

# Thinking critically about wellbeing

## Purpose

To help students to understand how reflection data might be used as part of a critical thinking approach to help identify health promoting actions. Students using this tool as part of an early intervention process, can also help them to understand the meaning and intent of it. Students use a scenario as the basis for the activity, instead of their own reflections. This activity may support learning for goal setting.

## Learning intention

Students will develop an understanding of the way information from a personal reflection may be used to help identify actions to promote wellbeing. (6A1)

## Key competencies

Participating and contributing.

## Resources

Copy template of critical thinking questions for each student and a scenario for each group. It may be helpful to cut the scenario into sections so that each person in a group can take responsibility for making sense of one part of the situation.

*Teachers may adapt aspects of the scenario to reflect a locally relevant situation.*

## Time

60 minutes.

## Activity sequence

### Teacher activity

- Explain to the students that this activity will use information from a scenario (and not their own reflection data – although they may still like to draw on their own experiences for ideas) to help decide what sort of support a young person needs to promote and improve their wellbeing.
- Provide each group of students with the scenario (cut into sections) and Effie's reflection on her wellbeing. Allow time for students to make sense of the scenario.
- Provide each student with a critical thinking framework. As a group, students discuss the questions and using ideas from the scenario, as well as their own understanding of the situation, to make a response to each question in the framework. They may decide some questions don't have an answer – but encourage them to think differently, or from other angles, or other people's perspectives if that is the case.

### Debrief

- Ask students to share the 'what needs to change' section of their responses. What ideas are similar or different across the class? What other alternatives are possible having heard these ideas?
- Why do you think some young people's issues require ongoing support and take a long time to be resolved?
- Students respond with own insights about the complexity of making changes when many people might be involved.

### Student activity

- Students divide the sections of the scenario between members of the group and lead the group in discussion about their allocated section.
- Students respond to and record ideas from the group discussion in the critical thinking framework.

## Learning journal entry

- Students file their responses to the critical thinking questions.

## Teacher knowledge and pedagogy

Making sense of complex situations to decide a course of action is hard. Help students to understand that the complexity of situations that undermine our wellbeing are often not easily 'fixed' and put right again through a simple one off action, and often involve many people. Emphasise the importance of the socio-ecological approach and how good quality health and wellbeing outcomes are dependent on a number of factors coming together to support and promote wellbeing in a sustainable way.

## Teacher's evaluation of the activity

- How readily could students respond to the critical thinking questions? That is, taking ideas from the scenario and thinking about them in a way that required them to see the situation from multiple perspectives – especially the questions around how benefits/who has the power and who is disadvantaged.
- Given the importance of these questions for critical thinking in health education, what are the teaching and learning implications for thinking critically in other contexts?

## Scenario

Effie has been caught drinking alcohol at school.

After a 'bad morning' (a fight with mum over her school uniform, a failed assessment, an argument with another student in her group, and being called names related to her bad mood) she had taken herself off to a quiet area of the school during lunchtime to drink the alcohol she had taken from her parent's drinks cabinet. When she was asked by a teacher why she was still out of class after the bell rang, it quickly became apparent how drunk she was so she was taken to see the nurse to lie down and sober up, and her situation was reported to her dean.

Last week Effie's best friend had hooked up with her boyfriend so she feels let down and cheated by two of the people most important to her. Things are pretty tough at home and mum and dad are always arguing about money and their jobs. She thinks she is failing at school and everything is getting on top of her. In the past she always gained really good levels of achievement in all of her subjects. She hasn't kept up with sports practice (she's a really good rugby player) and dropped out of the social choir who sing all sorts of different music – because they enjoy it and they are really popular when they sing at school events.

Next day, when Effie returned to school, the dean asked to see her to start the process the school uses when students find themselves in some sort of trouble, or they are experiencing distress that is affecting their wellbeing. The first thing Effie and the dean worked on was a self-reflection tool. Her results are shown below.

# Self-reflection: My wellbeing and my learning needs

## Step 1: The Seven C's

Using the item bank of meanings, and/or your own words, explain the meaning of each of the 7Cs terms. Write these below.

