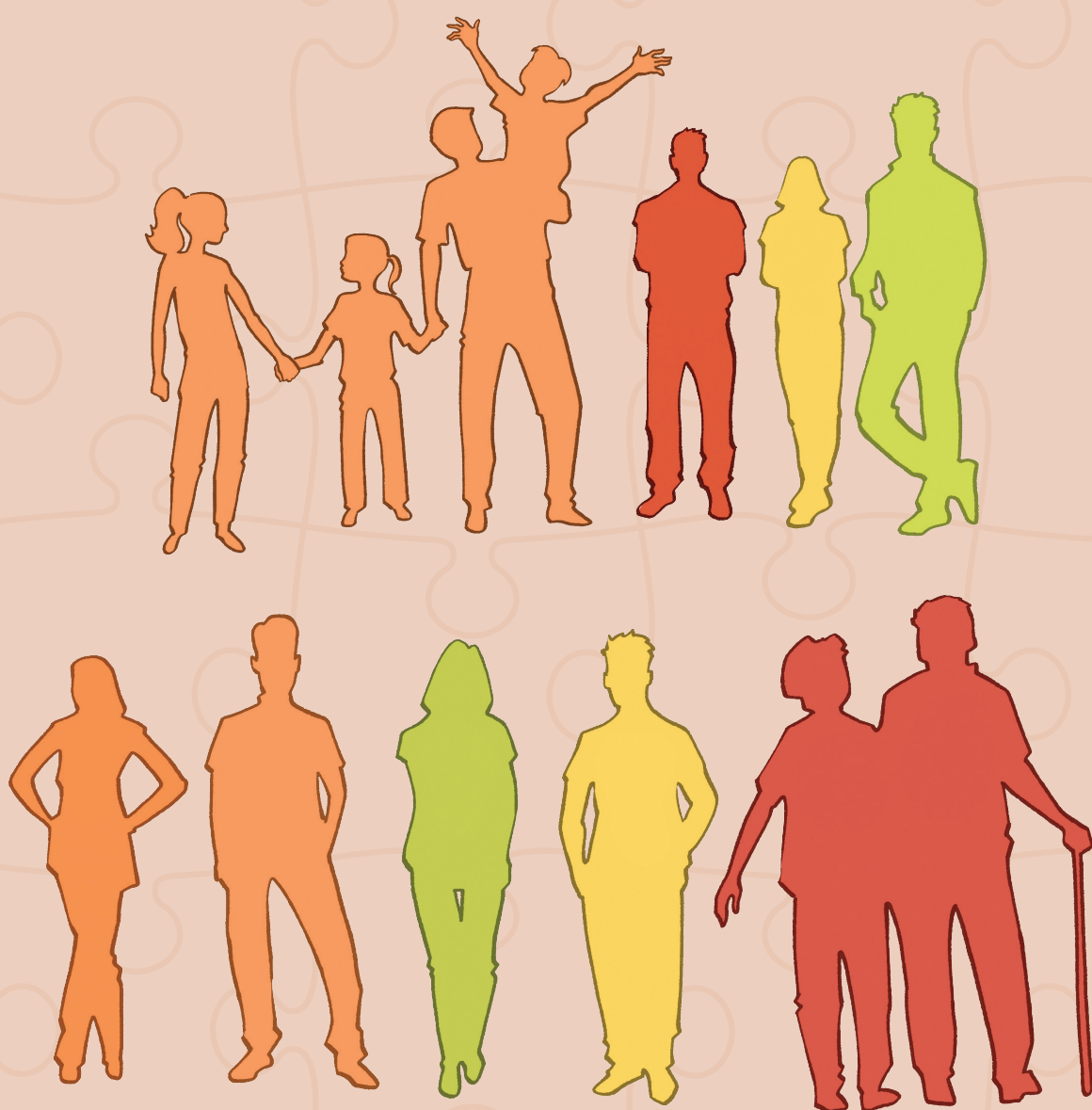


HOW TO DEAL WITH REJECTION



Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It focuses on *How to deal with rejection*, and follows the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework under the theme *Skills for health and well-being*. The lesson helps students learn that rejection - like someone saying “no” to a friendship or romantic interest - is a normal part of life. It supports them to name their feelings (like sadness, anger, or disappointment) and learn safe, respectful ways to respond. These skills help students build emotional resilience, understand social boundaries, and develop healthy relationships.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery through structured resources, scenario-based activities that incorporate peer modelling, visual supports, and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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How to deal with rejection



