

**Heartquake**

**Primary School Lesson Plan**

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| ***If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in the moment, live in the breath – Amit Ray*** |
| **Overview:**Trauma is a part of everyone’s life – including students. It is important to understand the emotions that trauma can spark and develop skills and strategies to cope. Through using the Nepal earthquake as an example, students can privately develop strategies to assist with their own personal traumas. |
| **Objectives:*** To understand that everyone goes through trauma in life
* To develop some basic strategies to cope with different emotions and trauma
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| **Australian Curriculum Links:**Years 3 and 4ACPPS034 Explore strategies to manage physical, social and emotional change.Years 5 and 6ACPPS054 Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing |
| **Prerequisites:*** An open trusting environment and strong relationships with students.
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| **Hook:** Create a soft calm atmosphere through music (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx1SrxDwxXo> ) and ask students to sit in a circle. To create an open and supportive feeling for this lesson play a short game of alphabet stories. In alphabet stories each student takes a turn to say a word to create a story, the catch is they must move through the alphabet e.g. Alice brought clever dogs every Friday  |
| **Activities:** Read aloud OR Silent readingChose three off the six month personal reflections from students on the heartquake website. Read these aloud to your class. ORIf your class has access to a number of devices, students can spend twenty minutes reading through the six month personal reflections themselves. TraumaGather the class together and ask them *‘What did you find most interesting about the reflections? How do you think you would feel if you had been there during the earthquake? Have you ever experienced something that made you feel very scared, angry, overwhelmed, sad or anxious?’* Reassure students that they do not need to share their answers with anyone. If no one answers then give some examples. Then explain that for the rest of the lesson as a class we will be exploring a few ways that they can help ease those feelings. Three SensesAsk students to take a few slow breaths and ask them:* What are three things you can hear? (clock on the wall, car going by, music in the next room, my breath)
* What are three things you can see? (this table, that sign, that person walking by)
* What are three things you can feel? (the chair under me, the floor under my feet, my phone in my pocket)

Explain to students how this strategy can bring them into the present moment.Pebble PowerHand each child a bag with four stones in it. Ask them to pick out the first stone and hold it in their hand, feel all of the grooves and knicks. Explain that this is a flower, ask them to close their eyes and think of a flower. A flower is unique and vibrant. Each of them are unique and amazing! Get students to breathe deeply three times.Ask them to pick out the second stone and hold it in their hand, feel all of the grooves and knicks. Explain that this is a mountain, ask them to close their eyes and think of a mountain. A mountain is solid and strong, each of them has an inner strength that they can harness. Get students to breathe deeply three times.Ask them to pick out the third stone and hold it in their hand, feel all of the grooves and knicks. Explain that this is a lake, ask them to close their eyes and think of a still, clear lake with the sky being reflected. A lake is still, clear and calm; when we are calm we are able to make better choices. Get students to breathe deeply three times.Ask them to pick out the fourth stone and hold it in their hand, feel all of the grooves and knicks. Explain that this is a spacious blue sky, ask them to close their eyes and think of an infinite blue sky. The sky represents the quality of freedom, freedom from feeling worry or anxiety. Get students to breathe deeply three times.Explain to students that if they ever feel stressed, anxious, anger etc. that they can go to (chose a spot in the room, if possible add some cushions) and use their pebble power. |
| **Resources:**Heartquake websiteEnough bags and stones for each student |
| **Assessment/home work:**A reflection of the lesson could be set for homework using these questions as inspiration:What did you learn?What did you find difficult? Why?What did you find interesting? |

**Teacher Notes**

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| **Duration of the Lesson:**Minimum of one hour (depending on the level of engagement this may go over) |
| **Topic:** Heartquake | **Lesson Heading:**Trauma and mindfulness |
| **Background of the importance of the topic:**All people will experience trauma and stressful periods throughout their life. It is important for students to develop a range of skills and strategies to cope with these periods in a healthy manner. |
| **Things to think about when preparing your lesson:**Trauma is traumatic. Bringing up these issues is sensitive and should be done with compassion. Never force a student to share a personal issue with the class.  |
| **Challenges which may be faced and coping strategies:** |
| Potential Challenges:Students may have an emotional reaction  | Coping Strategies:Remind students that it is okay to feel upset and allow them to have some time and space. |
| **Useful tips:*** Don’t use these activities as a one off. If the students seem restless these activities can be used to calm the class.
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| **Useful resources:*** <http://youth.anxietybc.com/mindfulness-exercises>
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