

TEACHER-FOCUSED SEL SESSION 2: EMOTION REGULATION

Objectives:

Teachers will be able to...

- Identify negative thought patterns that lead to negative feelings
- Use strategies to reframe negative thought patterns
- Demonstrate emotion regulation strategies.

Aim: How can teachers reframe their negative thoughts so they reduce their negative feelings and improve their emotional wellbeing?

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk / flipchart and markers

Time: 20 minutes

STEPS TO FOLLOW:

PREPARE (5 minutes)

1. Every session will begin with a mindfulness activity.
2. Invite participants to sit comfortably.
3. Say the following a slow, calm, gentle voice:
You can choose to close your eyes or keep them open but relaxed. We are going to breath out all the bad feelings in our bodies together and replace them with warm, happy feelings that make us feel good.

Take one deep, slow breath in through your nose like you are smelling a flower and want the smell to last as long as possible. Exhale deeply and slowly out of your mouth. Slowly feel your belly expand as you breathe deeply into your bellies. As you exhale, feel your bellies deflate.

On our next inhale feel all the bad things come together out of your finger-tips, arms, feet, legs, head and neck and meet together in your belly – swelling it up with the breath. Exhale forcefully, so you have hear the sigh as you breathe out. Feel the bad things come up out of your belly and exit your body. Two more breaths like this, breathing in to gather all of the bad things together, and exhaling out all of the bad things. Inhale slowly, counting and feeling as the last of the bad things are caught by your breath. Then exhale, so you can hear the sigh as all of the bad things leave your body. Now take two slow, deep breaths in and out, feeling the difference in your body now that only the good things are left.

Inhale deeply feeling your body swell up with warmth, happy feelings washing over your belly, chest, neck, and head. Feel the warm, happy feelings expand out through your shoulders, arms and finger tips. Feel the warm, happy feelings go down through your legs, feet, and toes. Feel as your entire body is engulfed in warm, happy feelings.

Allow yourself to feel the warmth and continue to breathe more and more happiness into your bodies.

4. Pause for a minute, allowing the participants to breathe.
5. Say: *Begin to bring yourself back to the present. Focus on your breathing – in and out slowly. Wiggle your fingers and toes. As you are ready, open your eyes if you closed them and bring your consciousness back into the room.*
6. Wait until participants open their eyes and bring their awareness back to the space to continue the session.
7. Ask how participants are feeling.

PRESENT (5 minutes)

Sensitivity Tip

Teachers may be uncomfortable sharing that they have these sorts of negative thoughts, or they might think this way because of their experiences. Be sure to give your own personal examples. Do not force teachers to share their own experiences if they do not want to.

1. Ask participants what strategies they remember to manage their feelings from the teacher training or what they have taught their students.
 - a. They should mention belly-breathing and counting to 10.
2. Allow participants to teach each of the strategies they remember.
3. Ask participants how they can use their focusing attention strategies for emotion regulation.
4. Explain that when we care about our jobs and our impact on other people, we are often our own harshest critic, which can cause us to end up feeling badly. If we can “*reframe these negative thoughts*,” we can improve how we are feeling.
5. Write on the board or a flipchart “Reframe Negative Thoughts.” Write the following four types of negative thoughts:
 - a. Taking it Personally
 - b. Blame Game
 - c. Negative Overload
 - d. Black & White
6. On another flipchart, write “Definitions” and write the following four definitions:
 - a. Blaming yourself or taking someone else’s comments as a personal attack.
 - b. Only seeing the bad in a situation.
 - c. Exaggerating the negative side of things.
 - d. Blaming someone else for your actions / mistakes.
7. Have participants match types of negative thoughts to their definitions on a small piece of paper.
8. After the participants are finished, share the correct responses. Ask participants to share an example of a time when they thought this way. After each example, have the group help to change the thinking so that it would be positive, rather than negative. You can provide an example if they do not provide one, or if they provide one that is not correct.
 - a. **Taking it Personally** – blaming yourself or taking someone else’s comments as a personal attack.
 - i. *Example:* My student says she hates school. Of course it is my fault because I am a bad teacher.
Reframed: This student must have had a bad experience; I can try to make him or her like school better.
 - b. **Blame Game** – blaming someone else for your actions / mistakes.
 - i. *Example:* All of my students failed a test; it is because they are stupid.
Reframed: I must not have taught the content well enough. How can I help my students to do better on the next test?
 - c. **Negative Overload** – exaggerating the negative side of a situation.

- i. *Example:* The head teacher's evaluation said that I should speak louder when teaching, because everything that I am saying is on target. She thinks I am such a bad teacher because I am too quiet.
Reframed: I am so pleased that what I am saying is good, and I will try to speak louder so my students can hear what I am saying better.
 - d. **Black & White** – only seeing the bad in a situation.
 - i. *Example:* Student evaluations said that they liked my teaching, but did not like how early school starts. My students do not like coming to school.
Reframed: The students are excited about school, but they also like to sleep in.
- 9. Explain that by turning the negative thought into a more realistic thought, as if they are viewing it from an outside perspective. Explain that by “changing our thinking” they can avoid the negative feelings.
- 10. There are four steps to overcoming negative thought patterns:
 - a. Identify that you are having a negative thought.
 - b. Determine what type of negative thought pattern it is.
 - c. View it as an outsider, getting a realistic perspective.
 - d. Reframe the thought in a more positive manner.

PRACTICE (8 minutes)

Sensitivity Tip

This activity could bring up negative feelings. Do not force teachers to share if they do not want to. Be prepared to comfort a teacher.

1. Allow participants to break into four groups by “type” of negative thinking. If there are not enough teachers to break into four groups, have them pair off or go through all four types as a whole group.
2. Each member of the group has one minute to share a time when they had that negative thought pattern.
3. After they share, the group gives them feedback on how they could reframe it for one minute.

PRODUCE (2 minutes)

1. Bring the whole group back together.
2. Allow each group to share one strategy they discussed for reframing their negative thought patterns.
3. Participants should discuss what they learned today and how they will use it in life.
4. Remind participants that these strategies should be used and practiced throughout their TLCs, when they are teaching their classes, and in the rest of their lives.