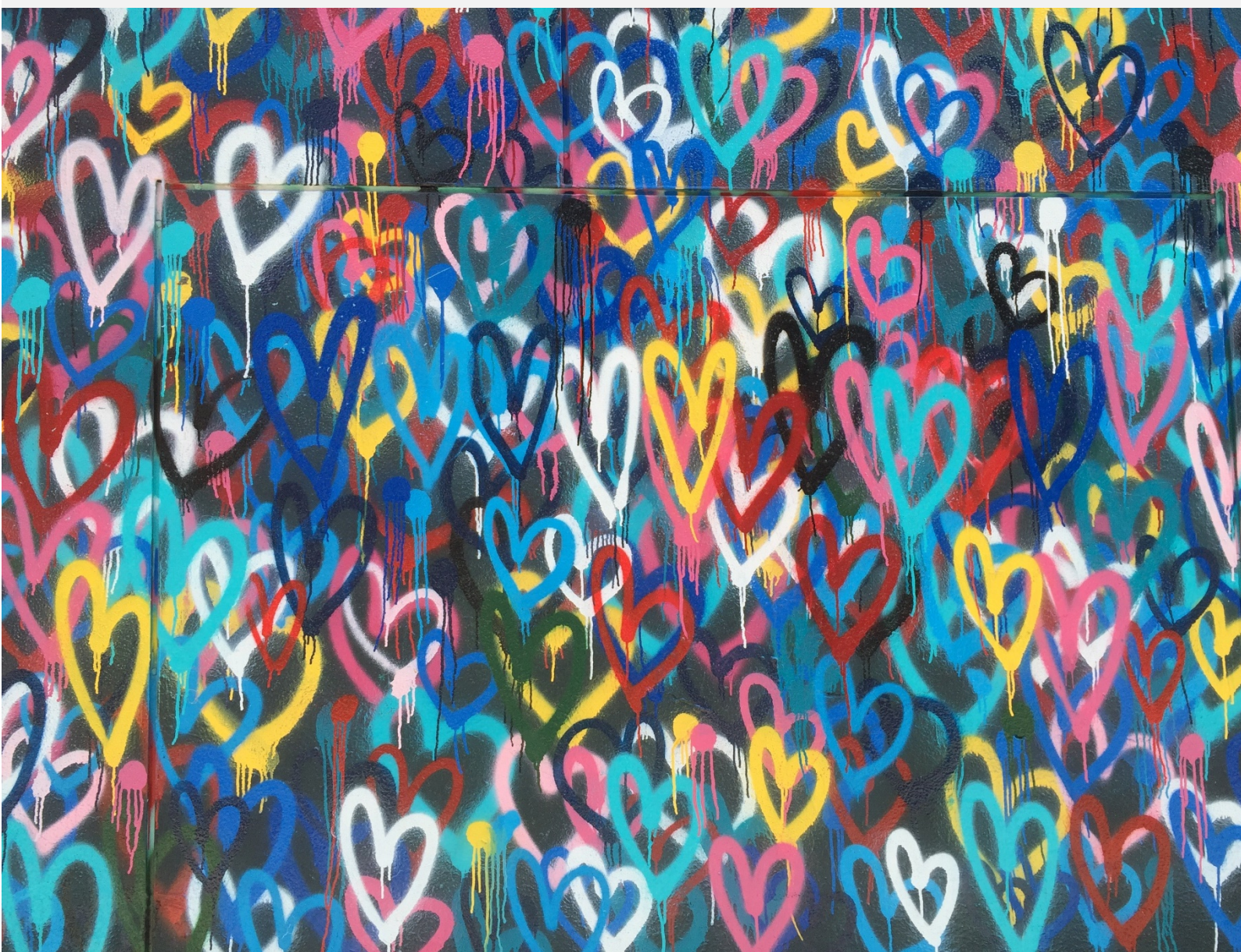




**Student
Wellbeing Hub**

'WHAT TO DO' STORIES TEACHER GUIDE

**Using 'What to do' stories in respectful relationships
education for students with specific needs**





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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to support teachers of respectful relationships education in Years 7–12 to understand the process of co-developing and implementing ‘What to do’ stories for students who experience challenges with appropriate social behaviour and communication.

This guide will assist teachers to engage students from diverse backgrounds, including those with limited literacy and with a range of identified learning needs, to understand the consequences of their actions specific to respectful relationships contexts.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed to help secondary classroom teachers, wellbeing coordinators and support staff to engage students with specific needs, including students with limited literacy and those from diverse backgrounds, understand the consequences of choices and actions in establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

What are ‘What to do’ stories?

