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Foundations for Wellbeing

Year 2, lesson 2: Different distractions



Different distractions

This is the second of five lessons on self-regulation, mental health and wellbeing, for year 2. This lesson focuses on how to direct attention and manage distractions.

To encourage pupils to use the self-regulation strategies taught in these lessons more automatically, autonomously and effectively, it is important to revisit and reinforce them regularly, as part of a whole-school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. The extension activities are designed to support this (for more information, see the [Teacher Handbook](#)). To learn more, please visit our [self-guided online courses](#), which are available to all School Plus members.

The lesson plan is based on a 45-minute lesson. The timings given are the minimum required to deliver the activities, but you may wish to spend longer exploring each activity.

Learning objective and outcomes

To learn about different kinds of distraction.

Pupils will be able to:

- identify whether a distraction is helpful or not
- describe how different distractions can make someone feel
- explain how to notice, name and manage distractions

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Flipchart paper and pens
- Resource 1: *Different distractions* [one cut-up set per pair]
- Resource 2: *Marek's day* [one cut-up set per group]
- Resource 3: *Ways to help* [support option, as required]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher handbook notes before teaching this lesson. They include guidance on establishing a safe learning environment, supporting pupils with additional vulnerabilities, using assessment and personal reflection effectively, and embedding the learning. They also outline useful subject knowledge on the theory and evidence informing these lessons, self-regulation strategies and relevant neuroscience.

The lesson plans should be used flexibly, and you are encouraged to adapt them to meet the specific needs and abilities of your pupils. It is also important to consider sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. If safeguarding concerns arise during this lesson, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with your school policy.

Baseline assessment

Introduction (Slides 9-10, 2 mins)

Establish or revisit ground rules. Explain that if pupils have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can speak to you individually or write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Using slide 10, begin by briefly recapping the learning from last lesson.

Introduce today's learning objective and outcomes. Explain that this lesson will be about different kinds of distractions, how they might feel, and ways to notice, name and manage distractions.

Baseline assessment activity (Slides 12-13, 5 mins)

Explain that some distractions are helpful and others not so helpful. If necessary, briefly recap the meaning of distraction as 'when something takes attention away from what someone is doing'.

Give pairs a cut-up set of cards from **Resource 1: Different distractions** and, using slide 11 to support, ask them to identify which distractions are 'helpful' and which are 'not helpful' by placing them on the continuum.

Then, ask pupils to write on the cards how each distraction might make Marek feel, and for the 'not helpful' distractions, what might help him to concentrate again.

Use pupils' responses to provide insight into their knowledge and understanding about distractions and how pupils might manage them. Note any misconceptions or gaps in understanding and aim to address these in the lesson. For example, you may want to spend more time on differentiating between 'helpful' and 'not helpful' distractions.

Core activities

A day of distractions (Slide 14, 10 mins)

Give pairs the storyboard from Resource 2: Marek's day where he encounters different distractions. Ask them to identify which are 'helpful' and which are 'not helpful' and take feedback.

Helpful:

Marek's class do some stretches to help them stop thinking about other things and focus on their schoolwork.

During a P.E. lesson, the teacher blows the whistle when it's time to change activity.

At break, Marek's tummy starts to rumble.

Marek drops his lunch tray in front of everyone, but a friend invites him to sit with them to distract him from thinking about it.

Not helpful:

Marek is running late for school but stops to stroke a cat on the way.

*Marek's brother is watching TV while he is trying to read his book.
A friend calls round early while Marek is tidying his room.*

Then ask pupils, what is the difference between a 'helpful' distraction and a 'not helpful' distraction?

A helpful distraction: tells us something useful; helps us know what to do next or stick to a routine, e.g. move to the next activity; warns us of something/helps us stay safe, e.g. a siren; helps us to stop focussing on what's upsetting us.

A not so helpful distraction: can stop someone from doing something, including things that they enjoy (like reading or painting); doesn't have a purpose; could be unsafe, e.g. when doing something riskier, like crossing the road, it is important pay attention to what is happening.



Support: Use the following prompts to support pupils:

- how well can Marek complete what he is doing?
- will the distraction be positive or negative for Marek?



Challenge: Draw/write in the blank box on the storyboard something else that Marek might encounter before bed that could distract him.

How do they feel? (Slide 15, 10 mins)

Using the examples about Marek's day from the storyboard, ask pupils to discuss the following in pairs:

1. How might Marek feel when he is distracted?
2. What might Marek do because of the distraction?

Model an example to the class using slide 15.

