

Introduction to Teaching Self-Management 25

[Self-Management Skills Module](#)

The Importance of Self-Management

Managing feelings, thinking, and behavior is essential for emotional, social, and physical well-being. When we don't manage unpleasant feelings like frustration, anger, and disappointment, we may act in ways that are not healthy for us or our relationships. To successfully self-manage, we need to be aware of what we are feeling and thinking and why (self-awareness), make effective decisions, solve personal problems, set goals (responsible decision-making), take the perspective of and empathize with others (social awareness), and be able to communicate effectively and resolve misunderstandings and conflicts in relationships (relationship skills). For essential background information on self-management, see the Managing Feelings & Thinking Reading ([Self-Management Skills Module](#))

Self-Awareness & Self-Management

The process of being self-aware is a prerequisite for coping with and managing our feelings and thinking in healthy ways. However, becoming aware of our feelings and thoughts and why can be difficult. Our feelings and thinking can be vague, and a feeling like anger may be only an initial feeling that masks deeper feelings. Initial feelings may only be the "tip of the iceberg" and not reveal deeper feelings. When we are unaware of the depth of our feelings, we may take them out on others. We do not manage our feelings and thinking by pretending they don't exist or holding them inside. We manage them by accepting what we are feeling and thinking, why we feel and think that way, and, when necessary, changing our behavior, our situations, our environments, our relationships, and/or our thinking. If unpleasant feelings and unrealistic thinking are managed effectively, they will not linger.

Managing Our Feelings Requires That We Understand:

1. Feelings can tell us who we are and how we are in the present, and how we want to be in the future.
2. Being aware of what we feel and why we feel that way can prevent us from saying and doing things that make situations and relationships worse.
3. Initial feelings, such as anger, may be a secondary feeling that masks deeper feelings, such as frustration, disappointment, or hurt.
4. The intensity of our feelings, or the feelings themselves, can change when we are aware of and accept what we are feeling and why we feel that way.
5. We can change our feelings by changing ourselves, our behaviors, situations, environments, relationships, and our unrealistic thinking
6. Feelings sometimes change on their own, depending on our environment or on things that happen to us.
7. Unpleasant feelings may be experienced not because of actual events, situations, environments, or relationships in the present but because of our thinking and the interpretations and assumptions we make about ourselves, others, current and past events, situations, or things we imagine may happen in the future.
8. There are things about ourselves that we cannot change, and there may be things about our situations, environments, and/or relationships that we cannot immediately change.
9. We cannot change the past.
10. Unpleasant feelings may result from or be intensified by the lack of restful sleep, exercise, poor eating habits, and/or other unhealthy behaviors.
11. Being aware of what we are feeling and thinking, why we feel and think that way, and managing and coping with our feelings and thinking are skills that can be learned and mastered.
12. When we cannot prevent or change stressful situations, we may manage/cope with the negative effects of stress by using various stress-reduction techniques.

Managing and Coping With Our Feelings Requires That We Be Able To:

1. Identify and accept our feelings and why we feel that way.
2. Identify and accept deeper feelings that may be masked by initial feelings (see the Focusing process ([Self-Awareness Module](#)).
3. Identify how our thinking (assumptions, interpretations, beliefs, and prejudices) affects our feelings and behavior.
4. Change our thinking to change how we feel by doing a reality check ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).
5. Identify when we are using unhealthy ways of coping with anger, other unpleasant feelings, and personal & relationship problems.
6. Develop healthy ways of coping with anger, unpleasant feelings, and personal and relationship problems.
7. Make decisions and set and implement goals to change our feelings by altering our behavior, situation, environment, and/or our relationships.
8. Actively listen, effectively self-disclose our feelings with others (I statements), be assertive, and master interpersonal conflict resolution skills in order to work through misunderstandings, impasses, and conflicts in relationships. See the [Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#) and the [Conflict Resolution Skills Module](#).
9. Prevent stress and manage/cope with its negative impacts when we cannot prevent it.

