



PRIMARY SCHOOL LESSON PLAN



canteen
bandanna day

PRIMARY LESSON PLAN

Health – understanding emotions

Here is a **lesson plan** designed for Australian primary school students (Years 3–6), aligned with the **Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education** strand “*Personal, Social and Community Health*”, specifically under the content descriptor **ACPPS038**: “*Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing.*”

LESSON PLAN

Understanding Emotions – When Someone We Know Has Cancer

Year Level: Years 3–6

Duration: 60 minutes

Curriculum Link: Health & Physical Education – Personal, Social and Community Health (**ACPPS038**: Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing)

LESSON AIM

Students:

- ▶ Understand that cancer can affect people in our lives including classmates, teachers or family members.
- ▶ Identify a range of emotions that people may experience when someone they know is affected by cancer.
- ▶ Learn healthy ways to express and cope with these emotions.

OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- ▶ Name at least three emotions people may feel when someone they care about has cancer.
- ▶ Describe two strategies they can use to manage their feelings.
- ▶ Know who they can talk to when they feel overwhelmed or confused.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ▶ Whiteboard and markers
- ▶ Emotion cards or emoji flashcards
- ▶ Large paper or poster board
- ▶ Markers or crayons
- ▶ Printed reflection worksheet (optional)

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Introduction – Creating a Safe Space (5 mins)

- ▶ Begin by setting the tone: “Today’s topic is a little serious, and it’s okay to feel different emotions as we talk about it. We’re going to talk about what it feels like when someone we know has a serious illness like cancer.”
- ▶ Acknowledge that some students may already have experience with this topic. Reassure them this is a safe and respectful space.

2. Class Discussion – What is Cancer? (5–10 mins)

- ▶ Provide a simple explanation: “Cancer is a disease that happens when some cells in the body grow the wrong way. People with cancer may need medicine, hospital visits, or time off school to get better.”
- ▶ Ask: “*Has anyone heard of cancer before?*” (No need to share personal stories unless students want to.)
- ▶ Emphasise: “*You can’t catch cancer. It’s not like the flu or a cold.*”

3. Group Activity – Understanding Emotions (15 mins)

- ▶ Show students a set of **emotion cards** or emojis (e.g., sad, confused, scared, angry, hopeful, lonely, worried).
- ▶ Ask: “*How might someone feel if their friend, teacher or family member has cancer?*”
- ▶ Stick the emotion cards on the board and brainstorm together.
- ▶ Use real-world examples: “*Imagine someone you know is in hospital with cancer. How might you feel?*”

4. Coping Strategies – What Can We Do? (15 mins)

- ▶ On the board, write the heading: “**Healthy Ways to Cope**”
- ▶ Ask students to suggest strategies for managing big emotions. Prompt with questions:
 - Who can we talk to?
 - What helps us feel better when we’re sad or scared?
 - How can we support a friend going through this?

Example strategies:

- Talking to a trusted adult (teacher, school counsellor, parent)
- Writing in a journal
- Drawing or colouring feelings
- Playing with a friend
- Doing something kind for the person affected

5. Creative Activity – My Coping Toolkit (15 mins)

- ▶ Hand out paper and art supplies.
- ▶ Ask students to draw or write their own *"Coping Toolkit"* — 3–5 things they can do when they feel sad, worried or scared about someone being sick.
- ▶ Encourage sharing, but make it optional.

6. Conclusion and Reflection (5 mins)

- ▶ Reaffirm key message: *"It's okay to feel lots of emotions when someone we care about has cancer. Talking about it and finding healthy ways to cope can help."*
- ▶ Ask reflective questions:
 - "What's one emotion you learned about today?"
 - "What's one way you can help a friend who might be feeling sad?"

Optional Extension or Homework

- ▶ Reflection Worksheet: *"When I Feel Sad or Worried..."*
- ▶ Encourage students to talk to their family about what they learned.

Support and Sensitivity Tips

- ▶ Inform school counsellors ahead of time.
- ▶ Be prepared to support students who may be emotionally affected.
- ▶ Avoid sharing specific cases or stories unless provided by students voluntarily.

What can you do to help?

You can run a Bandanna Day event at your school, to support kids and teens going through cancer. www.bandannaday.org.au/schools