

# WHAT'S **YOUR** STORY? school

Senior Phase

# LIFE

# ORIENTATION:

Telling

Lesson Plans

HEARTLINES





## CAPS Alignment

These 4 lesson plans align with key outcomes for Life Orientation Senior Phase.

## Telling

### Lessons 1 & 2

#### Topic 1: Development of the Self in Society

- Guide learners to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential.

### Lessons 3 & 4

#### Topic 2: Health, Social and Environmental Responsibility

- Develop learners' skills to respond to challenges, and to play an active and responsible role in the economy and society.

# Lesson 1: Our Emotions



## Essential Questions

- How can I understand my own emotions?



## Lesson Overview

Empathic people aren't just skilled at navigating other people's emotions. They're in touch with their own feelings too. Self-awareness is a foundation for empathy, which allows learners to reach their full emotional and social potential. Being aware of their own thoughts and feelings will also assist learners as a tool to manage intense emotions, like anger, if they arise during the Telling process.

## Keywords



- Emotional regulation: RULER
- Mood index
- Self-awareness
- Mindfulness

## Materials



Paper and pen  
 'Mood Index' handout  
 'RULER' worksheet  
 'Emotional Awareness' presentation  
 'Pass the Face' training video



## Summary

<b>Introduction</b>	
Activity: How do I feel?	10 min
<b>Body</b>	
Activity: Pass the face	20 min
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Activity: Mood index	10 min



# Activities



## Introduction

**Objective:** Introduce the learners to mindfulness as a tool to create emotional awareness, and for learners to identify these same emotional signals in others.

### Activity: How do I feel? (10 min)

#### Step 1:

Learners close their eyes and sit tall. Make sure they are all sitting up straight. It helps to use a visual, such as:

- Imagine there's a cord pulling at the top of your heads.

#### Step 2

Tell the learners to place their hands on their belly to feel **belly breathing**.

It helps to for them to use a visualisation:

- Imagine your stomach is a balloon. As you breathe in, the balloon expands, and when you breathe out the balloon deflates. This is belly breathing.

#### Step 3

Ring a chime, or gently tap a pen on a window, or a spoon on a glass.

- Listen to the sound for as long as you can, while still focusing on your breathing.
- Ring the chime a second time.

#### Step 4:

- Listen to the sounds your body is making.
- Notice any sensations you are feeling in your body – tension in one part of your body; a pain or an itch. Don't try to change this, just be aware of it.
- Notice any feelings you are feeling. Don't judge or try to change them, just acknowledge them. Greet your feelings in your own mind: 'Hello anger' and 'Hello sadness'.
- Then go back to your breath.

## Body

**Objective:** To help learners be more self-aware and manage their own emotions better.

### Activity: Pass the face (20min)



Note: Watch the 'Pass the Face' video in preparation.  
(Find the video in the Resources section under Training Videos.)

#### Step 1:

Spend time before playing the game brainstorming a long list of 'feeling words' that can be reinforced during the game. Give examples, such as 'happy', 'sad', 'angry', 'tearful'.

## Step 2: Explain

Gather the group into a circle so that everyone can see each other.



- One person (the Starter) chooses a feeling. They don't tell anyone what it is. Now everyone must shut their eyes. The Starter taps the person beside them on the shoulder to show them the feeling, using only their face. They do not speak.
- Then the Starter shuts their eyes. The person who just received the expression does the same as was done to them: they tap the person next to them on the shoulder, demonstrating the facial expression, and then shuts their eyes.
- The face (facial expression) is passed around the circle until the last person has 'received' it. The last person then demonstrates the expression they received to the whole group. Now the group must guess what feeling was passed along. The Starter then verifies if this was the emotion and expression they began with.

### Step 3:

Play as many rounds of the game as your learners want, giving other learners the chance to be the Starter.

### Step 4: Journal reflection

Reflect

- What happened during the game?
- Were some emotions easier to demonstrate than others? If so, why do you think that was the case?
- How might you have been able to more accurately 'pass the face'?



## Conclusion

**Objective:** Summarise the key ideas of the lesson, and allow learners to apply these outside of the classroom.

Talk the learners through the RULER approach and the concept of a mood index. These are helpful strategies for recognising emotions in ourselves and others, in order to find ways to regulate or control strong emotions.



Use the 'Emotional Awareness' presentation.  
(Find the presentation in the Resources section under Presentations.)



### Homework: RULER worksheet

Hand out the RULER worksheet, and Mood Index handout. Ask learners to fill it out once before the next *What's Your Story?* lesson. They should fill it out when they are feeling an intense or strong emotion.



