 Planning for the future

Suggested duration: 25 minutes

This activity is designed to assist students to reflect on the meaning and purpose in their lives, and to set goals that reflect this. Students are encouraged to think more broadly than just educational and career goals, and also plan for goals related to their health, wellbeing and personal aspects of their lives. Rather than focus on *what* they want to be when they leave school, this activity will give students the opportunity to think about *who* they want to be.

These activities have been adapted from “My Wellbeing My Classroom[[1]](#footnote-1).”

Course outcomes

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

4.2 Propose, apply and evaluate solutions to take action to lead and contribute to healthy, safe and meaningful lives.

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

* Reflect on the meaning and purpose they have for their lives.
* Reflect on their aspirations for all aspects of their lives.
* Set personal, health, wellbeing, and educational and career goals.
* Recognise their strengths and potential, and how these can contribute to setting and achieving goals.

Suggested content

| Learning context  | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Mental health and wellbeingFocus: Developing self-efficacy and mental fitness | Building resilience* recognising achievements and successes

Self-awareness and self-regulation* perspective taking
* holistic view of life

Positive wellbeing* accomplishment
 |
| IndependenceFocus: Building self-concepts and independence | 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

When setting goals, remind students that it can be beneficial to follow the SMART principle. This suggests that goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-framed.

This activity can be linked closely with a number of other sections of the Mental health learning context. These activities have been adapted from the [My Wellbeing My Classroom](http://au.professionals.reachout.com/my-wellbeing-my-classroom-resource) resource, which has a number of activities that will assist students and teachers to enhance their wellbeing through the use of positive psychology.

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 audiovisual 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)

Required resources and materials for preparation

* Handout 1 – Establishing purpose and meaning - 1 copy per student
* Handout 2 – Goal setting - 1 copy per student

Learning experiences

Activity one – Establishing meaning and purpose (10 minutes)

1. Individually, students reflect on meaning and purpose in life by completing Handout one: meaning and purpose.

Activity two – Goal setting (15 minutes)

1. Individually, students develop or revise their goals. These goals should focus on education and/or career, health and wellbeing or personal aspects of their lives.
2. Share Handout two – Goal setting with students to assist with the process of planning and setting goals.
3. Students reflect on the process of setting and achieving personal goals, by answering the following questions.
* What strengths do I need to apply to make sure that I achieve these goals?
* What support is needed to help me to achieve my goals?
1. To conclude this activity, remind students that goal setting is a cyclical process, and encourage them to regularly reflect and revise their goals.

Handout one - Meaning and purpose

Having purpose in your life helps you to focus on doing the things that make you feel good. When people live with purpose, they have made a decision to take control of their life. This allows for a deeper level of wellbeing rather than just finding simple pleasures, as it gives your life meaning.

To work out your sense of purpose, ask yourself:

What do you love doing that is going to ensure you have a fulfilling, happy life? What are you working towards? What are your goals in life?

My purpose in life is:

My purpose at school is:

5 things that I stand for or believe are important in life are:

Things I currently do or could I do in the future to contribute to my school or community are:

What is it about this that will make me feel good?

Handout two – Goal setting

Use the table to review and refine goals that you already have or develop new goals. Start with the big picture, and then the small steps (short term goals) to get there.

Try to set at least one:

* personal goal, for example future travel, achievements outside school (e.g. sport, music or another hobby), a new possession that you want to buy.
* school or career goal, for example achievements in final exams, future study choices, job options after school, career path.
* health and wellbeing goal, for example your relationships, fitness or physical activity levels, sleep habits, food intake, drug or alcohol use, managing stress.

| Goal | What is it? | How will I achieve it? (Short-term goals) | Time frame | AchievedYes / No | Next steps |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Personal goal |  |  |  |  |  |
| School or career goal |  |  |  |  |  |
| Health and wellbeing goal |  |  |  |  |  |

Goal setting example

Health and wellbeing goal

What is it?

* Reduce caffeine intake from 5 serves per day to 1 per day

How will I achieve it? (Short term goals) and timeline

* List all the items I eat / drink that contain caffeine (Day 1)
* Limit myself to three of the listed items per day (Week 1)
* Limit myself to two items per day (Week 2)
* Limit myself to one caffeine item per day (Week 4)

Achieved Yes/ No

Next steps

* Find replacements for caffeine and keep enjoying my one coffee or one cola drink per day.
* Attempt to drink decaf every now and then.

Career goal

What is it?

* Decide on career direction and courses to study at University

How will I achieve it? (Short term goals) and timeline

* Make appointment with Careers Advisor (Week 1)
* Research University courses (Weeks 2-5)
* Attend University open days for courses that I am thinking about (Before year ends)

Achieved Yes/ No

Next steps

* Set goals for HSC results to get into chosen course.

Personal goal

What is it?

* Save to buy a new car

How will I achieve it? (Short term goals) and timeline

* Prepare resume to get new part-time job (Week 1)
* Take resume to local businesses and apply for advertised jobs (Weeks 2-5)
* Put half of weekly pay from job into saver account (Each week until end of the year)

Achieved Yes/ No

Next steps

* Start looking at car ads. Keep saving same amount for a new goal.
1. [*My Wellbeing My Classroom*](http://au.professionals.reachout.com/my-wellbeing-my-classroom-resource)*,* ReachOut.com Professionals by Inspire Foundation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)