

WISETALKERS Schools- Lesson Plan

General Information

Please contact enquiries@stormsdmc.org if you would like the free WISETALKERS 2019 Slideshow and presentation notes.

WISETALKERS provides a framework to discuss wellbeing/self care, communication and peer support with students.

The Online course can be delivered as a stand alone, online course if necessary. It may also be used as Pre-reading for a workshop session or as an accompaniment to a workshop.

It is important to cover ALL the pages and do so IN ORDER. If you have covered some "Letters" (eg Wellbeing) in other sessions, just recap by using the highlighted introductory paragraph for the Letter and the "Top Tips".

We believe the content works better when delivered in a facilitated group with the opportunity for face to face interaction. A half day is needed to deliver the full content in a workshop setting, allowing for sufficient short breaks for reflection (and downtime). This can be shortened by using pre-reading (the TALKERS section works well with this approach) and/or fewer activities.

You may want to divide the course into 2 lessons, one for "WISE" and another for "TALKERS", to allow more detailed explanation and group work. Please ensure students attend both sessions.

As different levels of detail can be covered using different approaches, this lesson plan doesn't include suggested timings. These will be format and group specific.

Please note that some of the diagrams in the course benefit from Teacher explanation and discussion. Some group activity suggestions are included below.

Background

- Wisetalkers provides a practical guide to reducing common barriers to good two way communication. The knowledge and skills introduced are useful in day to day family, social and work settings by helping to promote respectful, supportive relationships.
- Wisetalkers is designed to increase the confidence to open a conversation with someone who is struggling with what is happening in their life, by providing tips on how to prepare.
- Wisetalkers introduces ways in which to encourage open and honest communication about thoughts and feelings, identifies some appropriate responses and where to direct people if further help is needed.
- Wisetalkers works on the principle that **everyone** can offer support in some form; you don't need to be an expert, It won't turn you into a trained counsellor and is not a replacement for professional help when this is needed.

Explain to students how your session will run, how much of the course will be covered, what it will include and whether you want to give a set amount of time for each page after which there will be a discussion/ activity/group work etc

Course Objective

Following the course students will be better prepared to open a conversation with someone who is struggling with what is happening in their life and help them get the support they need.

Learning Outcomes

Following the course students will:

- Understand how to look after their own mental wellbeing
- Understand why people don't always behave as you expect.
- Identify signs of distress in themselves and others
- Create a safe environment to encourage open and honest discussion
- Remove the main barriers to good communication
- Understand about asking for and providing support
- Know where to find additional support

Instructions to Students (if using online without practical session)

- Page settings allow students to share comments, upload images, videos or photos. Students should be reminded to be kind and respectful. "Comments and pictures posted should relate to the course activities only. When posting, find images or things to say that will have a positive impact for yourself and others and respect others' views". If they are not comfortable with sharing, they don't have to but would choosing a different profile name help? (Account Settings are top right).
- Students start page is found in the Left side bar, Learning Activities, WISE, "W= Wellbeing". By clicking NEXT at the bottom of each page they will follow the sequence automatically.

Facilitated Group Session

Important

- Agree Group ground rules for the session if there is to be Group work (Make sure the following are included).
 - **Write on Flipchart and keep visible throughout session.**
 - **Respect** each others' views. Be aware of your own feelings and those of others in the room. You don't know others' circumstances/ history. **(NB: Course content may be a trigger for someone in the room and it may not be who you think.)**
 - **Not therapy session.** People in the room may have things they are currently struggling with (statistically one in four). The course content may make them think more about these things or affect them in some way. See points below.
 - **Confidentiality?** Talk to others about content but keep it general, no names/identifiable info and remember who else is in the room. Don't reveal personal things here.
 - **Support/Time out.** If someone is affected by the content make sure they know it is ok to leave the room for some time out (and that someone will check they are OK). Make sure immediate face to face support is available following the session and they know how to do access it confidentially.
- **Reinforce Learning-** (How will follow up session be facilitated? Peer group? Formal?).

Suggested Group Activities/Discussions

Ice Breaker – Active (NOT) Listening

Please use the following activity for Group work. It (re)connects students with how it feels when someone isn't listening as well as being a good Icebreaker .



The slide features a title 'ACTIVITY 1 ACTIVE (NOT) LISTENING' in purple text against a light blue sky background. Below the title is an illustration of two men in a conversation; one is speaking and the other is listening. To the right of the illustration, the instructions are listed in a white box with a blue border. At the bottom of the slide, there is a blue banner with the 'STORMS' logo and the text 'FIND OUT MORE www.stormsdmc.org'.

ACTIVITY 1

ACTIVE (NOT) LISTENING

In pairs

Person 1 talks to Person 2 about something that interests them.

Have a normal conversation.

After 15 secs Person 2 will stop listening/responding to what is being said.

After another 30 seconds Person 2 interacts normally again for 15 secs.

Swap over and do it again

STORMS FIND OUT MORE www.stormsdmc.org

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ICEBREAKER (see slide above)

FACILITATOR TO TIME AND MANAGE THE CHANGE OVERS.