Managing Unhealthy Thinking:

Unpleasant feelings may be caused not by actual events, situations, or relationships in the present, but by what we are thinking and the assumptions and interpretations we make about ourselves, our situations, our relationships, and our future. We can make inaccurate, unrealistic, incomplete, prejudicial, and/or irrational assumptions about:

1. Situations we imagine will happen in the future (when they may not) and that future events will have dire consequences for us (when they may not).
2. Our current situation or some event in the present that is causing unpleasant feelings in the present.
3. Negative self-labels and self-talk.
4. Other people, their behavior, and/or their intentions.

To manage, cope with, and overcome unpleasant feelings caused by inaccurate, unrealistic, incomplete, prejudicial, or irrational thinking, we can use a process called Reality Checking ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). The steps in the process include:

1. Be aware of what we are feeling and thinking, why we are feeling and thinking that way, how our thinking may be causing those feelings, and how our thinking and emotions affect our behavior.
2. Understand the interpretations and assumptions we are making.
3. Determine whether the interpretations, assumptions, beliefs, and prejudices we make about ourselves, others, and our situation are accurate, realistic, and/or rational, and identify the evidence that proves that they are accurate, realistic, and/or rational.
4. Let go of interpretations and assumptions that are inaccurate, unrealistic, prejudicial, and/or irrational.
5. Replace inaccurate, unrealistic, prejudicial, and/or irrational interpretations and assumptions with accurate, realistic, and rational ones.

Teaching Self-Management

Social-emotional skills can be learned if they are modeled and systematically taught by teachers. If the skills are taught, and if students are given multiple opportunities to practice the skills in the classroom, process their use of the skill, receive feedback, and use them in their lives outside the classroom, they will be able to master them, and these skills can become an integral part of their lives. Outlined below are the steps in teaching a skill.

Helping Students See the Need for the Skill

Providing students with a rationale for learning a new skill and relating it to their past, present, or future experiences can help them see a need to learn it.

Ensuring Students Understand What the Skill Is

Skills need to be specific, observable, and describable.

Setting Up Repetitive Practice Sessions

Students need a chance to 'try on' the new skill and see how it fits. We can't just ask our students to talk about a new skill. Like a coach and music teacher, we need to give them a chance to practice it. This means having students practice the skill repeatedly. Most skill-development learning experiences provide students with the opportunity to role-play those skills in class.

Ensuring That Students Process Their Use of the Skills and Receive Feedback Whenever Possible

Practicing is not enough. Students must be given time to reflect on and process their use of the skills to determine what they did well and what they need to do better the next time they use it. Whenever possible, students should be given feedback on the quality of their use of the skill. Many skill-development learning experiences use self-evaluation and student observers/coaches.

Apply the Skills in Real-Life Situations

It is not enough to have students role-play the skills only in class. At some point, students need to start using the skills in real-life situations. They must be given opportunities to apply skills in real-life outside of class. Using skills in real-life situations, processing the results, and modifying their responses are necessary and must be continuous. After completing many learning experiences, students can set a goal to apply a skill and change their behavior outside of school. Behavior change projects and assessments can be very simple or very complex. The simplest behavior change project involves using the [My Goals Log](#) and the [My Goals Log LE](#) ([SES Projects Module](#)), in which students develop a goal and evaluate their progress at the midpoint and again at the end of the project.

More complex projects involve students developing and implementing a plan to change their behavior, monitoring their progress over time using self-monitoring charts, and self-assessing their effort, progress, and/or the extent to which they completed the project. See the [Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module](#) module for the two self-management projects.

For a full explanation of teaching skills, see the [How To Teach SES](#) in the [How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#).

Self-Management Learning Experiences, Readings, & Projects

[Self-Management Skills Module](#)

Managing Feelings

Managing Feelings & Thinking Reading ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This reading outlines essential background information on self-management, including techniques to manage/cope with anger and other unpleasant feelings, as well as a discussion of unhealthy coping mechanisms to avoid.

