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Problem-solving happiness – 25 activities – 5 from each partner

Activities may be overlapping or have similarities as each partner created them separately in the workgroup formed inside their organisation.

PARTNER 1

1. Positive outcome brainstorming

Pupils choose a challenging problem and brainstorm as many positive solutions as possible. This exercise teaches approaching problems with optimism and creativity.

2. Resolving stress scenarios

Role-play where pupils resolve common stress scenarios using positive thinking techniques. The teacher first asks them to brainstorm as many stressful situations as they can. Then they start working on creating coping techniques. This exercise develops coping strategies and a positive outlook.

3. Reflecting on personal challenges

Pupils reflect on a past difficult situation and analyse how a positive mindset could have changed the outcome. This exercise helps develop awareness and self-management skills.

4. Collaborative problem-solving

Pupils work together to find a solution to a hypothetical community problem, focusing on positive outcomes. This exercise encourages teamwork and positive thinking.

5. Writing a gratitude journal

Pupils write a gratitude journal, focusing on challenges they have overcome. This exercise fosters gratitude and a positive outlook.

PARTNER 2

1. Define your boundaries

The pupils need to look at 2-3 regular relationships you have, for example, with parents, brothers-sisters, friends, etc. Think about the boundaries you have about the following: Physical space (what is physical contact you feel comfortable with, what about sharing space, i.e. flat, bedroom, etc.).

Emotional space (how comfortable are you about sharing your personal thoughts, opinion and beliefs). Options (do you find it easy to limit your time with them, decline offers, etc.).

This activity is best done with secondary school students.

2. Communicating your boundary

The pupils look at the boundaries they listed in the previous exercise and choose one of the boundaries that is not always respected by their family members or peers. They think how they would express this to the other party using only “I” language, e.g. I feel ... It makes me feel etc.

3. Meeting your shadow

Everyone has a shadow, i.e parts that we do not like about ourselves, are ashamed of and try to hide. In order to get to know your shadow better, think about the following questions: 1. What kind of people trigger you and what quality exactly? 2. When you feel envy towards someone, what exactly do they have that you desire? 3. How do you talk about yourself to other? 4. How often do you give advice and why do you need to do that? 5. How do you speak about other people when they are not present?

This activity is best done with secondary school students.

4. Saying NO

This practice is done in pairs. Some desirable edible things, such as fruits, strawberries or chocolate are needed. A has the desired thing and B takes the role of a beggar who uses different strategies to get the strawberries or chocolate. The first person has to say NO to every request - this exercise can last approximately 2-3 minutes. Then B plays the role of a bully, so the asking takes a more aggressive tone and again A has to decline. Then the roles are reversed. The goal of this activity is to help young people increase their confidence in saying NO.

5. Physical proximity sensor

Pupils stand in two lines. Everyone has a partner in the opposite. The pupils standing on the left line start invited the person opposite to come closer trying to sense what is a comfortable distance to interact. Then the roles are reversed.

PARTNER 3

1. What if

Teacher creates a list of moral dilemmas for students to ponder(ChatGPT). Cut them up, put them in a bag. Ss pull out/ use WheelPicker to make the selection. Pupils share how they would handle the situation using ethical reasoning & decision making skills. Truth dilemma: Your friend breaks something and asks you not to tell anyone. Should you keep their secret or tell an adult what happened?

2. Building site

The teacher provides pupils with materials (straws, marshmallows, paper cups); challenge them to build: the tallest freestanding tower, a bridge that can hold a certain weight, structures following specific rules. Students learn to think creatively, collaborate, iterate.

3. Moon landing

More information can be found here:

<https://targethiv.org/sites/default/files/supporting-files/cqii-survive-moon.pdf>

4. Escape activities

Escape rooms promote problem solving and critical thinking. Pupils are presented with a scenario or challenge within a controlled environment (themed classroom/ designated area). They work together to decipher puzzles, uncover clues, solve challenges within a set time limit. Escape rooms provide immersive and engaging problem-solving experiences(Google Forms).

5. Debates

Debating on contemporary issues stimulates critical thinking and persuasive communication skills. Topics can include: Establishing a universal basic income to address poverty/ Social media regulation to address misinformation and hate speech on platforms/ Banning TikTok /Animal testing for cosmetics and scientific purposes/ Space exploration funding

PARTNER 4

1. Role-play of difficult situations

The group should recreate real-life conflict scenarios or imagine a specific situation, such as a misunderstanding at work or with a friend. The group acts out the situation. Then, all participants should offer constructive ideas on how to resolve the conflict, focusing on using conscious communication, active listening, and positive feedback.

2. The happy problem box

Participants write down small problems or situations that make them feel challenged or frustrated in their daily lives on small pieces of paper. The papers are placed in a box. Each participant picks a random problem and, in small groups, they discuss creative ways to solve the situation, focusing on how to turn it into an opportunity for happiness or well-being. They then share their solutions with the group, encouraging an open discussion on how small changes can lead to feelings of joy and satisfaction.

3. The happiness map

Each pupil person draws a “happiness map” where they identify a problem they face (e.g., stress with homework, difficulties with friends) and map out different paths to solve it. On the map, they create various routes to happiness, drawing the steps they think are necessary to overcome the problem. In pairs or groups, they share their maps and discuss how working together can help find solutions to everyday challenges.

4. The ladder of happiness challenge

Each pupil chooses a small personal problem they would like to solve to feel happier (e.g., “I want to make new friends”). They draw a ladder with 5 steps and, with the help of their peers, fill each step with a small action that can help solve the problem. The group discusses and offers ideas for each

participant's ladder. This activity promotes teamwork and demonstrates how happiness can be achieved through small, consecutive actions, reinforcing the value of communication.

5. The happy solutions wheel

One participant spins a wheel with different types of problems written on it (e.g., "Friendship problem," "I don't like school," "I feel tired"). When the wheel stops, the group has 5 minutes to collectively find a creative and positive solution to the selected problem. After the discussion, the group shares their solution, encouraging dialogue about how different perspectives can bring creative and effective answers to common problems.

PARTNER 5

1. Find the story ...

The teacher gives each group of pupils (3-4) some random words (approx. 10-12) and the students in teams make a story using all of the words.

2. Creating a personal happiness action plan

Pupils develop a personal happiness action plan and share it with a partner who provides feedback. This exercise helps set goals and develop a positive outlook.

3. Yes ... And ...

One person begins to tell a story or describe a scenario. The rest of the team challenge is to build on this narrative by replying with "yes, and.." One after the other, each team member contributes one or two sentences to the story. The key is to react quickly to keep the flow of the story going. You can make the game more challenging by determining the order in advance, for example, by first name or age. This can add an extra layer of complexity to the game, as participants must adapt to the changing sequence of response.

4. Idioms and phrases

The pupils are given random idioms and they need to explain what a given idiom or a phrase means.

5. Make a rainbow

Take a glass of water and a white paper near a window (we need the sunlight). Hold the glass of water above the paper. Watch as sunlight passes through the glass of water, it bends and forms a rainbow of colors on your sheet of paper. Now try holding the glass of water at different heights and angles. Has it a different effect? The aim of this activity is to demonstrate that the way you look, changes what you see.