A ‘What to do’ story is a learning tool for explaining social situations, and the socially appropriate behaviour and responses expected in these situations, to children and young people with specific learning needs and intellectual disability.

‘What to do’ stories are sometimes called ‘social scripts’ or ‘social narratives’ and enable key relational, behavioural or social skills to be explained to individual students who may struggle with understanding these. ‘What to do’ stories support/assist children and young people to develop the skills needed for successful social interaction.

These stories can be used with children or young people who experience challenges when they are faced with choosing the appropriate behavioural responses in specific social situations, and with understanding the consequences of their behaviour.

Although this type of story method was originally developed for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, it can be a useful tool for teaching children of any age who experience challenges with appropriate social behaviour and communication. You can read more about Carol Gray’s Social Stories™ or watch sample videos from the list of references at the end of this guide.

Why use 'What to do' stories in respectful relationships education?

What to do stories act as a guide for students and allow for skills or concepts, often subtle, nuanced or complex in respectful relationships education, to be understood, explored in a safe way, and referred to regularly.

Using What to do stories with students is a communication strategy that builds their understanding of social situations and the kinds of behaviours that are expected in specific contexts. The stories help students understand not only what their own behaviour should be in a particular situation but enable them to also understand how others might behave or react in the same situation. Having opportunities to learn how to behave and how to respond to others in social situations builds students' confidence and social acceptance. The stories are presented in simple, sequenced steps that act as a scaffold for the students.

The focus for this guide will be on teaching students with specific needs to understand the consequences of actions in respectful relationships situations. Examples of What to do stories will explore the following themes from the respectful relationships education curriculum:

- Protective behaviours
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Developing positive relationships, expressing feelings and showing empathy.

Creating 'What to do' stories

Using co-developed 'What to do' stories to teach relationship concepts and skills

Before you start

- Remember that 'What to do' stories are best co-created, with input from the teacher and the student.
- 'What to do' stories need to be tailored to the specific needs of individual students.
- You can develop generic 'What to do' stories to use multiple times; however, these will need to be amended or adapted to suit each individual student and their specific needs.
- Seek information, advice and relevant data about the student from a variety of sources including school enrolment data and support services to help you tailor the story to their needs and learning style.
- Look for examples of adapted or amended resources for students with specific needs in respectful relationships education materials developed by states and territories to guide your approach



- There are different formats for What to do stories. This guide provides three examples of these formats.

Steps for writing a ‘What to do’ story

Step 1

Begin with your goal or aim

What do you want the student to understand? It often begins with a problem such as an incident you have observed where a student’s behaviour was inappropriate, or an issue that arises from a student’s inability to understand the consequences of their actions.

Step 2

Clearly state the skill, concept and behaviours you want the student to learn

Step 3

Select a specific situation

This might be derived from a classroom interaction in the respectful relationships class where there has been a misunderstanding about appropriate behaviour. If you know the student and their specific needs well, you may also want to provide an opportunity to learn, and be able to practise **in advance** the appropriate behaviour around a topic, skill or concept that you will be teaching in the program in the future. This can help reduce anxiety for students and build their confidence and sense of emotional and social safety by being prepared for this situation.

Step 4

Develop your story

Keep these tips in mind when co-creating your story:

- Use a positive tone, simple language and short sentence structure so that students can process one fact, idea or narrative element at a time.
- Like all stories, cover the basic questions ‘who, what, when, where and why’.
- Use a mix of sentence types including descriptive, instructional and questioning. The student can then learn to build a picture of the social situation, have opportunities to explore their own and others’ thoughts and feelings. This will help them understand when decision points arise and the possible consequences of the choices they might make at these points.
- End the story in a positive way as a reminder and reinforcement of the appropriate behavioural choices the student has learnt for the specific social situation in the story.



'What to do' story examples

Below are examples of three 'What to do' story types. You could explore other formats or combine elements of these story types. The type of story will depend on the specific needs, interests and abilities of the student you are working with.

1. Decision point narrative

Theme: Healthy and unhealthy relationships

Topic: Personal safety

Concept/Skill: Understanding safe and unsafe situations

Understanding the elements of a healthy relationship

Recognising the warning signs/cues of disrespectful or unhealthy relationships

Scenario

This year I am in Year 7. I have made a new friend and her name is Kim. We have fun together at recess and we like to play on the computer. We hold hands and talk about lots of things. When we play she likes to be in charge and always decides what to do. Sometimes I want to choose what we play but she gets angry and calls me names like 'stupid boy' and sometimes she cries. When she does this. I [can]:

- a. Run away
- b. Tell her I don't like her calling me names and crying
- c. Say that I want to be her friend but that good friends take turns and care about each other

Decision point: healthy, respectful friendship; ok/not ok; how to recognise and respond to an unhealthy, exploitative or abusive relationship

Suggested guiding questions

These are generic questions for exploring with a student what to do. Questions need to be tailored to suit the situation and take into consideration the needs and abilities of the student.



