 Acknowledging achievements and successes

Duration: 60 minutes

Purpose of the task

Acknowledging our achievements and successes increases our positive emotions. Cultivating these emotions on a regular basis increases our resilience. Creating memories around our important achievements allows us to have something to remember in times of self doubt. During these times we can use these achievements to give ourselves reinforcement of what we can actually achieve.

Teacher further learning:

* ReachOut.com – [Building resiliency in young people](http://au.professionals.reachout.com/building-resiliency-in-young-people-resource)

Course outcomes

1.1 Assess personal strengths and skills to achieve positive outcomes in a range of challenging and changing situations.

1.3 Build positive thinking, self-belief and a sense of empowerment to take action to promote meaningful futures for self and others.

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Recognise the characteristics of resilience and reflect on these characteristics in relation to their own resilience.
* Assess their personal strengths and skills to achieve a positive outcome in a range of changing situations.

Required resources and materials for preparation

Student activities are set around:

* whole group
* small group
* individual activities
* offline and online.

Equipment required:

* post-it notes
* access to the internet and laptop/tablet/phone
* online access to the [resilience self-test](https://www.verywellmind.com/quiz-how-resilient-are-you-4008851)
* 3, 2, 1 Ideas worksheet
* Boosting success through character strengths worksheet
* Recording my achievements big and small worksheet

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Mental health and wellbeing  Focus: Developing self-efficacy and mental fitness | Building resilience   * acknowledging controllable factors * recognising achievements and successes * seeking, accessing and accepting help and support * empathising * overcoming adversity   Positive wellbeing   * accomplishment |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Personal values and beliefs   * recognising and assessing strengths, aspirations and potential * self-concepts   Self-management   * using mind-sets for motivation and achievement, e.g. growth mind-set * managing change and initiating contingency plans * responsibility for self and actions * planning, setting, tracking and modifying goals * strategies for future success |

Teaching notes

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready)

Learning experiences

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability of an individual to face particular difficulties (like abusive situations, living in poor conditions and having a non-supportive family) and not develop problem/risk behaviours. It describes the capacity of a person to respond in a positive way to the risks, stresses and adversities of life (www.health.gov.au).

3,2,1 Brainwriting: what is resilience?

* Students work in groups of 3. Each group completes the 3, 2, 1 Ideas worksheet.
  + Each student in the group is to think of two ideas around the definition of resilience. These can be words they associate with resilience or examples of being resilient.
  + Apply a 1-minute time limit for each student to complete these two ideas. After the time limit pass on to the next student in their group.
  + Students continue the exercise until all 3 students have completed the worksheet.
* Conduct a whole group discussion to invite each group’s ideas and develop a group definition with a list of examples of being resilient.

How resilient are you?

* Individually, students complete the [resilience self-test](http://stress.about.com/library/resilience/bl_resilience_quiz.htm)
* Students pair up to discuss the following questions:
  + were your results what you expected?
  + what resilience skills are you good at?
  + what resilience skills do you need to work on?
  + what are some ways to improve these resilience skills?

Acknowledging achievements group discussion

* How do we celebrate our achievements?
  + Record 5 headings on a board or online space (as indicated in the table below).
  + Each student uses 5 post-it notes, one for each heading - at school | at home | in the community (sport/clubs) | with our friends | by ourselves.
  + Students use the post it notes to record as many ways they can think of to celebrate achievements in these settings.
  + As a group, explore the range of responses.

Recording your achievements

Note: Revise setting personal goals from previous activity Planning goals.

* Students complete: Recording my achievements big and small worksheet.

Successes — what strengths help us in being successful?

The following activities build on previous learning and understanding of personal strengths.

If students have not explored previous content in this learning context, ask students to complete the VIA Character Strength test or use the Identifying strengths, skills and strategies activity to build understanding.

What strengths assist us in being successful?

As a group, or prior to the lesson, students watch the clip [The Science of character](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3nT2KDAGOc) and complete the following questions individually.

* List two famous people from history who have also identified character strengths as important components of a meaningful life.
* How can you shape other peoples’ character strengths?
* Which part of the brain controls our thoughts and actions?
  + Executive system
  + Pre-frontal cortex
  + Self-regulation
  + Focus centre
  + Grey matter
* Discuss as a group.

7 character strengths for success

* Explain to students that Positive Psychologists have discovered that 7 of the 24 character strengths are linked with academic success and life satisfaction. These character strengths are listed below:
  + grit
  + social intelligence
  + optimism
  + gratitude
  + zest
  + self-control
  + curiosity
* Students complete the Boosting success through character strengths worksheet.
* Students work in small groups of 3 and share their answers from the worksheet on how they could further develop these character strengths.
* Create a class list of ideas on how to develop these characters strengths and display in classroom or in school hallway for other students to see.

3, 2, 1 ideas worksheet

| Student | Idea 1 | Idea 2 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

Boosting success through character strengths

Positive Psychologists have discovered that 7 of the 24 character strengths are linked with academic success and life satisfaction.

For each character strength below, investigate its definition and write it in the table below. Read through how to develop each strength and then list an additional way to develop this strength in the last column of the table.

| Character strength | Definition | Example of how to develop strength | What else could you do to develop this strength? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grit |  | Read an inspiring quote or poem each week to boost your perseverance! |  |
| Social intelligence |  | Watch your favourite TV show with the sound muted and write down your feelings as you watch it. |  |
| Optimism |  | List all the bad things that have happened to you and for each list two positives. |  |
| Gratitude |  | Notice how many times you say ‘thanks’ and consider how much you mean it. |  |
| Zest |  | Improve your sleep hygiene by getting to bed to have at least 8 hours sleep! |  |
| Self-control |  | Monitor and eliminate distractions when you are completing your homework (e.g. phone, tablet, computer). |  |
| Curiosity |  | Expand your knowledge in an area of interest through reading books, magazines, journals TV, radio or online for 30mins three times per week. |  |

Recording my achievements big and small

Keeping a notebook of all your achievements, big and small, helps to increase daily motivation, improve future planning and build resilience.

Set aside 5 minutes every week to record the achievements you have made. You may like to think about achievements relating to:

* personal goals (short and long term)
* school work
* friendships
* family relationships.

Below is an example. You may like to buy a notebook to record your achievements or use this worksheet as a template. It’s up to you.

Tips:

* write down your achievements for the week.
* focus on aspects of your life that are important to you, not what you think others think are important.
* focus on progress towards your goals, not the end result you are aiming for. Small steps!
* reflect at the end of the month: what could you do more of? what could you improve on?
* repeat.

| Week | Date | Area of focus | Detail |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |