**UNIVERSAL Resilience Curriculum**

**Developing a Positive Mindset – MALTA**

**Optimistic thinking & positive mindset when facing life’s adversities**

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Good Days and Bad Days

**Age Group:** 3-5

**Level:** Basic

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity, I will talk about my good days and bad days and draw a picture of a good event

**Materials needed:** Blank paper, colours.

i) Explain to the children that: (Ideally this would be coupled with a song/story/video)

* Sometimes we have sunny days, sometimes we have rainy days
* Sometimes we have happy days, sometimes we have sad days
* Sometimes we have exciting days, sometimes we have boring days
* Sometimes we have funny days, sometimes we have serious days
* Sometimes we have good days, sometimes we have bad days
* We all have good days and bad days

ii) Ask the children:

* Have you ever had a bad day? What happened on the day?
* Did the bad time go away after a while?
* What happens on the good days that you have?
* What do you like remembering best, the good days or the bad days?

iii) Children may draw or paint a picture of a good event in one of their favourite days. The good evemts can then be hung on the wall in class. Children can be encouraged to remember the good events that they had and think of the good events that are coming to help them get through a bad day.

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Turning bad days into good days

**Age Group:** 3-5

**Level:** Intermediate

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will find one thing that makes me feel better on a bad day.

**Materials needed:** Chart, blank sheets of paper, coloured flashcards, marker, crayons or pencil colours, paint.

i) Explain to the children that bad days happen to everyone. Ask the children if they have ever had a bad day. What happened on the day? e.g. I fought with my friends in the playground, I fell and hurt my knee, my little sister broke my favourite toy etc.

ii) What makes you feel better on a bad day? e.g. talking to my friends, getting a hug from my mummy, forgiving someone for hurting me etc.

iii) The children then draw or paint a picture of what makes them feel better on a bad day.

iv) Below the picture write what the drawing represents. The pictures can then be hung on a chart named ‘Turning bad days into good days’ which the children may refer to if they are having a bad day or going through a bad time.

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Positive posters

**Age Group:** 3-5

**Level:** Advanced

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will make my own poster of those things/people/situations that make me feel good.

**Materials needed:** Magazine cut-outs, A4/A3 charts of different colours, glue, colours, decorations.

i) Explain to the children what it means to be **positive**. Explain that when something bad happens or if we’re having a bad day, being positive will make us feel better.

ii) Ask the children:

* What makes you feel better on a bad day?

iii) Tell the children that everyone is going to make a Positive Poster of all the things that make them feel good when they’re feeling sad or after something bad has happened. The children can choose the pictures of those things that make them feel and think positively and glue them on their chart. The children can then share their Positive Posters with their classmates.

iv) The Positive Posters can be hung in class. Children can be encouraged to look at them when they’re feeling sad or are going through a bad time.

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Positive posters

**Age Group:** 6-8

**Level:** Basic

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will make my own poster of those things/people/situations that make me feel good.

**Materials needed:** Magazine cut-outs, A4/A3 charts of different colours, glue, colours, decorations.

i) Explain to the children what it means to be **positive**. Explain that when something bad happens or if we’re having a bad day, being positive will make us feel better.

ii) Ask the children:

* What makes you feel better on a bad day?

iii) Tell the children that everyone is going to make a Positive Poster of all the things that make them feel good when they’re feeling sad or after something bad has happened. The children can choose the pictures of those things that make them feel and think positively and glue them on their chart. The children can then share their Positive Posters with their classmates.

iv) The Positive Posters can be hung in class. Children can be encouraged to look at them when they’re feeling sad or are going through a bad time.

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Positive Tracking

**Age Group:** 6-8

**Level:** Intermediate

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will learn how to find a positive thing in a situation.

**Materials needed:** Small ball with a smiley face drawn on it.

*Prior to the activity, the children should be seated in a circle.*

i) Start a discussion on what it means to be a **positive tracker**. Talk about how positive trackers engage in positive thinking (they find the positives in oneself, in another person or in a situation). Other people are **negative trackers**, and they think negatively about themselves, others and situations.

ii) Some discussion questions may include:

* Why is it better to be a positive tracker? (People may feel happier, may do better in school because they don’t give up, they feel better about themselves).
* Why is it not good to be a negative tracker? (People do not feel as happy, they may give up easily because they do not believe they can do well).

ii) Explain that they will practice being psoitive trackers by finding a positive thing in a situation. Explain that you will try to find something positive about **this week**. Call out a name and throw the ball to that person. The student has to say something positive about this week. The student then calls the name of another child and throws him or her the ball. The activity goes on in this way. You may change the activity every once in a while by changing the main question:

* What is one good thing about today?
* What is one good thing about last weekend?
* What is one good thing about tomorrow?
* What is one good thing about going to school?
* What is one good thing about our class/classroom?
* What is one good thing about this season?
* What is one good thing about this month?

iii) The children can then be asked about how they fel participating in this exercise? Did they enjoy thinking about the good things? Are they feeling better than before? Are they looking forward to the times ahead?**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Positive Tracking

**Age Group:** 6-8

**Level:** Advanced

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will learn to distinguish between positive and negative trackers and describe why it is better to be a postive tracker

**Materials needed:** Handout 1 with Emma’s thinking patterns.

i) Start a discussion on what it means to be a **positive tracker**. Talk about how positive trackers engage in positive thinking (they find the positives in oneself, in another person or in a situation). Other people are **negative trackers**, and they think negatively about themselves, others and situations.

ii) Some discussion questions may include:

* Why is it better to be a positive tracker? (People may feel happier, may do better in school because they don’t give up, they feel better about themselves).
* Why is it not good to be a negative tracker? (People do not feel as happy, they may give up easily because they do not believe they can do well).

iii) Introduce Emma’s character and explain that she is a negative tracker. Explain to the children that she is going through a bad week and she needs their help to think positively. Distribute handout 1 and explain what they need to do. The children may work in pairs and some of the work may be presented in class.

**Handout 1: Helping Emma think positively.**

**Oh no! Emma is having a bad week. She is using negative tracking in her thinking. As a positive tracker, how would you think about these bad situations? Write your name on the line and try to think like a positive tracker!**

My best friend’s birthday party is cancelled. I was looking forward to it so much and now I have to stay inside!

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Great! My little sister is always playing with my toys and now she broke one of my favourite ones! Now I don’t have anything to play with.

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

My aunty just had a baby. But I woke up sick this morning and I can’t go visit her and the new baby in hospital! Everyone is going except for me.

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Positive Tracking

**Age Group:** 9-11

**Level:** Basic

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity I will practice positive tracking during bad situations.

**Materials needed:** Handout 1 with Emma’s thinking patterns.

i) Start a discussion on what it means to be a **positive tracker**. Talk about how positive trackers engage in positive thinking (they find the positives in oneself, in another person or in a situation). Other people are **negative trackers**, and they think negatively about themselves, others and situations.

ii) Some discussion questions may include:

* Why is it better to be a positive tracker? (People may feel happier, may do better in school because they don’t give up, they feel better about themselves).
* Why is it not good to be a negative tracker? (People do not feel as happy, they may give up easily because they do not believe they can do well).

iii) Introduce Emma’s character and explain that she is a negative tracker. Explain to the children that she is going through a bad week and she needs their help to think positively. Distribute handout 1 and explain what they need to do. The children may work in pairs and some of the work may be presented in class.

**Handout 1: Helping Emma think positively.**

**Oh no! Emma is having a bad week. She is using negative tracking in her thinking. As a positive tracker, how would you think about these bad situations? Write your name on the line and try to think like a positive tracker!**

My best friend’s birthday party is cancelled. I was looking forward to it so much and now I have to stay inside!

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Great! My little sister is always playing with my toys and now she broke one of my favourite ones! Now I don’t have anything to play with.

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

My aunty just had a baby. But I woke up sick this morning and I can’t go visit her and the new baby in hospital! Everyone is going except for me.

**Emma**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Helpful vs. Unhelpful thinking

**Age Group:** 9-11

**Level:** Intermediate

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity, I will learn to turn pessimistic thinking into optimistic thinking.

**Materials needed:** Handout with Jake and Emma’s stories, handout for the children to fill in.

*Prior to the activity, make copies of the handouts and distribute to each student.*

i) Split the class in pairs to read out loud the stories of Jake and Emma (Handout 1). One student reads Jake’s story and the other reads the story about Emma.

ii) Start a discussion on Jake and Emma’s stories. Use the following questions to help you:

* What was the bad situation that happened to both characters?
* Who thinks positively and expects things to get better? (Jake)
* Who thinks negatively and expects things to remain as they are or get worse? (Emma)
* Who thinks the situation happened because of them? (Emma)
* Who thinks the situation may happen to other children? (Jake)
* Who makes the situation affect other areas in their life? (Emma)
* Who thinks about other things that are OK in their life? (Jake)
* Do you think the bad times will last?
* What did Jake do differently to Emma?
* What do you think will happen as a result of the way Jake and Emma are acting?

iii) Explain that Emma is thinking like a **pessimist** (the bad situation happened because of ‘me’, it is affecting everything in my life, and the situation cannot change or get better) while Jake is thinking like an **optimist** (the bad situation can happen to other children, other things in my life are OK, and the situation will get better).

iv) Now ask the children to fill in Handout 2. The children need to help Emma think more positively.

**Handout 1: Helpful vs. Unhelpful thinking**

Hi. I’m Emma. Recently, my family and I moved house. I had to change my scouts group as well! It must be because I did something wrong. I’m really worried that I won’t know anyone in my new group. I’m sure no one will like me and no one will ever want to play with me. I know I will never manage to make friends. I’m so unhappy that I don’t even want to be a scout anymore. I wish I never moved.

**Emma**

Hi! My name is Jake. Recently, my family and I moved house. I had to change my football team and attend one nearer to my new house. When I heard the news I was so angry and worried that I wouldn’t make friends. But then I remembered how I made new friends when I started school. I felt shy at first. I tried to smile and talk to the other boys in my team. I took my favourite golden football and showed it to the boys. I miss my other friends but I have friends at school and I think I will make new ones in my new team.

**Jake**

**Handout 2: Helping Emma think positively.**

**Emma is thinking like a pessimist. Help her change her negative thoughts into positive ones.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pessimistic thinking | How is Emma thinking like a pessimist? | How can Emma think like an optimist? |
| “I had to change my scouts group as well! It must be because I did something wrong.” | She thinks that this situation happened because of **her**. She thinks it’s her fault. | “............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  ............................................................” |
| “I’m so unhappy that I don’t even want to be a scout anymore. I wish I never moved.” | It’s affecting **everything**. Emma hates everything about being a scout and moving. | “............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  ............................................................” |
| “I’m sure no one will like me and no one will ever want to play with me. I know I will never manage to make friends.” | Emma thinks that the situation won’t get better and that **nothing will change**. | “............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  .............................................................  ............................................................” |

**Theme:** Developing a Positive Mindset

**Sub-theme:** Optimistic thinking and positive mindset when facing life’s adversities

**Activity:** Helpful vs. Unhelpful thinking

**Age Group:** 9-11

**Level:** Advanced

**Learning Outcome:** In this activity, I will learn to find a positive way of looking at a bad situation that I have gone through or am going through at the moment using an optimistic explanatory style.

**Materials needed:** Handout with Jake and Emma’s stories, handout for the children to fill in.

*Prior to the activity, make copies of the handouts and distribute to each student.*

i) Split the class in pairs to read out loud the stories of Jake and Emma (Handout 1). One student reads Jake’s story and the other reads the story about Emma.

ii) Start a discussion on Jake and Emma’s stories. Use the following questions to help you:

* What was the bad situation that happened to both characters?
* Who thinks positively and expects things to get better? (Jake)
* Who thinks negatively and expects things to remain as they are or get worse? (Emma)
* Who thinks the situation happened because of them? (Emma)
* Who thinks the situation may happen to other children? (Jake)
* Who makes the situation affect other areas in their life? (Emma)
* Who thinks about other things that are OK in their life? (Jake)
* Do you think the bad times will last?
* What did Jake do differently to Emma?
* What do you think will happen as a result of the way Jake and Emma are acting?

iii) Explain that Emma is thinking like a **pessimist** (the bad situation happened because of ‘me’, it is affecting everything in my life, and the situation cannot change or get better) while Jake is thinking like an **optimist** (the bad situation can happen to other children, other things in my life are OK, and the situation will get better).

iv) Now ask the children to think of a situation in their lives. They can discuss it in pairs and fill in Handout 2. Encourage them to think positively by using the three ways of thinking optimistically like Jake did. The children may wish to share their situation, and how they would like to think positively about it, with the class.

**Handout 1: Helpful vs. Unhelpful thinking**

Hi. I’m Emma. Recently, my family and I moved house. I had to change my scouts group as well! It must be because I did something wrong. I’m really worried that I won’t know anyone in my new group. I’m sure no one will like me and no one will ever want to play with me. I know I will never manage to make friends. I’m so unhappy that I don’t even want to be a scout anymore. I wish I never moved.

**Emma**

Hi! My name is Jake. Recently, my family and I moved house. I had to change my football team and attend one nearer to my new house. When I heard the news I was so angry and worried that I wouldn’t make friends. But then I remembered how I made new friends when I started school. I felt shy at first. I tried to smile and talk to the other boys in my team. I took my favourite golden football and showed it to the boys. I miss my other friends but I have friends at school and I think I will make new ones in my new team.

**Jake**

**Handout 2: Helpful thinking in a bad situation.**

**Try to think of a bad situation in your life. This time may have already passed or you might be going through it at the moment. Write the situation down and then try to find ways of thinking in a positive way like Jake did.**

**My bad situation is:**

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

...................................................................................

**Positive thinking**