Note: Find the 'RULER' worksheet and 'Mood Index' handout in the Resources section under Handouts.

# Lesson 2: Safe Spaces



## Essential Questions

- How do we create safe spaces to tell and reflect?



## Lesson Overview

In this lesson you and your learners will together explore the idea of 'safe spaces' – of where and with whom learners feel safe to share. The lesson introduces the difference between public and private telling. There are some stories that we want to share with others. But there are other stories that we want to keep in our hearts. Using post-its allows for the safety that anonymity provides, and allows learners to be more open without the fear of being judged by their peers. Contracting is then about working collaboratively to identify what a safe space means for telling, and how as a class you can create that space – that is a space that encourages reflection and appreciation of each other's work and stories.



## Keywords

- Public and private telling
- Contracting



## Materials

- Slips of paper or post-its in different colours
- Butcher paper or A3 paper
- Markers, pens and pencils
- 'Public and Private Telling' presentation
- 'Contracting' training video
- 'My Story in Post-Its' training video



## Summary

<b>Introduction</b>	
Activity: My story in post-its	10 min
<b>Body</b>	
Activity: Contracting	20 min
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Present	10 min



## Activities



### Introduction

**Objective:** Understand the types of stories and the people with whom the learners are comfortable telling, and listen to and introduce the idea of public and private telling.

### Activity: My story in post-its (10 min)



Note : Watch the 'My Story in Post-Its' video in preparation.  
(Find the video in the Resources section under Training Videos.)

#### Step 1:

Make a chart or use the wall with the following headings:

A story I feel comfortable sharing.	A story I feel uncomfortable to share.	Three people I feel comfortable to share with.	Three people I don't feel comfortable sharing with.
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Each participant is given four post-its: yellow, pink, blue and green. They must not write their name on them. Tell the learners that you will be re-writing the answers from the post-its before the class sees them.

#### Step 2:

On their **blue** post-it, the learner should write the title of a personal story they **would** feel comfortable sharing:

e.g. 'My childhood'; 'The day I was bullied'; 'My favourite pet'.

#### Step 3:

On their **pink** post-it, the participant must write one word that summarises a story they **would not** feel comfortable sharing:

e.g. 'divorce', 'loss', 'depression'.

#### Step 4:

On their **yellow** post-it, the participant should write down three people they would feel comfortable sharing their story with:

e.g. Mom, Dad, sister.

#### Step 5:

On their **green** post-it, the participant writes down three people they would feel uncomfortable or unsafe sharing their story with:

e.g. uncle, policeman.

#### Step 6:

Now collect all the post-its, except for the pink ones.

#### Step 7:

Explain public and private telling.



**Definition:**

Private telling is stories you write or draw that are for yourself only to help you think and understand yourself better. Public telling is the stories that you are happy to share with others.



Use the 'Public and Private Telling' presentation.  
(Find the presentation in the Resources section under Presentations.)

**Body**

**Objective:** Both you and the learners collaboratively agree on a code of behaviour that will support them to feel safe and respected in the classroom.

**Activity: Contracting (20 min)**

Note: Watch the 'Contracting' training video to learn more.  
(Find the video in the Resources section under Training Videos.)

**Step 1: Define contracting****Definition:**

- A contract implies that all parties have a responsibility to uphold the agreement.
- Students can think about what it means for a classroom to have a contract.

**Step 2: Students reflect**

Prepare learners to develop a class contract. Ask them to reflect on their experiences of being learners in a class with others. Write down learners' responses on the chalkboard. Alternatively, learners can write their ideas in their journals. You might use prompts like those below to structure learners' reflections:

- Identify a time when you have felt comfortable sharing your ideas and questions in a class. What happened in those moments to help you feel comfortable?
- Identify when you have had ideas or questions, but have not shared them. Why not? What was happening or what were you feeling in those moments that stopped you from sharing?



### Step 3: Discuss in small groups

What do you think about these values and guidelines?

Which ideas do you think would help your class create a safe, respectful, productive learning environment?

Invite students to edit this list by deleting, revising, or adding to it.

### Conclusion



**Objective:** Agree on a shared classroom culture, and create an agreement on how everyone will treat each other.

### Activity: Present your contract (10 min)

After learners have discussed their ideas in their groups, allow one person from each group to present to the class. Collect all the contracts the learners have made at the end of class.

