



SenseAbility delivery toolkit

Thank you for choosing SenseAbility!

The program is a suite of modules designed to enhance and maintain emotional and psychological resilience in young secondary school aged Australians.

Young people who possess sound social and emotional skills are better able to cope with the stressors of daily life. They also tend to have better relationships with teachers, parents, and peers, and perform better academically.

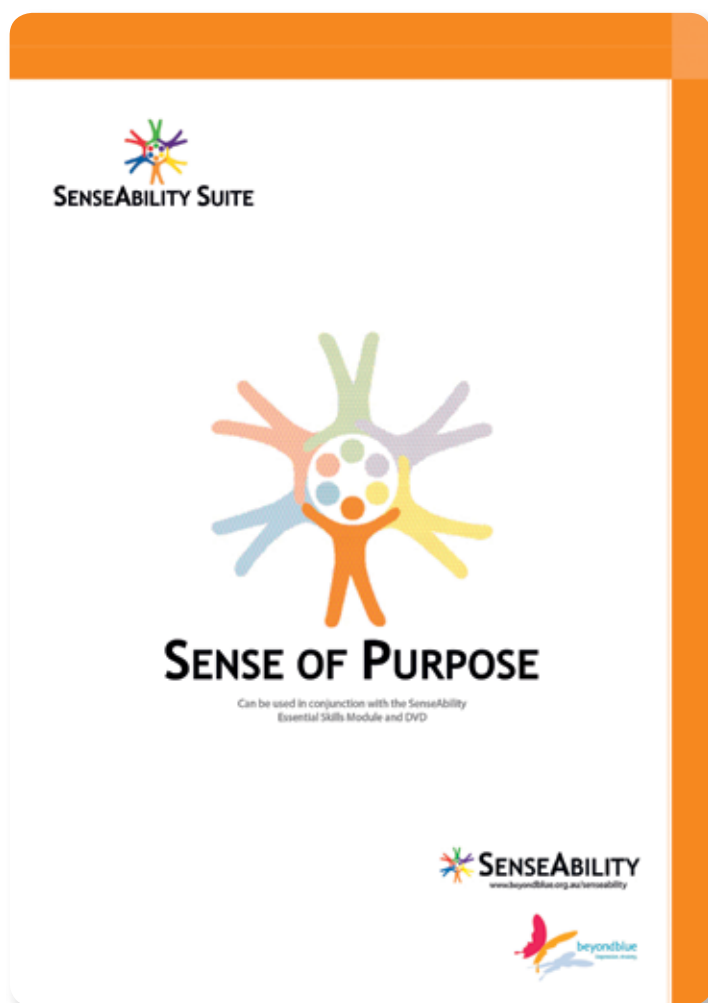
Very importantly, young people with these skills are less likely to experience significant mental health issues in the future.



What is SenseAbility?

SenseAbility is a comprehensive follow-on from *beyondblue's* Schools Research Initiative Classroom Program for years 8, 9 and 10. SenseAbility can be used by itself, or in conjunction with the existing Classroom Program.

SenseAbility has seven modules, six cover life senses and one covers essential life skills.



Each module is totally flexible – a short version can be delivered in as little as three 45 minute sessions, or you might choose to explore a module in depth over a whole term.

The modules are as follows:

1. Essential life skills– Covers the life skills which help young people to deal with life's changes and challenges and interact more effectively with others.
2. Self-worth – This module covers knowledge and belief in strengths, qualities, and abilities, and an acceptance of inherent value and individuality. Self-worth is particularly important during the transitional phases in a young person's life.
3. Control – This is about a young person's belief that they have the skills and ability to cope with life's challenges and can manage their emotions. Includes a realistic recognition of what is within and what is outside a person's control and how to respond to challenging events.
4. Belonging – Discusses the feeling of being valued, needed, accepted and meaningfully connected to a social network. Feeling 'connected' to friends, family, school and community provides a sense of belonging, which is especially important when times are tough.
5. Purpose – Covers the concept of a sense of purpose or meaning and the motivation that drives a young person towards a satisfying future. Discusses developing a personal code of behaviour.
6. Future – Looks at feelings of hopefulness about the future. Involves positive expectations, realistic thinking, goal-setting and problem-solving.
7. Humour – Discusses the ability to see the lighter, funnier side of life, including their own foibles, and the importance of planning enjoyable events.

Each module is self-contained. You can deliver as many or as few modules as you think will benefit your students.

There is no hierarchy, although it is highly recommended that you look at the Essential skills module and complete some aspects of this module in advance of any Six-sense modules.