QUESTIONS TO GROUP

How did that feel when you were trying to talk and they stopped listening? (Was it hard to keep talking? Feel awkward? Feel uninteresting/boring etc). How did it feel trying not to listen? (Hard not to respond in any way?). Our natural response is to engage. We just sometimes need to help this happen.

ACTIVITY 1 (I= Individuality)

Fingerprint Diagram

Pick some labels in the Fingerprint diagram and ask the group what sort of experiences we may have under these headings (eg Socio- Economic- the area you are brought up in, income of parents, level of crime/gangs, opportunities/role models). Make sure to highlight both positive and negative experiences, not just negative. Positive assumptions can mislead us as much as negative. Point out that we assume a lot from these labels. These assumptions are based on our own experiences/beliefs, our Fingerprint. We judge ourselves and others based on our own Fingerprint, often based on these assumptions. Our behaviour is influenced by our Fingerprint.(If creating a “character” for the role play, ask students to write some beliefs which may result from a Fingerprint (eg Got to be cool/clever/rich/good looking, tidy, perfect etc) on Post-Its for use later.)

SToRMS Bucket

(If creating a character for the Role play, ask students to write down what may be filling up someone's bucket and how they may let water out. Write down ideas on Post-It)

ACTIVITY 2 (S= Signs)

Signs of distress diagram.

Before viewing the Signs page. Form 3 Groups. Each looks at one of "Outward Signs", "Physical sensations" "Thoughts and Feelings" writing down what they think might be signs of distress for their category. Reassemble class to discuss each.

Then discuss:

- How some of these can be hidden from others. Putting on a (macho) front. Stigma/ Strong and silent. How people tend to think it is only them who feel this way. It is "Strong" to admit when you need help.
- Stress is really common even in young people. Short term, it can be seen a positive thing by some people. If stress continues the effects of the Cortisol released can be harmful. If people struggle to cope with their stress it can lead to anxiety or depression (the most common mental health conditions). There is a lot of overlap between the categories of Stress/ Anxiety /Depression in terms of Signs. You don't need to diagnose, just recognise Signs of distress and if they are lasting more than a couple of weeks, or affecting your daily life think about getting advice from GP.

ACTIVITY 3- TALKERS - these skills are best practiced as a whole.

If not possible to do a practical session, after reading TALK and viewing the "L=LISTEN" video:

Discuss how man shut down the conversation then pick up on the points in the slide below, identifying key actions/sentences to try.



Role Play- Stop /Start

Look for:

- Tuning in and recognising the distress
- Setting up the "Environment"- Physical space, Time
- How to start the conversation/ask
- Keep the focus on them- Active Listening
- Find out more- Open questions
- Try not to do things that may stop them talking
- Check your understanding- Closed questions

 www.stormsdmc.org

Ensure you then cover how to ask for help (summarised in next slide)



AS "SENDER" - Upset by someone?

- Your needs, thoughts and feelings are equally as important as anyone else's.
- Need to say something? Don't leave it too long but wait till you're calm.
- They may not realise you are upset or why- different "Fingerprint".
- Don't assume, hint or expect them to guess.
- Be clear, concise, considerate and keep calm.
- ✓ Avoid exaggerating or accusatory language like "Why can't you ever be ready on time".
- ✓ Describe the **situation**, rather than what they did. "We missed the beginning".
- ✓ How it made **you feel** "I get really wound up when we're late."
- ✓ What **you need** to feel better "I'd be more chilled if we could leave on time".
- ✓ Options that recognise **your needs and theirs** "How can we sort it next time?"

 FIND OUT MORE www.stormsdmc.org

Role play a conversation.

Decide what conversation- Student talking to friend/parent/teacher etc (eg Student playing a teacher under stress, and teacher playing the student). The role play enacts the "what not to do" in these scenarios then discusses the small changes that would make it go better. Ideally then replay it, changing these points

The role play can be carried out:

1. **In pairs.** Try to encourage a good range of scenarios. Facilitators discuss with individual groups. This needs a number of facilitators present to cover all the pairs to ensure learning. If possible each pair (or those who feel able to role play before the group) present their scenario to the group, The Group then stop /start the action when they see things that are shutting the conversation down etc and the role players redo that part, doing it differently.
2. **With 2 pre- arranged peer "actors"** to improvise chosen situation or work from a framework script. At least one (the "Receiver") must have good knowledge of WISETALKERS to ensure key points are brought out.
3. **With someone from the group and a facilitator** (needs another facilitator to stop/start action and prompt comments/discussion from the group. If this option is chosen at the session planning stage, 2 characters can be created by the group as part of the WISE session as below.

Discuss role play approach (Options 2 and 3 above).

- All decide scenario (s) they want to role play, "who meets where".
Eg The scenario we are going to do today is going to be 2 students, same age- mid 20s, They have been to the same lectures and sort of know each other but not well. They meet in the Med School Café.
Sender is female, Receiver is male.

