**Positive Psychology**

**Resource Pack:**

**Happiness**



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**Information for Teachers**

The concept of happiness is the corner stone of the assumptions of positive psychology. Happiness is characterised by the experience of more frequent positive affective states than negative ones as well as a perception that one is progressing toward important life goals (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). In general, happiness is understood as the positive emotions we have in regard to the pleasurable activities we take part in through our daily lives. Pleasure, comfort, gratitude, hope, and inspiration are examples of positive emotions that increase our happiness and move us to flourish.

Happiness is important to the wellbeing of all children and young people; Martin Seligman, the founder of positive psychology, names three reasons for teaching happiness: antidote to depression, increasing life satisfaction and aid to better learning and more creative thinking. Several research studies have also proven that happy people live longer, have better problem-solving skills and are more successful in life. They are much more creative, helpful and can concentrate better on particular activities.

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| I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them. **HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a** |
| I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them. **HWB 2-02a / HWB 3-02a** |
| I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. **HWB 2-04a / HWB 3-04a** |
| I am aware that positive friendships and relationships can promote health and the health and wellbeing of others. **HWB 2-44b** |

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Description automatically generatedExperiences and Outcomes**

**Introduction to Lesson:**

This lesson focuses on the concept of happiness, with the opportunity for pupils to discuss what happiness means to them. Pupils will also learn about the benefits of happiness, identify ways to increase their happiness and set their selves a SMART goal.

**Learning intentions and Success Criteria:**

Learning Intentions:

By the end the lesson I will learn what is meant by happiness, how I can increase my happiness and set myself a SMART goal.

Success Criteria:

I will have been successful if I can:

* Understand the meaning of happiness
* Identify how I can increase my happiness
* Set myself a SMART goal

**Activity: What is Happiness?**

1.Ask pupils to take a moment to think about what happiness means to them. They should note down whatever comes to their mind.

Discuss pupils’ thoughts as a class and read out the happiness definition below:

Happiness is the state of being happy – in other words, being content or pleased with your life, your situation, or the person that you are. It means having good feelings about the present, (and maybe the past or the future), and feeling that you are able to achieve what you want, or able to enjoy yourself.

2.Pupils should now think about specific things that often make them happy. These could be activities, people, places or anything else that comes to their mind.

Discuss pupils’ thoughts as a class.

3. You may wish to prompt some debate by asking the question ‘can money buy happiness?’

Although happiness can be defined in general terms, it can also vary greatly from person to person, in terms of what brings them happiness. For example, for some people, happiness would be having a nice house, lots of money, or a really expensive car. These are all examples of material happiness – in other words, happiness that comes from possessing physical things. For other people, happiness would be being really popular, or having great friends. These are all examples of emotional happiness, which comes from the relationships that a person is able to form. Yet again, for other people, happiness might mean doing really well at school, getting high grades, becoming a master at their particular hobby or interest, and getting a top job in their chosen field. This might be classed as professional happiness, because it's focused on achieving potential. For other people, happiness might mean seeing everybody in society doing well and being looked after. We might call this social happiness, as it's focused on the wellbeing of other people. Of course, there are many more types of happiness, and many people have a mix of all of these.

**Activity: How to increase your happiness**

One-way scientists have discovered that can increase people’s happiness is by only doing things which enrich their life. Explain that the things we do on a daily basis can be split into three categories: Things which enrich us, for example reading, cooking. Things which do not enrich us, for example tidying, and things that are neutral but necessary for example sleeping, eating. The simple fact is that if we do more things that enrich our lives than don’t, then we will feel happier!

Issue pupils with **Worksheet 1: My Normal Day**, to complete. Then ask pupils to discuss with a partner about how, they can reduce the ‘doesn’t enrich’ column and increase the ‘does enrich’ column.

**A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generatedWorksheet 1: My Normal Day**

**Activity 2: Goal Setting**

Another way of achieving happiness is by setting, meeting and celebrating our goals. It is clear that happy people set clear goals and determine clear and specific plans to ensure that these goals become reality.

Explain SMART Goal Setting to pupils using the information below:

The following are components of an effective goal - one that describes performance standards that will ‘tell us what good behaviour looks like’. The SMART acronym can help us remember these components.

* **S**pecific - The goal should identify a specific action or event that will take place
* **M**easurable - The goal and its benefits should be quantifiable
* **A**chievable - The goal should be attainable given available resources
* **R**elevant – The goal should be important to you and help with long term goals.
* **T**imely - The goal should state the time period in which it will be accomplished

Pupils could thought shower on the board, or paper some goals that they might have in mind. It might be useful to prompt them into goals which are in various areas such as: personal, relationships, educational, health, fitness etc.