What is in each module?

The Essential skills module contains:

- Six skill-sets
 - Helpful thinking and self-talk
 - Emotion recognition and regulation
 - Life problem-solving
 - Communication (including listening and speaking, non-verbal communication, joining in conversations, assertion, perspective taking, and negotiation)
 - Planning and time management
 - Keeping well (including sleep and nutrition, exercise, stress-busting and relaxation techniques, focusing on strengths, and help seeking)
- DVD with easy-to-navigate clips
- Classroom activities with discussion points
- Resources that can be printed and photocopied to complement activities
- Engaging, easy-to-read hand-out sheets for students

The suite also contains a CD with the activities and resources from each module in Portable Document Format (PDF).

Each Six-sense module contains:

- Overview of the relevance to young people
- Delivery flowchart
- Three delivery choices
 - 3-session program
 - 5-session program
 - Fully flexible (teacher's choice of activities and discussion)
- Classroom activities with discussion points
- Resources that can be printed or photocopied to complement activities
- Real Life Applications (where students can apply what they've learned in settings outside the classroom) with discussion points
- Suggested texts (novels, plays, movies and tv shows)
- An easy to read hand-out for students
- Quick guide to help choose appropriate activities.

How do the modules work?

Each module has very straightforward aims:

- Introduces the Essential skill or Sense, and explain its importance in protecting wellbeing.
- Has students reflect upon their current strengths in the area of the Skill/Sense.
- Has students consider circumstances in their own lives where employing the Skill/Sense could be beneficial to their wellbeing.
- Engages students in classroom activities where they get to utilise and practise the Skill/Sense.
- Broadens understanding of the Skill/Sense by exploring its use by people in real life and by characters in literature, film and television.
- Encourages students to practice using the Skill/Sense in their lives outside the classroom.
- Encourages students to seek help if they find they are struggling with the Skill/Sense.



Who is SenseAbility for?

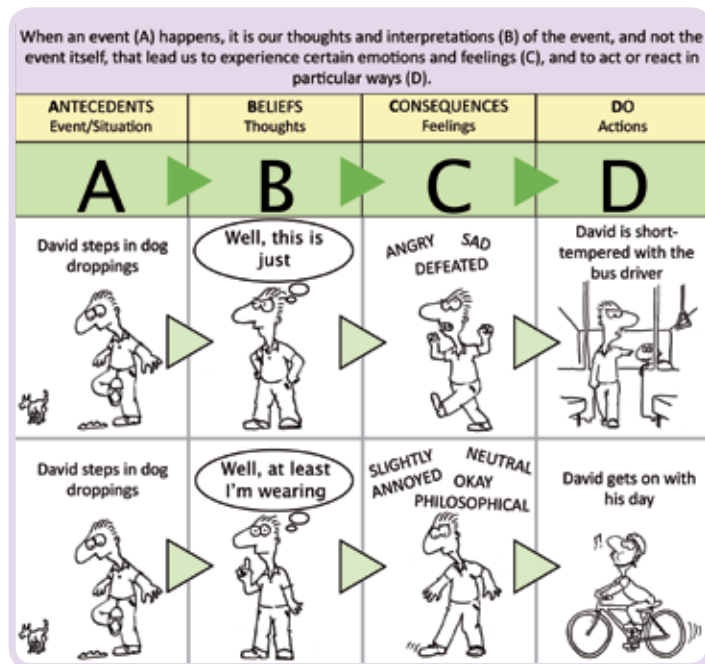
SenseAbility is designed for those working with young people in Australia aged 12 to 18. The modules have been created with classroom delivery in mind; however, the suite has strong potential to benefit young people in other structured environments.

SenseAbility will complement many existing programs, and the modules have been created in such a way that they can easily 'tap into' coursework that teachers are already delivering. SenseAbility is particularly well suited to Health and Physical Education, Pastoral Care programs, English, Drama and Social Studies.

Important concepts behind SenseAbility

SenseAbility is based on **cognitive-behavioural principles**. This evidence-based approach says that our thoughts play a central role in influencing our feelings and our consequent behaviour. In other words, when an event (A) happens to us, it is our interpretation of and thoughts (B) about the event – not the event itself – that leads us to feel certain emotions (C) and to act in particular ways (D).

Many of the activities and discussion cues included in SenseAbility relate to this A-B-C-D model:



Once your students have grasped the concept of the thought-feeling-action link, it is important to move on to the next step; encouraging your students to challenge unhelpful thoughts about events and replace them with more helpful thoughts.