Awareness of Feelings & Thinking Skill Card ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This skill card provides students with a two-page summary of questions to ask when trying to determine what one is feeling and thinking (interpretations and assumptions). It outlines basic and more advanced questions to help one determine what is bothering them, as well as questions to help manage one's feelings and thinking.

Self-Awareness & Management of Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This learning experience is a follow-up learning experience after students have completed the [Self-Awareness of Feelings Learning Experience](#) ([Self-Awareness Module](#)). This learning experience asks the same questions as the [Self-Awareness of Feelings LE](#) ([Self-Awareness Module](#)) and also adds questions about how they managed their unpleasant feelings and what, if anything, they could have done to manage them more effectively.

- **Feelings & Managing My Feelings Log 2024** ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).
Students use this log to track their feelings, why they feel this way, how they manage their unpleasant feelings, and what they could have done to manage them more effectively.

Managing Feelings by Changing My Behavior Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This learning experience builds on the Self-Awareness & Management of Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)) to help students focus on the specific activities, environments, relationships, and other situations that generate pleasant and unpleasant feelings. It also allows them to identify what they need to do to change, the barriers that keep them from changing, and how to overcome them. Students use the Building More Pleasant Feelings In My Life Log ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)) to identify the activities, environments, and relationships that cause pleasant feelings and the Reducing Unpleasant Feelings Log to identify the specific activities, environments, and relationships that cause unpleasant feelings. (see below).

- **Building More Pleasant Feelings Log** ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). Students use this log to keep track of the activities, environments, relationships, and other situations that generate pleasant feelings and identify what they can do to increase them. It also asks them to identify the barriers that keep them from meeting their goals and how they can overcome them.
- **Reducing Unpleasant Feelings Log**([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). Students use this log to track activities, environments, relationships, and other situations that generate unpleasant feelings, and to identify what they can do to reduce or eliminate them. It also asks them to identify the barriers that keep them from reducing or eliminating them, and what they can do to overcome them.

My Styles of Expressing Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

The purpose of this learning experience is for students to become aware of how they express their feelings, their impact on them, and their relationships, and what changes they wish to make in how they express their feelings.

Managing Anger

Managing Anger Poorly Cases Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

The purpose of this learning experience is for students to understand how managing and coping with anger and other unpleasant feelings in ineffective ways can worsen situations and relationships. Students will examine several hypothetical cases and explore ways to manage and cope with anger and other unpleasant feelings more effectively.

- **Managing Anger Poorly Case Chart** ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). This chart is used with the Managing Anger Poorly Cases Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

Managing My Anger Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

The purpose of this learning experience is for students to understand how managing their anger and other unpleasant feelings in ineffective ways has affected them in the past, and to explore ways they can manage and cope with these feelings more effectively in the future. This learning experience can be done as a stand-alone learning experience. It may be more effective as a follow-up learning experience to the Managing Anger Poorly Cases Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)).

- **Managing My Anger Log** ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). Students use this log to track their unpleasant feelings, the reasons for these feelings, how they manage their anger, and what they could have done to manage it more effectively. It is used in conjunction with the Managing My Anger Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

Coping

How Do I Cope Learning Experience? ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

The purpose of this learning experience is to raise awareness of healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with feelings and personal problems, and to help students recognize the coping mechanisms they currently use. As a follow-up activity, students can set a goal to eliminate an unhealthy coping strategy and/or begin practicing healthier coping strategies for feelings or personal problems.

Managing Feeling By Changing Unhealthy Thinking

Managing Unrealistic Thinking Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This learning experience aims to facilitate the awareness of how unrealistic and inaccurate thinking about ourselves and our possibilities affects how we feel about ourselves and how it negatively affects our behavior and relationships. It examines nine specific examples of unrealistic and inaccurate thinking and the skills to overcome them. The My Unrealistic Thinking Log can be used as a follow-up learning experience to have students record their unrealistic and inaccurate ways of thinking and identify a more realistic and accurate statement.

- **My Unrealistic Thinking Log**. This log has students record their unrealistic and inaccurate ways of thinking and identify a more realistic and accurate statement.