Pupils should then complete **Worksheet 2: My SMART Goal Planner** to break down into each of the SMART categories. See below for some examples:

SMART goal Example:

**Specific** – I want to learn multiplication facts to 6

**Measurable** – I will pass my math minute quizzes

**Attainable** – I have learned other math factors, therefore I will be able to do this too

**Relevant** – I will use my facts in other math problems

**Timely** – I aim to meet my goal in 1 month

Examples of SMART/Not SMART goal statements:

**Specific**

Not Specific: I want to get good grades

Specific: I want to have a 93% average in science by March 17th

**Measurable**

Not Measurable: I want to score lots of goals for my football team

Measurable: I want to score 4 goals in tonight’s game

**Attainable**

Not Attainable: I want to be able to run a marathon

Attainable: I want to be able to run for 15 minutes without stopping.

**Relevant**

Irrelevant: I will to dance around for 20 minutes to be a better reader

Relevant: I will read for 25 minutes per night for 1 month to build my reading time.

**Timely**

No Time: I want to learn to play the piano

Time: I want to learn how to play “twinkle twinkle little star” on the piano by 3rd June.

**Worksheet 2: My SMART Goal Planner**

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| --- | --- |
| **Specific** | What exactly do I want to accomplish? |
| **Measurable** | How will I know when I meet my goal? |
| **Attainable** | Is it possible to meet this goal with effort by my timeline? |
| **Relevant** | Is this goal worth working hard to accomplish? Does it help me with my long-term goals? |
| **Timely** | What is the deadline I have set to meet this goal? |

Pupils should then complete **Worksheet 3: SMART Goals**.

Pupils could complete the sections ‘*Goal Statement’* and ‘*What do I need to do to reach this goal?*’. After some time, pupils could review their goal and think about what obstacles may have come in the way of their goal and what solutions may help to achieve their goal.

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Description automatically generated**Worksheet 3: SMART Goals**

**Kindness increases Happiness**

Did you know that being kind to others can make you happier?

Over a decade ago, a study with Japanese students, found that happy people were kinder than people who were not happy. Their study also revealed and that one’s sense of happiness increased by the simple act of counting the number of one’s acts of kindness. Counting one’s acts of kindness also led happy people to become more kind and grateful.

**Activity: what are random acts of kindness?**

Pupils could come up with a list of random acts of kindness. They could think about how they could perform one act of kindness over the next week.

Examples:

* Ask someone if you can help with a problem
* Spent time with someone who is lonely
* Do a favour for a neighbour
* Donate some items you no longer need.

**Additional Activity: Group act of kindness for school or community**

Pupils could work in small groups to decide what kind of random act of kindness they could complete. What can pupils do for the school or community in your area?  
  
When they’ve done their random act of kindness, pupils could complete a short write up of their experiences. They could answer questions such as:

* What random act of kindness did you do and why?
* Explain your inspiration for this random act of kindness.
* What can random kindness do for a person or community?
* Are random acts of kindness doable in life?
* Are they worth the effort?
* How did this make you feel?
* Will you continue to do more random acts of kindness?

**Extra Activity: Happiness Facts**

Below are some interesting facts that could be shared with pupils to generate some discussion:

* Happiness is linked to lower heart rate and blood pressure, as well as healthier heart rate variability.
* Happiness boosts our immune system, which can help us fight and fend off the common cold.
* Happy people tend to experience fewer aches and pains, including dizziness, muscle strain, and heartburn.
* Those who are happiest tend to live significantly longer than those who are not.
* Happy people tend to make others happier as well, and vice versa – those who do good, feel good!
* Smelling floral scents like roses can make us happier.
* Relationships are much more conducive to a happy life than money.
* Being outdoors – especially near the water – can make us happier.
* Happiness is contagious! When we spend time around happy people, we’re likely to get a boost of happiness as well (Florentine, 2016; Newman, 2015).
* Most of our happiness is not determined by our genetics, but by our experiences and our day-to-day lives (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005).

**Extra Activity: A Smile Poem**

Smiling is infectious,

You catch it like the flu,

When someone smiled at me today

I started smiling too.

I walked around the corner

And someone saw my grin,

When he smiled, I realised,

I’d passed it on to him.

I thought about the smile

And realised its worth;

A single smile like mine could travel around the earth.

If you feel a smile begin

Don’t leave it undetected,

Let’s start an epidemic quick,

And get the world infected.