotions can be used as fuel to motivate ourselves. There's are two ways of propelling a vehicle. You can put the right fuel inside and let the engine do what it's devised to do, or you can push it. Helping students develop a growing awareness of and an ability to relate positively to their emotions is crucial to their wellbeing. Emotions are very important for the journey of life but it's not necessarily a good idea to let them drive the car of our lives.

Learning intention students will understand that it is important to

NEVER MAKE A PERMANENT DECISION BASED ON A TEMPORARY EMOTION

- that what you go through you can grow through
- to never take sides with your pride and suppress stress - it's good to talk and it's great to get help.

"We are being judged by a new yardstick; not just how smart we are, or by our training and expertise, but also how well we handle ourselves and each other." - Daniel Goleman

Lesson 1: Emotions

Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key question is what are our emotions and how do they affect us in our day to day experiences
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start the class with five minutes of mindfulness. Teacher may use an app such as smiling mind or headspace. Students write down something that has happened to them since the last class that they are grateful for. Ask the students to name as many emotions as they can. Now ask them to recall the last 24 hours and to write down what emotions they experienced. What was the cause of these emotions? Did they recognise any physical response in their bodies? e.g. tense, sweating, slow heartbeat, fast breathing? Feedback
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the biscuits story. Unpack. What led to the change of feelings? How did the new information change the point of view? What had the person been assuming? Ask students to create a scenario where they will have an emotional response to a situation. Get them to describe what their reaction to the situation would be. Ask would that emotion be used as fuel to motivate them, a reward, or a warning light? Play the stuck in a hole game.

The Biscuits Story

A busy executive was waiting for a connecting flight home from the airport when she noticed that the flight had been delayed. Irritated but reconciled to the fact that nothing could be done about it, she decided to buy a newspaper and a packet of biscuits and put in the time with a cup of tea. A person took a nearby seat at the same table and smiled courteously in her direction. Not seeking to get involved in conversation, the lady raised her newspaper and began reading, only to be distracted a short while later by the sound of the person crunching on a biscuit – her biscuits! Putting the newspaper down she threw a none too happy glance in his direction. This, instead of generating the desired effect of an apology or even an embarrassed look, only drew a quick smile and the pushing across the table to her of her own biscuits. She wasn't quite sure in that moment if she was more annoyed, angry or disgusted. The cheek! An announcement on the tannoy indicated that her plane was now ready for departure and was now boarding. She started to gather up her things, still furious. She placed her paper back in her bag, but not before shooting the person a withering glare for his cheekiness. At that moment, in her bag she spotted ... her packet of biscuits. She had in fact been eating his biscuits all the while.

1. What are the initial thoughts and feelings of the executive towards the person eating the biscuits?

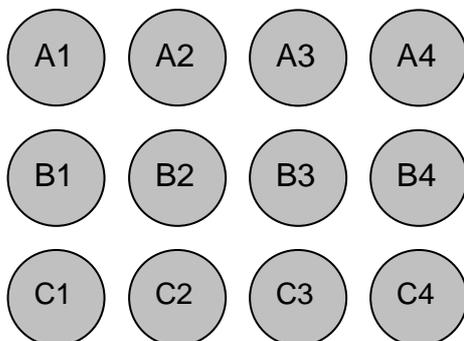
2. How did the executive's thoughts and feelings change during the event at the airport?
3. 'When you assume, you make an ass out of me and an ass out of you'! Do you agree with that saying? Have you ever made a judgement or assumption about somebody or something that was wrong?

This is a game that can express the isolation one can feel when experiencing depression. The greatest friend to depression is isolation and its biggest enemy is human connection. We are hard wired to connect. It is important for our wellbeing to have good relationships in our lives and a good relationship with ourselves.

Instructions for 'Stuck in a hole.'

Students are to imagine that they are stuck down a hole. The game is played in silence, and the aim is for the students to escape from their hole. Success in the game depends upon co-operation and is useful for illustrating the importance of relationships in overcoming obstacles.

The students have various items at their disposal to use for their escape attempt, including paper and a pen with which they can send messages to other hole dwellers (listed on student instructions). The problem is they do not know that there are other hole-dwellers and they do not know that their messages have to be addressed to specific holes. The holes are set out on an imaginary grid (which can be bigger or smaller according to class-size), of which the students are unaware:



During the course of the game, you have to read out a series of announcements (below), and collect any messages that they may choose to write, in a 'basket.' Students should receive as little help as possible from you to really underline the feelings of helplessness and isolation. Read out the messages when you think the students have arrived at a moment of frustration.

First of all, give students the pen and paper and the instruction sheet for the game. Allow them some time to digest the instructions and then proceed with the announcements when you see fit.

- **Announcement 1:**

Attention - hole-dwellers, you can send messages to other hole dwellers. Please put them in the basket when it next comes down. The people keeping you in the hole will not reply to any messages.

If the students write any messages, distribute them at random to other hole dwellers.

- **Announcement 2:**

Attention - hole-dwellers, none of the messages were correctly addressed to the other hole-dwellers, so we have distributed them at random. Kindly address your messages correctly in future.

- **Announcement 3:**

Attention - hole-dwellers, due to a feeling of frustration and sadness, we have decided to give you some gifts to try to cheer you up. Please choose up to 3 items from the list:

Matches	Candles
Sleeping pill	A homing pigeon
Chocolate	Laptop
Axe	X-Box (including games)
7 metre rope	A book (of your choice)
Screwdriver	2 metre step-ladder
Mobile phone	Wood
Television	€1000

- **Announcement 4:**

Attention hole-dwellers, we thought that it was about time that you knew your exact location and we will be sending our agent to do this shortly. Please send your messages to the correct address in future. If you think that you have found your way out of your hole, please raise your hand.

After you have read this announcement, please write the location of each student's hole on their instruction sheet (A1, B2 C3 etc.). Also, please deliver messages to where they are addressed. See if any students send messages to other holes to ask for help and attempt to formulate an escape plan.

A successful attempt to escape might be sharing of rope or duvet covers to make a rope, one end of which is then sent to the next hole to make an escape rope (i.e. one hole-dweller holds on to one end whilst the other hole-dweller climbs out and then helps their partner). Escapees can then choose to help other hole-dwellers if they wish.

Stuck in a Hole: Instructions for Students

Hello.

This is a silent game.

You are stuck down a hole.

The hole is about 10 metres deep. There is no visible way of getting out (no ladder and the walls are made of smooth concrete). No-one responds if you call or shout out. You don't know where you are or how long you've been in this hole.

You have the following things:

- A bed (with a bed sheet, a duvet and a pillow.)
- A toilet.
- A table and chair.
- A pen and some paper.

It is your task to find a way to escape from the hole.

Every so often a basket is lowered into the hole with food and drink in it. When you are finished eating and drinking, your dirty plates and glass are taken away in the basket, which is raised up. Obviously someone is lowering and raising the basket, but you don't know who and you think that the string the basket is on will break if you try to escape on it.

What do you do now?

Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to generate topics that teenagers have strong feelings on and to rate how strongly they feel about the issue on a scale of 1-10.• Get them to reflect on their own triggers and emotional hot buttons and write them down.• Write down three takeaways, three questions or observations having played the stuck in a whole game. What tools can help someone dig themselves out of a hole? What can help, what can hinder and what can harm. What objects did they choose and for what reason, what was their thought process. Did anyone give up and think there was no point even trying?• Can they recall a time they overcame an obstacle? Can they remember and name the feeling they had at the time?
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About John Doran, Author

John Doran has been a teacher and guidance counsellor for over 24 years. A founding Chairman of the Network of School Planners from its foundation, he is author of the acclaimed *Ways to Wellbeing*. It is currently taught in over 140 schools both here and in mainland Europe. He is passionate about the transformative power of education to disrupt poverty, and help young people do all that they can, with all that they have, in the time that they have got, in the space that they are in. John speaks to management bodies, Education Trusts, teachers, parents and students on the topics of resilience, Wellbeing, stress management and maximising performance both nationally and internationally. John is a member of the Board of Directors of the Make A Wish Foundation Ireland, and is about to record a Ted talk in October.

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