SenseAbility also draws on positive psychology literature and takes a strength-based approach that removes the focus from 'deficits' and 'defects' to students' inherent qualities and skills. The program encourages students to recognise and capitalise on these skills.



Do I need training to deliver SenseAbility?

You do not need special training or professional development to deliver SenseAbility. The modules are written to be delivered effectively regardless of a teacher's level of experience or confidence.

If several teachers in a single school are planning to deliver SenseAbility, it would be very beneficial to discuss the approach as a teaching group, with a more experienced teacher offering guidance on effective delivery.

How do I deliver SenseAbility?

The Essential skills module covers six important skill-sets, and each of these is broken into two to four discrete units. There is no time frame governing how long you take to deliver a unit, but each requires at least one 45-minute class period.

Each of the Six-Sense Modules can be delivered in any of three ways:

- 3-session delivery: a suggested program where you deliver specified activities over three 45-minute sessions.
- 5-session delivery: a suggested program where you deliver specified activities over five 45-minute sessions.
- Fully flexible delivery: where teachers can deliver as much of the content as they think their students require, utilising any of the dozens of activities, applications and references provided in the suite.

That Changed My Life – Inspiring Stories

ACTION

Print sufficient to allow a minimum of one story per group. Cut safely along dotted lines with scissors or guillotine.

Ishmael Bean had a fairly happy, if poor, childhood in Sierra Leone when civil war began raging through the country. Aged 12, Ishmael and friends went to a neighbouring town to attend a talent contest. On their way home, they learned that their home village had been attacked, and returned to horrific scenes of violent death. Ishmael wandered for months before discovering his family had been burned to cinders. With no family, Ishmael was easily recruited as a child soldier.

Ishmael survived to be rescued by the UN, and was slowly rehabilitated from the drugs and violence that had been essential to his survival, and has since written a book about his life.

Dr Ian Gawler was an ambitious young veterinarian and athlete, but at age 24 he was diagnosed with bone cancer in his right leg. That leg was amputated at the hip. A year later, the cancer had spread to Ian's pelvis and chest. He was told there was nothing that could be done for him and, eventually, that he had only weeks to live.

But Ian was not ready to die. He began studying meditation and developed a healthy diet that he adhered to strictly. He continued to research the disease, eat well, think constructively and concentrate on healing himself.

Against all the odds, Ian's cancer retreated. He was eventually declared clear of cancer and went on to become a successful author and mentor to other cancer sufferers.

Grace Bowman was keen on horses since she was a little girl. By age 12 she'd become a champion horsewoman. But then she suffered an accident in 2002, and was left a paraplegic as a result of a severed spinal cord.

Grace had many excuses to give up. But was determined to regain her independence and get back in the saddle. After three months in hospital, Grace found the skills and strength to return to the sport she loves.

Grace describes herself as a normal teenager, and in many ways she is exactly that. But she is also a member of the Australian Paralympic Equestrian Squad, and competed in the 2008 Paralympics.

In 1995, Major Glenn Todhunter was enjoying his dream job as an ambitious Blackhawk pilot. Flying was Glenn's passion; he'd got his student's pilot licence at age 16, and after joining the army became a junior officer with flight responsibility. But everything changed dramatically when an aircraft he was training in crashed from a height of 70 m.

Glenn was on life support for several days and both of his legs required amputation below the knee. He was in hospital for months, and faced the prospect of never flying again. But he was determined to return to the air, and underwent the painful process of mastering his prosthetic limbs. He then reacquired his driver's licence and was flying just 18 months after the accident.

After being told he would never fly again, Glenn returned to the controls of a Blackhawk, and became the only bilateral amputee actively serving in the world, a first since Sir Douglas Bader in WWII.

SenseAbility Online Communications Portal

The SenseAbility Online Communications Portal aims to increase learning opportunities, enabling professional collaboration whereby teachers and experts can contribute to a shared body of professional knowledge, ideas and strategies for delivering and implementing the SenseAbility program.