**Note:** Make sure to write up a summary of the contract that the class has designed and agreed to. Make a copy and stick it up on the board for all learners to sign when they come to class for the next lesson.

# Lesson 3: Processing My Story



## Essential Questions

- How do I understand my own story?



## Lesson Overview

The lesson helps learners to interpret and think about the events that have occurred in their lives. They will do this through a drawing activity, as well as through the framework of specific questions they will answer. Visual representation often makes learners feel safer to share their story. This will help them decide what parts of their own stories they want to share, and which parts they choose to keep private.



## Keywords

- Self-Awareness



## Materials

River of Life  
Crayons, pens, paper  
Copy of the class contract from Lesson 2  
'RULER' worksheet



## Summary

<b>Introduction</b>	
Activity: Contract signing	5 min
<b>Body</b>	
Activity: River of Life	25 min
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Activity: RULER	10 min



## Activities



### Introduction

**Objective:** Remind learners of the agreed values and behaviours in the classroom to ensure that it feels like a safe place for sharing.

### Activity: Contract signing (5 min)



Allocate 5 minutes at the beginning of the class for all the learners to sign the contract.



### Body

**Objective:** Learners practice public telling by writing a short narrative essay.



- Imagine your life as a river, which roughly corresponds to the chronological order of events in your real life. For example, the river can be calm and straight, or perhaps bubbling during the good or happy times. The river might then wind itself around large, imposing rocks that represent obstacles you've faced. Think of relationships, or key moments with your family and friends, or encounters with people who are different to you. A major bend in the river could represent a major life change, such as moving away from home. A waterfall could represent those times when you feel like you lost control and were caught in a downward spiral.
- Think also of your river in terms of some key moments in South Africa's history, and in terms of significant encounters with 'the other' (whatever that may mean to you).



Remind the learners that this is not a test of their drawing abilities, and that the drawings will only be for themselves. They don't need to worry about how 'good' their drawings are.



### Conclusion

**Objective:** To assist your learners to debrief and process any strong emotions they may be feeling after doing these exercises.

### Activity: RULER (10 min)

Instruct the learners to fill in the RULER worksheet to reference an emotion they are feeling after finishing this activity.

### Homework:



In the next lesson the learners will be sharing their River of Life with a partner. Tell the learners to finish their river, and to prepare for what and how much of their river they want to share with their partner.

# Lesson 4: The River of My Life



## Essential Questions

- How can we tell our story to others?



## Lesson Overview

Using the framework of the 'River of Life' is the culmination of the **Ask. Listen. Tell** lesson. Learners:

**ASK** their partner to tell their story.

**LISTEN** to their partner's story.

**TELL** their partner their own story.



## Keywords

- Ask. Listen. Tell



## Materials

Exit tickets (slips of paper)



## Summary

<b>Introduction</b>	
Activity: Active listening	5 min
<b>Body</b>	
Activity: River of Life	25 min
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Activity: Exit tickets	10 min



## Activities

### Introduction

#### Activity: Active listening (5 min)

Remind the learners about active listening.



Note: Refer to Lesson 1, Activity: What can I hear?

### Body



**Objective:** The learners tell their stories while their classmates listen to them and finally get to know each other better. The learners also identify similarities between their respective stories.

#### Activity: Presentations of River of Life stories (25 min)

##### **Step 1:**

Place the learners in pairs.

##### **Step 2:**

In pairs, learners take turns to present their River of Life.

##### **Step 3:**

The learners must listen to their partners and not interject or ask questions after or during the presentations. Give each learner 10 minutes to present, and then tell the learners to swap.

##### **Step 4:**

After both have explained their River of Life, the learners should write on a piece of paper one similarity they recognise between their own and their partner's story.

##### **Step 5:**

Learners each share what they have written on their paper with their partner.

### Conclusion



**Objective:** The exit ticket is an exercise that helps to summarise the big ideas of the lesson and assess the learners' understanding of key concepts.

#### Exit ticket (10 min)

##### **Step 1:**

Hand out slips of paper, or ask learners to take out a piece of paper and a pencil. Also give them a copy of the mood index. (See Handouts in the Resources section.)

##### **Step 2:**

Ask them to write down one thing that they learned today about their friends and classmates.

##### **Step 3:**

Ask learners if and how they see their classmates differently after listening to their River of Life.

##### **Step 4:**

Learners must fill in the mood index.

##### **Step 5:**

Collect all exit tickets at the end of the lesson. This will provide you with valuable feedback on how your learners experienced your lesson. You can use these to build and grow your classroom practice.