- Split into 2 groups.- one for the Sender and one for the Receiver in the role play. One is currently finding it difficult to cope with something “the sender” and the other the “Receiver”.
- Each group to decide a few characteristics for their character; what is “known” by the other person and what isn’t, using information from Post-its completed for Fingerprint and STORMS Bucket. Then use a role play to see how tweaks to the conversation can affect how it pans out.
- Use the template below for flip chart paper to generate/record these characters. The role players only need to include the “External” (Known) items in their role play.

Character Prep 5 mins

Instruction: Each group discuss their post-its from the Fingerprint exercise and agree on one relevant behaviour/attitude that the other role player will see. All the other post-its are unknown to the other role player but are still in play. Also select one post-it from the STORMS bucket exercise, that the other role player will know. The others are all unknown. Sender group also agree a trigger, something happened recently/on the day that has caused the acute distress.

Make it clear that the templates are like real life, we only know a small % of what is affecting someone, and if we go only by outward appearances we may get it wrong. **Examples in red**

SENDER	NAME:	AGE:
	INTERNAL (UNKNOWN)	EXTERNAL (KNOWN) 1 ONLY
FINGERPRINT	Invisible beliefs/judgements	Visible behaviours
Creating these beliefs, judgements, behaviours.	Got to be successful. Only perfect is good enough. I’m too fat. Can’t show weakness.	Chirpy
BUCKET	INTERNAL (UNKNOWN)	Shared with Others (1 ONLY)
Self	“Can’t do anything right”	Death in the family
Others	Parents arguing. My fault.	
Stuff Going On	Can’t get anything to go in and exams soon.	
Coping Mechanisms	Go to the gym but friend’s stopped going so haven’t been	
What has happened to tip the balance- TRIGGER	Breakdown of a relationship	

RECEIVER	NAME:	AGE:
	INTERNAL (UNKNOWN)	EXTERNAL (KNOWN) 1 ONLY
FINGERPRINT	Invisible beliefs/judgements	Visible behaviours
Creating these beliefs, judgements, behaviours.	My life’s going nowhere. My brother is really cool and everyone loves him.	“Grumpy teenager”.
BUCKET	INTERNAL (UNKNOWN)	Shared with Others (1 ONLY)
Self	Friends making fun of me on	Housemate hasn’t cleared up the

	Facebook. I don't need them. Everyone thinks I'm lazy. Looking for jobs but no-one replies. Can't sleep.	kitchen.
Others		
Stuff Going On		
Coping Mechanisms	Drinking (too much?)	

Slide 8 - Explain Group input to Role play (Slide)

Often we close conversations down just by wanting to help, thinking about solutions, or trying to reassure people that it's going to be OK rather than just listening.

When you see something that could be done better we want you to stop the role play by pressing your buzzer, say what you saw and you (or the Group) suggest how the role play can address it. The role play will then restart having made the agreed change. I may also buzz to stop play to ask the group how either party may be feeling.

These conversations are rarely quick, as people take time to open up, so we will do a short snippet. Bear in mind that one of the most effective ways to get someone to talk is to leave silences as they may feel the need to fill them. We obviously can't do that here as it will just look like the role play has stalled!

Facilitator can stop/start action to ask group what they think is happening and what each role player may be thinking or feeling. Try to take through as many of TALKERS letters as possible.

Teacher background- Info from MIND

What are the signs of stress?

We all experience stress differently in different situations. Sometimes you might be able to tell right away when you're feeling under stress, but other times you might keep going without recognising the signs. Stress can affect you both emotionally and physically, and it can affect the way you behave.

My head is tight and all my thoughts are whizzing round in different directions and I can't catch them.

How you might feel

- irritable, aggressive, impatient or wound up

- over-burdened
 - [anxious](#), nervous or afraid
 - like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
 - unable to enjoy yourself
 - [depressed](#)
-
- uninterested in life
 - like you've lost your sense of humour
 - a sense of dread
 - worried about your health
 - neglected or [lonely](#).

Some people who experience severe stress can sometimes have suicidal feelings. (See our pages on [how to cope with suicidal feelings](#) for more information.)

How you might behave

- finding it hard to make decisions
 - constantly worrying
 - avoiding situations that are troubling you
 - snapping at people
 - biting your nails
 - picking at your skin
-
- unable to concentrate
 - eating too much or too little
 - smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual
 - restless, like you can't sit still
 - being tearful or crying.

How you might be physically affected

- shallow breathing or hyperventilating
 - you might have a [panic attack](#)
 - muscle tension
 - blurred eyesight or sore eyes
 - [problems getting to sleep](#), staying asleep or having nightmares
 - sexual problems, such as losing interest in sex or being unable to enjoy sex
-
- tired all the time
 - grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw
 - headaches
 - chest pains
 - high blood pressure
 - indigestion or heartburn
 - constipation or diarrhoea
 - feeling sick, dizzy or fainting.

[It feels like] the world is closing in on me, I can't breathe and I'm running out of time.