- How does this [action/behaviour] make you feel?
- What sort of feeling is this? [negative or positive]
- What choices can you make in this situation?
- What do you need to think about when making your decision?

Outcome

At lunchtime we play my choice Minecraft on Mondays, and her game on Wednesdays. The rest of the week we go to dance class together.

2. Narrative and visual cards

Students read the given scenarios, then select the appropriate matching visuals or emotion card words.

Theme: Developing empathy and expressing feelings

Topic: Understanding feelings and emotions in relationships

Concept/Skill: Expressing emotions appropriate to the situation

Scenarios

Year 9 student

- You fail a test that you studied really hard for
- Your family gets a new kitten
- Your best friend is moving interstate
- You get dumped by text message
- Your grandfather is very sick and has to go to hospital

Decision point: How do I react in different social situations? What happens when I react inappropriately?

Suggested guiding questions

These are generic questions for exploring with a student what to do. Questions need to be tailored to suit the situation and take into consideration the needs and abilities of the student.

- How do you feel about [action/situation/behaviour etc]?
- What sort of feeling is this? [negative or positive]
- Why might you react this way?



- What choices can you make in this situation for staying in control of your emotions?

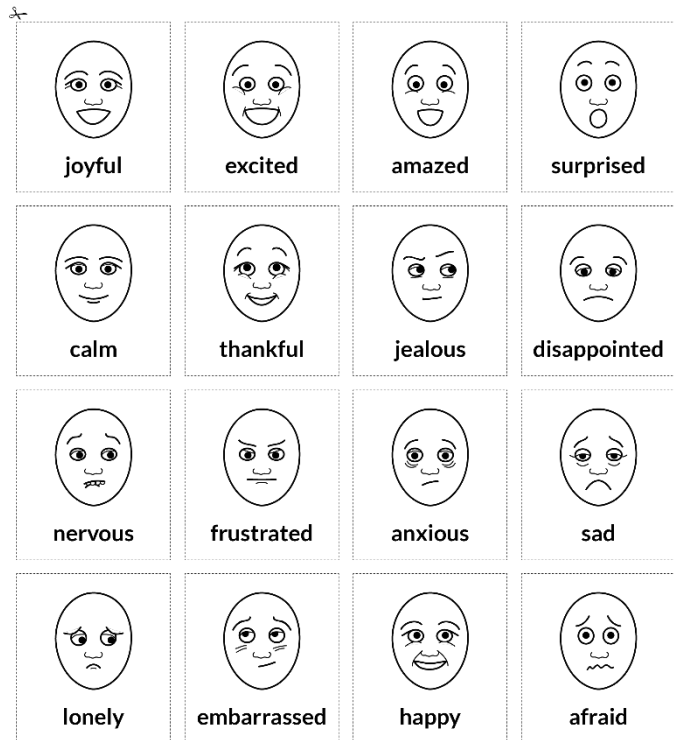
Task 1

For each of the scenarios match the emotions you feel to a visual. A range of cutout cards with faces and descriptions of emotions been provided at the end of this document. However, the teacher may choose to experiment with other types of similar media found on the internet or by using hand drawings.

The teacher could then work with the student. Ask the student to review the emotions they chose for the situations and consider if they were:

- equally the same for all scenarios
- appropriate to the situation.

How they could have reacted differently in each situation?



Now that you've explored emotions and their consequences, ask them to choose one of these situations and write a story.

Task 2

Prepare a new set of one-off scenarios involving two people interacting in different relationships. The task is for the student to match the emotion to how they would feel and how they think the **other person** would react/respond in these situations. The cutout cards provided may be used for this task or the teacher could explore other using types of media.

Now that the student has explored emotions and their consequences, ask them choose one of these scenarios below and write a story.

Scenarios

- Your parents ground you for coming home late
- You argue with your boyfriend and refuse to sit next to him in class
- Your teacher asks you to buddy a student new to the school
- You show a private message from your friend to another girl

3. Co-produced comic strip narrative

Students create appropriate dialogue to match a scenario. Depending on the age and needs of the student, comic strip storyboard templates can be used or the student can draw their own.

