

Case Study

Using the ABC Skill During Transition Day

Monk's Walk is a secondary school in Hertfordshire that teaches the Penn Resilience Programme (PRP) lessons to students as part of their year 7 curriculum. Key learning is revisited in year 8 to reinforce and consolidate understanding. They have 8 certified PRP teachers.

As part of the transition arrangements for new students coming into the school they have designed and deliver a session using the foundational skill (ABC) taught in the PRP lessons. This case study provides an outline of what they did and starts by explaining the ABC Skill.

The ABC Skill

Slowing a situation down to understand ones interpretation of it



It's the **Beliefs** one has that lead to the Consequence in a situation.
Not the A.
People react differently when in exactly the same situation because their Bs are different.
The ABC skill slows the situation down to separate the A from the Bs and the Cs.

Introduction

In July the new September intake attended Monk's Walk for a day to familiarise themselves with peers, staff and the school. Trained PRP teachers developed a session to introduce the students to the ABC skill as a way to help students share their thoughts and concerns about joining the school in September. This creative session illustrates how the skills of the PRP can support students to prepare for this sometimes-daunting transition.

How It Worked

The teachers started the day by introducing the concept of resilience, what it means and why it is important. They engaged students by getting them to think about which celebrities they thought were resilient and why. The students were then asked to think about coming into secondary school and to explore and list all the beliefs associated with moving on from primary school. The activity identified common concerns such as getting lost around the school, making new friends and having to do homework. The ABC Skill was introduced (see above).

The role-plays allowed the students to recognise shared concerns they had about moving on in a safe and structured way and introduced them to the notion of an internal radio station playing away inside their heads that often focused on the negative beliefs.

The Activity

Students were then introduced to the idea that negative beliefs cannot only lead to unhelpful feelings and behaviour about a situation, but that the beliefs may not be inaccurate. A simple example was explained illustrating the notion of *self-fulfilling prophecies*, illustrated below.

Students then worked together on prepared scenarios with characters who all had concerns and negative beliefs about starting a new school. Students were put into groups and were tasked with coming up with alternative, less negative ways of interpreting the situations. The aim was to encourage the students, working together, to see that there isn't just one way of seeing a situation and that it is possible to come up with different interpretations.

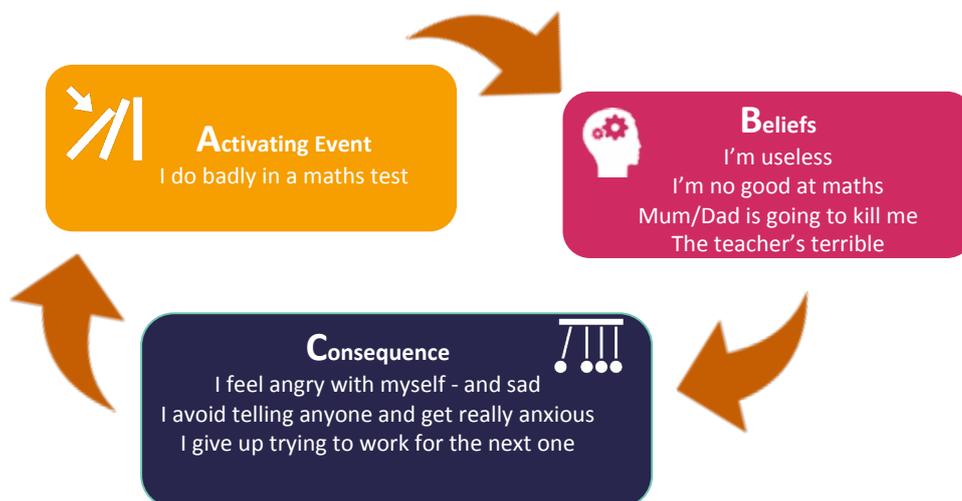
The next stage was to ask them to think about how differently the new beliefs would allow the characters in the scenarios to feel and behave. Would the new interpretations lead to more helpful feelings and behaviours? How likely are the new beliefs to be accurate or as accurate as the negative beliefs?

Speed Dating

This activity allowed the students to bring their learning from the previous activity and apply it directly to the concerns they had. Clear boundaries were set to ensure their concerns remained as 'everyday', 'shared' concerns. It was explained that if they had bigger worries then they could talk to someone outside of this session. The students were asked to move around the classroom. The students would each say one concern they had to each other. Each 'date' lasted for 1 minute, before all students moved on to the next 'date'. This activity enabled students to share their concerns, listen to others and develop their confidence about recognising and talking about their feelings.

The ABC Skill

Identifying self-fulfilling prophecies



So what will happen next time there is a test if the pupil has stopped studying?

They fail the test.

The B drives the C - a self-fulfilling prophecy (reinforcing the original B)

I've failed again. I really am useless.

Graffiti Diagram for Future Use

Finally, students were asked to graffiti a diagram of their internal radio (their beliefs in the moment) about joining the school. Although the students were unaware at the time, they would be reunited with their diagrams when they started the PRP lessons in September. In September the diagrams were redistributed as part of the PRP lessons. The students were able to consider the accuracy of their beliefs (both positive and negative) about starting at Monk's Walk.

Joanne Mitchinson, PSHCE and PRP Lead at Monk's Walk

"It was a great session to teach - the students were open and receptive and gained confidence from realising that everyone had very similar concerns. They returned in September remembering the key concepts they had learnt and remembering that they had enjoyed the lesson. We will definitely run it again. We know students often feel a number of emotions when making this transition; excited and exhilarated but also anxious and frightened. Students may not want to admit to these feelings and may not realise that others are experiencing exactly the same way."