Take feedback from pairs about each example, ensuring the following are discussed:

Marek's class do some stretches to help them focus on their schoolwork:

1. *Marek might feel happy and have a clearer mind.*
2. *He might find it easier to concentrate on his work.*

At break, Marek's tummy starts to rumble:

1. *Marek might feel hungry/ready to eat.*
2. *He might go to get his snack.*

During a P.E. lesson, the teacher blows the whistle when it's time to change activity:

1. *Marek might feel excited and ready for the next activity.*
2. *He might move to the next activity.*

Marek drops his lunch tray in front of everyone, but a friend invites him to sit with them to distract him from thinking about it.

1. *Marek might feel happy and grateful to be invited to sit with his friend.*
2. *He might forget the unpleasant feelings of dropping his lunch tray, enjoy his lunch with his friend.*

Marek's brother is watching TV while he is trying to read his book:

1. *Marek might feel annoyed/angry.*
2. *He might not be able to concentrate on his reading.*

A friend calls round early whilst Marek is tidying his room:

1. *Marek might feel rushed, relieved, or happy.*
2. *He might not finish tidying his room.*

Highlight that sometimes it's clear to Marek that he is being distracted, for example when his tummy starts to rumble. However, sometimes he won't be aware straightaway, such as when his brother is watching TV.

If any pupils complete the challenge activity, take feedback. Highlight that even though stopping to stroke the cat gives Marek pleasant feelings, it's not a helpful distraction because he was running late for school. But if we can try and notice when we are distracted, we will be better able to manage it and focus again.



Challenge: Draw/write in the blank box on the storyboard something else that Marek might encounter before bed that could distract him.

What could help Marek? (Slide 16, 10 mins)

Explain that noticing distractions and how they make us feel can help us to manage them better too. For example, if Marek notices he is being distracted – he can then decide if it's a helpful distraction or not, and if it's not helpful, then he can think about what could help him manage it. With practice, his brain will get better at noticing and managing distractions.

Using the 'not so helpful' examples from the previous activity, in small groups, ask pupils to suggest ways to help Marek when he is getting distracted. Each group should write their ideas onto a mind map in their exercise books or on a sheet of paper. Take feedback.

Pupils might suggest:

- Marek stops to stroke a cat on the way to school: *take one minute to stroke the cat and then keep going to school; think about how long he has to get to school; decide to leave earlier the next day to see the cat.*
- A friend calls round early whilst Marek is tidying his room: *remember that he needs to come back and tidy it; explain that he needs to finish tidying and ask his friend to wait a few minutes.*
- Marek's brother is watching TV while he is trying to read his book: *move to a different room; ask his brother to watch TV another time; use headphones for the noise; agree a time for TV and a time for other activities like reading.*



Support: Ask pupils to use **Resource 3: Ways to help** and match the scenario to the different strategies by drawing lines.

Reflection and Endpoint assessment

Reflection and Endpoint assessment (Slides 17-18, 5 mins)

Ask pupils to think about an activity they enjoy, such as a hobby or a subject at school that they want to be able to focus on without getting distracted. If they become distracted, what could help? As this is a personal reflection, they do not need to share their responses with the class.

Remind pupils that the learning outcomes related to identifying if a distraction is helpful or not, how different distractions can feel, and how to manage them. Ask them to return to Marek's 'helpful' and 'not helpful' scenarios from the beginning of lesson. Ask them to choose one, and then write down in their exercise books:

- Why the example is helpful or not helpful.
- How Marek might feel and what he might do because of the distraction.
- How Marek might notice the distraction.
- What Marek can do to manage less helpful distractions in the future.

Use this as evidence of progress and to inform future teaching.

Check the question box and respond to any remaining questions.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 19, 3 mins)

Remind pupils that everyone gets distracted sometimes and that they can speak to a trusted adult if they want help with distractions. Pupils can also contact Childline: 0800 1111.

Closing the lesson (Slide 20)

Finally, using slide 20, reinforce the key learning by summing up for the class what they have achieved in today's lesson.

You could also refer to the strategies posters (Appendix 3) in the Teacher's Handbook, now or after the lesson, to reinforce strategies for managing distraction.

Activities to extend and embed the learning

What can help? (Slide 21)

Ask pupils to create their own 'bank' of ways to manage distractions and use these to make a class display for them to refer to if they get distracted.

Managing distractions (Slide 22)

Lead the class in an activity that could support pupils when they are trying to manage distracting or big feelings, such as overexcitement or irritation: putting on headphones, bubble breaths (pupils pretend to blow up a bubble with a deep inhale and then slowly exhale as if they are blowing the bubble away), visualising a calm place (encouraging them to picture the sights, sounds, and smells to

create a calming mental images. You could refer to strategies posters (Appendix 3) in the Teacher's Handbook for more information on emotional regulation techniques.

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