

Life Skills for Schools Programme

Dear Parent,

Your child's secondary school has invited Aware to deliver the Life Skills for Schools programme to their class. We thought it would be useful for you to have some information on the programme content; you or your child might like to have a conversation about it at some point.

Life Skills for Schools is a free educational programme available to senior cycle students and aims to help young people develop helpful ways of thinking and managing concerns. The programme contains eight modules and is delivered over four weeks. The benefit of delivering the programme over a four week period is to give students time to reflect on the key learning point each week and time to experiment with the 'new ways of thinking' presented. The weekly schedule also allows time for students to raise any questions they might have with their programme instructor.

Programme content:

WEEK 1:

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FEELINGS

This session introduces cognitive behavioural (CBT) and helps the group understand that what we think and do influences how we feel.

ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP YOUR TEMPER (1,2,3 Breath)

This session helps recognise what winds us up, and how to control anger and improve happiness and relationships.

WEEK 2:

LOOKING AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY

This session teaches the group to recognise and control unhelpful thinking patterns, and encourages them to challenge negative thoughts and replace them with more helpful ones.

BUILDING INNER CONFIDENCE

Things other people say to us creep into our heads and we can begin to believe them. This session helps the group rebuild self-confidence and learn to like themselves again.

WEEK 3:

THE THINGS YOU DO THAT MESS YOU UP - AND HOW TO STOP DOING THEM

This session helps identify things in life, such as comfort eating or spending money, which may make us feel better initially but which might lead to problems over time; and how to manage the temptation.

HOW TO FIX ALMOST ANYTHING

Everything is achievable if it's broken down into small enough steps. This session introduces a 4-step plan to help tackle problems and make positive changes in life.

WEEK 4:

DOING THINGS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER

This session focuses on encouraging the group to start doing healthy things which can make them feel better.

TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO TO FEEL HAPPIER STRAIGHT AWAY

The last session sums everything up and shows some simple things that we can build into everyday life to help us feel happier, fitter and more positive.

The programme is supported with a colourful book (which is also free) and consolidates each module's content: this can be used as a reference manual after the programme is completed.

The Life Skills programme is not counselling; it is an educational programme designed to help young people learn new ways to deal with concerns and challenges in life. It uses an approach based on the principles of cognitive behavioural (CBT) which focuses on thinking and behaviour.

You might also be interested to know that Aware provides a Life Skills programme for adults as well; the adult version is available online or in group sessions nationwide, at various times throughout the year. For more information visit the website www.aware.ie or follow us on Facebook (AwareIreland) or Twitter (@Aware).

About Aware

Aware is the national organisation offering support, education and information around depression and bipolar disorder. It is estimated that 450,000 (one in ten) people in Ireland experience depression at any one time, and a further 40,000 people experience bipolar disorder. Aware also provides a support programme for relatives supporting a loved one through depression or bipolar disorder and mental health education programmes for senior-cycle students; for employees in the workplace, and for adults who are managing challenging life situations and/or stress, as well as our range of support services. All of Aware's services are independently evaluated and based on best practice.

I hope that your child enjoys the Life Skills for Schools programme, and that the things they learn will be of benefit to them, now and into the future.

Yours faithfully,



Leah O'Brien

Education and Online Co-ordinator