



Put on the breaks, is turning red

Key message

Extremists and violent groups adopt a repertoire of behaviours that are focused on striking what they consider a threat, more than searching strategies to solve conflicts and reduce unpleasant emotions. Both for preventing young people to assume these behavioural patterns and for disengaging those who have already taken it on, it is necessary to provide them with the adequate skills to deal with emotions instead of acting in an alienated way.

Key words: Self-control, emotional intelligence

Summary

This brief self-control technique is a starting point to introduce young people to emotional intelligence. Self-control can be understood as our ability to regulate our emotions when facing situations of discomfort, misunderstanding or tension. As in our daily conflict environment, it is essential to be aware of our emotions and to develop the necessary self-control skills to regulate and reduce the unpleasant ones.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Exit strategies	• individual • small	• 12 - 15 • 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 1 hour

Purpose

- Identify and analyse the three components of emotions (physical, cognitive and behavioural) and develop the ability to perceive them (emotional self-awareness).
- Analyse emotions through own experiences and share it in group in order to facilitate the identification and cohesion.
- Know some self-control patterns to manage adverse emotions.

Description

Step 1: Make a brainstorming about what emotions are. You can work from the four basic emotions *Happiness, Sadness, Anger and Fear*. Explain what the emotions and their components are through the scheme «I think, I feel, I act» (see handout 1 below), to understand how what we think and do influences in the emotions we experience.

Take some emotions as example (happiness, anger, sadness, etc.) and ask the group what would they feel physically (tension, relaxation, tears, etc.), what would they think (e.g.: he doesn't love me, if I'm a fool, he does it to annoy me, etc.) and how they would act (e.g.: I hit him, I'm out of here, it makes me lose my will to go out, etc.).

Step 2: Ask the participants to form pairs. Each pair will make three columns in a folio with the three components of the emotion (what did you feel? – physical signs, what did you imagine? – thoughts,

what did you do? – behaviour) and will have to answer to the following questions:

1. Which of the above-mentioned emotions have you felt more recently? Anger, fear or sadness (or a mix of them).
2. Thinking about this situation, fulfill this table:

WHAT DID YOU FEEL?	WHAT DID YOU IMAGINE?	WHAT DID YOU DO?
-physical feeling-	-thoughts-	-behaviour-

Step 3: Each pair will play (roleplaying) one of the emotions described in their interview and the rest of the group will have to guess what emotion it is. Ask the young group if they found easy to describe the components of their emotions and if in some case they managed to shift them away. *Which strategies did they use for this?*

Emphasize the influence of what we think and do according to our feelings by taking examples of situations described by the group and asking everyone to propose alternatives and strategies to manage negative emotions (e.g.: What would you do if you were very nervous? What can we think of in these moments to reduce it?)

Step 4: It is advisable to dispose of enough time for this activity (20-25 min.) and having worked in depth the previous steps. Present a short and easy self-control technique to be developed in three steps: “The traffic light: Stop!, Think!, Go ahead!” (see handouts -2- below) which purpose is to perceive these emotions and learn some strategies to manage them in a discussion.

Explain that there are many techniques to regulate our emotions and not all of them work in all situations or affect everyone in the same way, but it is important to know them and practice them to find the ones that suit us best. This activity will describe some of them:

1. Present the first step “Stop”-Red, which consists on perceive the physical feelings related with this emotion (e.g. get tensed, breath strongly, speak loud, etc.) and intend countering their effect. Ask for examples of how could it be done and give some techniques such as the »Fix the volume, one step behind or breath 4-4-8«.
2. The second step, “Think!”-Yellow, deals about how to identify automatic or negative thoughts (e.g. It is always the same; I'm fed up with; etc.) and then reconsider objectives searched by both parts and possible solutions. Present examples of self-verbalisations to cope with automatic thoughts.
3. Last step, “Go ahead!”-Green, is used to summarise the common points and find a solution. If it is not achieved, use the “go out or postpone conversation” techniques.

Materials needed

Paper, pen and Cardboard with the “Traffic light” technique (see handouts)

Methodology

(Self-)assessment

Advice for Trainer

- Adapt the number of emotions and the level of analysis according to the age and previous experience in emotional development dynamics of the group.

- The teacher/trainer/educator should prepare cardboards reporting the technique steps and examples of the corresponding strategies for each step to be distributed to the participants.
- It is recommended to embed this activity with dynamics addressing emotional expression and regulation, self-control and cognitive distortions (automatic thoughts or wrong ideas).

Source / Literature

Araujo López, I. (2005). Manual de autocontrol. *Centro de Atención al Menor Alborada*.

Handouts

[HOW DO MY EMOTIONS WORK?](#)

[HOW CAN I REGULATE MY EMOTIONS?](#)



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