Theme: Protective behaviours

Topic: Help-seeking in relationships

Concept/Skill: Ways to seek help

Scenario

This year I am in Year 11. I've been dating my boyfriend for four months but lately he's been acting weird and telling me to do stuff I don't want to do. Sometimes I feel scared when he punches my arm. I get upset because he says if I want to be his girlfriend I should do what he says. He loses his temper easily and I don't know what he's going to do next. I don't want to be his girlfriend anymore. I can:

- Just ignore him if he phones or texts me
- If I see him in the street just ignore him
- Get ready to fight back when he tries to hit me
- Ask someone for help to work out how to end the relationship

Decision point: How to break up with someone in a safe and healthy way? Who can you go to for help?

Suggested guiding questions

These are generic questions for exploring with a student what to do. Questions need to be tailored to suit the situation and take into consideration the needs and abilities of the student.

- How do you feel about [action/situation/behaviour etc]?
- What sort of feeling is this? [negative or positive]
- What choices can you make in this situation?
- What do you need to think about when making your decision?



- Who could you ask for help or advice?
- What to do now that you have decided?

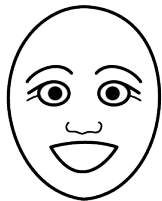
Outcome

I will ask someone I trust like my mum, dad, teacher or school counsellor to give me some advice about the best way to break up with him. I will practise with that person so that I feel confident and safe.

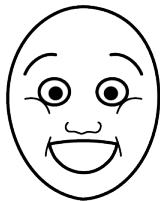




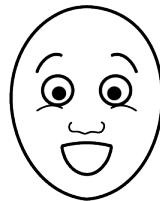
Teacher resource – Emotion cards



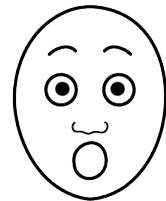
joyful



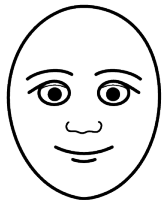
excited



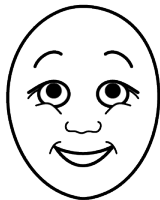
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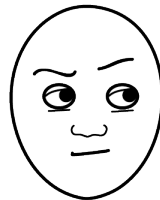
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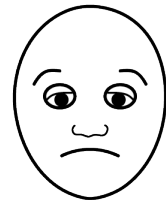
calm



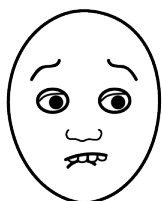
thankful



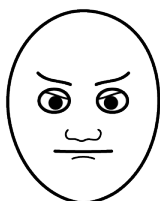
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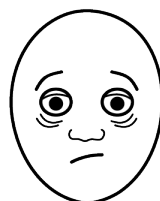
disappointed



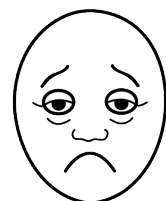
nervous



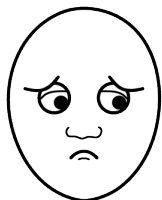
frustrated



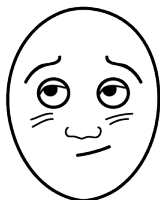
anxious



sad



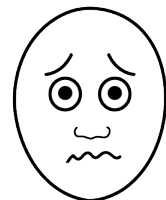
lonely



embarrassed



happy



afraid



Additional resources

[SECCA App](#)

A free resource to support access to relationships and sexuality education.

[Time and Narrative: An Investigation of Storytelling Abilities in Children with ASD \(2018\)](#)

This study analysed the relation between mental time travel and the ability to produce a storytelling focusing on global coherence, which is one of the most notable characteristics of narrative discourse.

[Social Narrative Interventions for students with autism \(2013\)](#)

This study evaluated the effects of a social narrative on teaching appropriate social skills to three students with autism.

[Social Stories™](#)

A guide to using Social Stories for parents by the Raising Children Network.

[Carol Gray Social Stories](#)

A social learning tool that supports the safe and meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals, and people with autism of all ages.

[Autism and communication: interview video \(Vimeo\)](#)

Autism and communication: interview with Carol Gray (overview of social stories).

[Writing social stories: Carol Gray practical workshop video](#)

A step-by-step training video for writing effective Social Stories.

[NCCD: Resources and tools](#)

Various resources and tools provided to help implement the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) model.



Respectful relationships education in Australian states and territories

	Resource
ACT	Respectful relationships education
NSW	Child protection and respectful relationships education
NT	NT Social and Emotional Learning
QLD	Respectful relationships education program
SA	Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum
TAS	Respectful relationships: Teaching and learning package
VIC	Respectful Relationships
WA	Respectful Relationships