These resources can be found at www.beyondblue.org.au/senseability

Features

- Videos profiling the SenseAbility program in action within two different school environments
- A webinar series featuring guest presenters sharing their experiences of delivering and implementing the SenseAbility program at their school



- A SenseAbility delivery and implementation toolkit
- Free SenseAbility professional e-learning program



- A shared learning space for teachers to post SenseAbility delivery ideas and strategies
- A suite of SenseAbility evaluation tools (forthcoming)



	Risk	Protective
Child	Sensitive or shy - non-compliance Clearly fearful or anxious - avoidance & withdrawal Representative & oppositional Low intelligence & poor language skills Poor or insecure attachment	Secure relationships & attachment One positive adult relationship Positive child attachments
Family	Harsh & over-controlling parenting styles Inconsistent supervision Lack of warmth & affection & involvement Parent health problems - mental illness & substance Violence & crime & racism Divorce, separation, single parent, unemployment	Warm, supportive locus Living with firm boundaries Consistent parenting style Strong sense of belonging Valid number of family Appropriate voice to development
School	Being bullied or bullying others Social exclusion or peer rejection No inclusion or difficult engagement	Respectful friendships Positive social groups
School	Inadequate behaviour management Unclear expectations Learning difficulties or academic failure Poor school attendance, inconsistent attendance	Supportive school environment Participative opportunities Sense of security through consistent and firm boundaries



e-learning

beyondblue also offers a free online SenseAbility e-learning program developed to assist teachers and others who work with young people in delivering SenseAbility and, in particular, the Essential Skills module. More information about the SenseAbility e-learning can be found at:

www.beyondblue.org.au/resources/senseability

This program will cover approximately three hours of professional learning and you will receive a certificate upon completion. You may choose to complete as many or as few of the SenseAbility e-learning Essential Skills topics, and go at your own pace.

The six topics covered are:

- Introduction
- Thinking well
- Thinking errors
- Emotional fitness
- Keeping well
- Application and delivery.

It is important to remember that no one knows your students like you do. You should feel free to adapt activities and discussions so they become as relevant as possible to the young people in your class. If you believe your students are already demonstrating solid understanding of certain concepts, feel free to skip activities rather than run the risk of labouring the point and losing students' interest.

Evaluation toolkit

The SenseAbility Evaluation Toolkit is an online professional learning package which offers a basic guide for schools and youth services to complete a 'do it yourself' evaluation (quantitative and qualitative) as well as some basic measurement tools. The Toolkit enables you to consider the impact of SenseAbility at your school or service.

The downloadable Toolkit includes:

- introduction to evaluation
- a formulated Excel spreadsheet for data entry and automatic results, plus a User Manual
- templates with editing functionality; letters for school Principals and Case Study templates.

Teaching suggestions

Core activity

Each module contains a 'core' activity (e.g. Give Me A Song: Share a Secret). This important activity highlights the thought-feeling-action link proposed in the A-B-C-D Model. These activities are basically identical and all aim to achieve the same result: to elicit from students many different reactions to a single stimulus event, and to help students understand that the ways that they think about an event directly affect how they consequently feel and what they do.

If several teachers in your school are delivering SenseAbility, it is recommended that you all convene before commencing classroom delivery and have a coordinating teacher deliver a 'practice round' of the Core Activity to the other teachers so that you all experience the situation as your students will, and so have a practical understanding of how this important activity works. The accompanying DVD has an example that clearly presents the A-B-C-D Model and can be used as a guide (see Helpful Thinking & Self Talk, Unit 1, Clip #1).

If you are delivering more than one Six-sense module, it is not necessary to cover this core activity with every module. Once students have grasped the concept underpinning the activity, feel free to either revisit the A-B-C-D Model concept in another fashion, or to move directly to other activities.

How many other activities?

Select and deliver as many activities as you think are necessary to allow your students to understand and have sufficient practice at applying aspects of the Sense or Skill. If you feel your students have grasped a point well, you may decide delivering more activities or persisting with discussion is 'overcooking' the information. You are the best judge. You may also wish to revisit some of the activities at a later stage as a form of revision or booster for knowledge or skills learned earlier.

Non-participation

Some students, with good reason, may not wish to participate in either activities or discussion. This non-participation should be seen as a valid response to the material; it does not necessarily mean the student is not gaining insight from your delivery or other students' participation. Allowing the student to observe may be the best course.

Sensitive issues

There may be some activities or discussion points with potential to cause distress to some vulnerable students. Vetting activities and references beforehand, and thorough debriefing when necessary, should decrease this risk.

You as role model

It is important to seek opportunities to employ your own strengths in the various Sense and Skill areas in the classroom. For instance, with Sense of Self-worth, be mindful that students are valued not necessarily for particular prowess, but because of their inherent individuality and uniqueness; with Sense of Purpose, be mindful that even small and seemingly humble goals and achievements can give a person's life meaning; with Sense of Humour, be careful not to take yourself too seriously, and to highlight the difference between laughing at someone and laughing with them. Be aware of your behaviour and criteria when selecting teams, or which individuals might answer questions or demonstrate understanding. Try to be conscious of the way you apply your own Six-senses and Essential skills when interacting with students and fellow staff members outside of class.