Reality Checking: Changing Unrealistic Thinking Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

Reality Checking is a more advanced process to facilitate the awareness of how our unrealistic thinking affects how we feel (and thus how we behave) and how unpleasant feelings may be caused not because of actual events, situations, or relationships in the present but because of what we are thinking and the assumptions and interpretations we make.

Reality Checking Skill Card ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This skill card outlines the steps in doing a reality check about the interpretations and assumptions we make about ourselves and our self-talk, about other people's behavior and intentions, about things that are happening to us in the present, and about things that may occur in the future (when they may not) and that future events will have bad consequences for us (when they may not).

Jealousy Learning Experience: Combining the Focusing & Reality Checking Processes ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

This learning experience illustrates the skills of Focusing and Reality Checking to show how we can change our feelings by becoming aware of the depth of our feelings beyond our initial feelings, and by managing our thinking. This example is best used after students understand the focusing and reality-checking skills. See the **Reality Checking Learning Experience** ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)) and the **Focusing Learning Experience** [Self-Awareness Module](#).

Self-Management Projects

Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module

My Goals Learning Experience ([SES Projects Module](#)).

Students can keep a My Goals Log to develop and track goals following most learning experiences. It does not require as much time or assessments as the SES Skills BC Projects.

- **My Goals Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). Students use this log to write their goals, to assess how they are doing at a midpoint and what, if anything, they need to do to be more successful, and then to evaluate their success at the end of the project. The log tracks all goals they develop throughout the year.

Managing My Feelings By Changing My Behavior Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project aims to facilitate the development of competency in managing feelings by changing one's behavior. This project is best used as a follow-up learning experience after students have completed the Managing My Feelings By Changing My Behavior Learning Experience ([Self-Awareness Module](#)).

My Styles of Expressing Feelings Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project is a follow-up learning experience for students who have completed the My Styles of Expressing Feelings Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). It provides students with the opportunity to change how they express their feelings in real-life situations.

- **The My Styles of Expressing Feelings Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)) is used to track their progress.

Managing My Anger Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project is a follow-up learning experience for students who have completed the Managing My Anger Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). This project aims to facilitate more effective, healthier ways of dealing with anger and to allow students to practice these skills in real-life situations.

- **Managing My Anger Project Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). Students use this log to track their unpleasant feelings, why they feel this way, how they manage their anger, and what they could have done to manage it more effectively. It is used in conjunction with the Managing My Anger Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

Coping in Healthier Ways Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project aims to facilitate the development of the competency to effectively cope with and manage feelings in real-life situations. This project is best used as a follow-up learning experience after students have completed the “How Do I Cope Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)).

- **Healthy Ways of Coping/Managing Feelings Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). This log has students identify activities, environments, relationships, and other situations that generate pleasant feelings.
- **Unhealthy Ways of Coping/Managing Feelings Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). This log has students identify activities, environments, relationships, and other situations that generate unpleasant feelings.

Managing My Unhealthy Assumptions Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project is a follow-up learning experience for students who have completed the Reality Checking Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). The purpose of this project is to provide students with additional experience in identifying their inaccurate, unrealistic, irrational, or prejudicial interpretations and assumptions that are causing unpleasant feelings and then providing the opportunity to replace their inaccurate, unrealistic, irrational, or prejudicial interpretations and assumptions with accurate, realistic, rational, or non-prejudicial ones.

- **My Unhealthy Assumptions Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). This log has students record their unhealthy assumptions that cause unpleasant feelings and then replace them with accurate, realistic, and rational ones.

Managing My Unrealistic Thinking Project ([SES Projects Module](#)).

This project is a follow-up learning experience for students who have completed the My Unhealthy Thinking Learning Experience ([Self-Management Skills Module](#)). The purpose of this learning experience is to provide students with additional experiences identifying unrealistic and inaccurate ways of thinking, the specific examples of when they used it, and their more realistic and accurate statements to counteract their unrealistic and erroneous thinking.

- **My Unrealistic Thinking Log** ([SES Projects Module](#)). This log has students record their unrealistic and inaccurate ways of thinking and identify a more realistic and accurate statement.