	Circle one	Comments
<p><b>Competence</b> Do you feel like you have the skills you need?</p>		<p>I think I have some skills but because everything bad is happening all at once I don't feel capable of doing anything for myself.</p>
<p><b>Confidence</b> Do you feel confident?</p>		<p>I know I can learn because I have always been good at school work.</p>
<p><b>Connection</b> Do you feel connected to positive people, school, your family, and your community?</p>		<p>I still have my connections with my music and I listen to music at home</p>
<p><b>Character</b> How well do you demonstrate our school values?</p>		<p>I should be able to rate myself more highly and at other times I would, but right now I feel I can't do this as well as I could because of everything else I'm dealing with.</p>
<p><b>Contribution</b> How well do you contribute to the wellbeing of others?</p>		<p>Given how many arguments and fights I've had with my parents and friends I don't think I'm contributing much at all at the moment, but I know I have in the past.</p>
<p><b>Coping</b> How well do you use positive coping strategies?</p>		<p>Not very well! It's why I'm in trouble now!</p>
<p><b>Control</b> How well do you think you can make healthy choices?</p>		<p>I know I can but right now I have so much going on I don't know where to start.</p>

## Step 2. Support for you to grow

Reflect on the statements on this sheet. Choose the face that reflects how you currently feel about each statement and write down what this looks like in your life in the space provided.

**Support for you to grow**

**Positive contributions that you make**

I like to think I do but I haven't had a chance lately

**People who care about you**

At the moment I don't think I have anyone who cares - mum and dad are always fighting and ignore me and my friend and boyfriend have stabbed me in the back. I suppose some of the others in my rugby team and singing group still talk to me but most of the kids in my class just pick on me for being in a bad mood and being a depressed 'downer' they don't want to be with or work with

**Places where you belong**

Most of the places that are important to me are associated by my boyfriend and ex best friend and my family so although I've got some special places, at the moment they don't feel that special because of who I usually share them with.

**Positive activities**

I like rugby and singing - even if I don't go to practice all of the time

# Step 3. Thinking about your overall wellbeing

**Choose One** **Write an action you could do to improve or maintain your wellbeing**

<p><b>Taha tinana   Physical wellbeing</b></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eating well</li> <li>▪ Doing regular physical activity</li> <li>▪ Getting enough sleep</li> <li>▪ Keeping healthy and well</li> </ul>		<p>I do still get to some rugby practices so I am doing some physical activity, and despite everything, I still have a healthy nutritional diet. I don't always sleep well. And I know I drink too much alcohol.</p>
<p><b>Taha hinengaro   Mental and emotional wellbeing</b></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling confident</li> <li>▪ Knowing how to communicate thoughts and feelings</li> <li>▪ Managing stressful situations</li> <li>▪ Feeling good about myself and others</li> </ul>		<p>Everything. I want to feel happier and for this heavy weight to lift off my shoulders. I can't decide on just one thing.</p>
<p><b>Taha whānau   Social wellbeing</b></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to care and share with others</li> <li>▪ Feeling connected to whānau</li> <li>▪ Having positive friends</li> <li>▪ Being involved in positive activities</li> </ul>		<p>I need to stop having fights and arguments with people.</p>
<p><b>Taha wairua   Spiritual wellbeing</b></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling like I belong and am connected to things and people that matter to me</li> <li>▪ Having goals and hope for the future</li> <li>▪ Knowing who I am and what is important to me</li> <li>▪ Values and beliefs that support wellbeing</li> </ul>		<p>I want to strengthen my connections with things that are important to me - like music and rugby. I hope if I can do that I can better build my connections with other people and places.</p>

## Questions to help decide the details of Effie's Support Plan

<p>The situation</p>	<p>What happened or what is happening for Effie?</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>How does Effie feel about the situation?</p> <p>What aspects of this situation are acceptable or unacceptable?</p> <p>Why do you say this? <i>Think of Effie and others.</i></p>
<p>Values and beliefs</p>	<p>What are the values and beliefs of the people involved in this situation?</p> <p>What do you think has influenced these values and beliefs?</p>

<p>The impact</p>	<p>Who has been affected? In what ways?</p> <p>What could they have experienced?</p>
<p>Change and support</p>	<p>What needs to change for Effie?</p> <p>How can Effie contribute to this change?</p> <p>What support does Effie need from others? <i>Think about Effie's support network - those who will be highly involved and those less involved, and how they will support her.</i></p>

*Adapted from Ministry of Education. (2004). The Curriculum in Action: Making Meaning Making a Difference and Ministry of Education (2014). Positive Behaviour for Learning: Restorative Practice Kete Book Three Restorative Circles.*