

**Topic**: Managing Emotions

**Learning Intentions:** We will be able to:

1. Differentiate between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors
2. Identify how thoughts and emotions can impact behavior choices
3. Identify strategies for making positive behavior choices when experiencing a strong emotion

**Success Criteria:** We know we are successful when we can identify the differences between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and identify strategies for making positive behavior choices.

**Materials for Activity:** Copies of “Weekly Goal Sheet Printable.doc,” DPR data (if available), large Post-it paper/easel/chalkboard/whiteboard, markers/chalk

**Teaching Procedure:**

* See Guiding Document (pages 4-7) for starting procedures for each group (check-in menu, icebreaker menu, inspiring word menu, goal check-in rationale)
* Reminder: shared agreements (refer to your school PBIS expectations)
* Begin with a mindful minute (see “Menu of Mindful Practices”)
* Identify topic
* Teach learning intentions and success criteria
* Lesson outline
1. **Emotions Can Vary from Big to Small**

A situation can make one person feel one way and another person feel totally differently. Emotions can often be identified by tuning in to what is going on in our bodies. Understanding our emotions and figuring out their purpose is important, but it’s also important to know the difference between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It is easy to get these three things mixed up. Today we are going to talk about how our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are connected and positive or pro-social ways to manage our thoughts and emotions.

1. **Facilitator should draw the following diagram, and explain that**
* emotions affect our thoughts and behaviors,
* thoughts affect our emotions and behaviors,
* behaviors affect our thoughts and emotions.



1. In every situation, we always experience all three of these things—we have thoughts about it, we have feelings about it, and we behave in a certain way. These three things can happen so quickly that it’s often difficult to figure out what is what. But it’s important to learn how these three things are working together in order to become better at managing our emotions. Facilitator should give an example here.
2. Activity for Practice

Let’s practice identifying the differences among thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. **Facilitator should read these statements and ask which of the three each statement represents:**

* I hate school. (emotion)
* My teacher doesn’t like me. (thought)
* I’m never going to pass that class. (thought)
* I skip my class. (behavior)
1. **Just because you have a thought or an emotion, it doesn’t mean that it’s true.**

They often seem true to us at that moment, but they are just thoughts and feelings—not facts. Actually, thoughts and emotions often change. When we can step back and look at the situation, our thoughts, and our emotions, we are able to make better choices about how to respond to the situation. Taking a little time to reflect can help us to make decisions that we won’t regret.

1. Activity for Practice

Let’s practice by looking at a vignette. Facilitator should read the following:

Mercedez is a 16-year-old junior. She had been dating Mark for a year, but he had recently broken up with her. He told her that he didn’t want to be in a relationship with anybody and just wanted to focus on the basketball team and getting his grades up. He said that he loved her but just wanted to be single. Mercedez was really sad because he was the first guy she every really loved, and she was confused because things had seemed to be going fine. She texted him all the time, trying to convince him to get back together, and even had her friends try to convince him.

After a few days, Mark blocked her from all of his social media accounts and completely stopped talking to her at school. A week after their break-up, Mercedez was at the mall with her friends, and she saw Mark holding another girl’s hand and laughing with her. It looked like they were on a date.

1. The facilitator should ask these questions in a large-group format, or he/she can have students pair up and then report back to the group. Write out their answers on the board.
* **What do you think Mercedez might have been feeling?** (e.g., angry, hurt, betrayed, embarrassed)
* **What do you think Mercedez might have been thinking?** (e.g., “Why wasn’t I good enough for him?” “He’s a liar.” “I want to post embarrassing things about him on Facebook.” “He’s such a jerk.”)
1. It is important to remember that our bodies and our feelings are telling us that we either
2. like what is happening and agree with it, or
3. do not like what is happening and do not agree with it.

Usually, the more we like or DISLIKE a situation, the greater or bigger our feelings, thoughts, and reactions. Our response is our outward expression of what we think and feel about the situation. As young adults and adults, we need to think about how we respond to situations. **Why is HOW we respond to situations important?** Go around sharing out on why HOW we respond is important. Students should begin making the connection between responses that elicit positive consequences and responses that elicit negative consequences.

The following questions can be done in a large-group format, or in a pair-share, followed by a large-group discussion.

* 1. **What do you think is the best way for Mercedez to behave in this situation?** (Facilitator may want to prompt students that a pro-social behavior choice would not make the situation worse for anyone, including herself, in the long run.)
	2. **What are some things Mercedez can tell herself to help her feel better about herself and the situation and to encourage pro-social behavior choices?** (e.g., “I’m hurt and angry, but I’m glad that I’m not going out with a liar—I can do better.” “He’s not the only guy in the world—I will meet other guys and will fall in love again.” “It’s not worth it to create a drama.”)
1. **Closing Circle Question/Process**
	1. Ask group: **What part of today’s topic was the most interesting or helpful to you?** Or **How will you use something that you learned today this week?**
	2. **Goal Check-Out:** Distribute weekly goal sheets. Discuss the importance of having weekly goals within the school setting to work toward. Ask group: **What did you learn from your DPR data and/or group this week that may be useful in planning your goal?**
	3. **Positive Send-Off:** Send each student off with a positive comment or observation from group and/or their goal sheet or DPR data.