What does it mean?

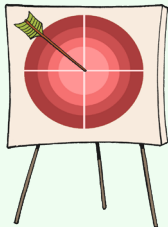
Dealing with rejection means understanding and accepting when someone does not feel the same way you do or does not want the same things. It's a normal part of life and happens to everyone at some point. It is important for students to be able to recognise and name the emotions that come with rejection, like sadness or disappointment, and have healthy coping mechanisms for how to deal with these feelings.



Why is it important?

Learning to deal with rejection is crucial for students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum because it enhances their emotional resilience, helping them recognise and manage their emotions in healthy ways. Research has noted that people on the autism spectrum can engage in stalking behaviours because of rejection, not understanding nonreciprocity feelings, having difficulties with social awareness and how to initiate relationships¹. Learning how to manage rejection promotes healthy relationships by teaching respect for others' boundaries and effective communication. It also ensures their safety and well-being by helping them understand social norms and seek support when needed.

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives



Learning outcomes

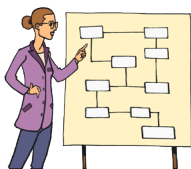
Students can list strategies for coping with rejection.

Students can demonstrate healthy coping strategies when faced with rejection.

Accessible learning outcome

I can say some way I could cope if someone didn't like me the way I like them.

I can show how I can cope when someone tells me they don't like me the way I like them.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: **How to deal with rejection**

Note for teachers:

Rejection is a common experience for all people, it is something that some of your students (if not all) have already experienced. It is important that students learn healthy ways to cope with rejection. Rejection should be normalised, share with students examples of times where you have experienced rejection. Explain how you have dealt with rejection in healthy ways.

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can list strategies for coping with rejection.	Visual supports Peer modelling	Video player Appendix 1: Zones of regulation Appendix 2: Cards with zones of regulation Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection
Students can demonstrate healthy coping strategies when faced with rejection.		Pens Glue Scissors Appendix 4: Who can I talk to Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection Appendix 6: Feelings of rejection

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask students about a time where they felt rejected or didn't get something they wanted. Ask students about the different feelings they have had because of feeling rejected.

Prompts for rejection:

- Have you tried out for a team and didn't make it?
- Have you asked someone out and they said "no"?
- Has there been a time that you weren't included with your friends?

Prompts for feelings:

- How did that make you feel?
- What zone were you in? ([Appendix 1: Zones of Regulation](#))
- Is it okay to have these feelings?

"Feeling like you have been rejected is a normal part of life. It happens to everyone. It is important that we accept how another person feels, we have to respect their boundaries. It is okay for us to feel sad or disappointed. We need to find healthy ways for us to cope with these feelings."



Activity 1: Rejection: It happens to everyone

As a class, watch [Rejection: It happens to everyone](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- Has everyone felt rejection before?
- Do we have to accept the other person's decision?
- If someone doesn't have the same feelings for you that you do for them, does that mean there is something wrong with you?
- What are some of the feelings we saw in the video? ([Appendix 1: Zones of Regulation](#))
- What were some of the ways the character in the video managed feeling rejected?



Activity 2: How does rejection make us feel?

The teacher distributes [Appendix 1: Zones of Regulation](#) to the class. The worksheet contains four fields in the colours of regulation zones (red, yellow, blue, and green).

The Zones of Regulation is a framework designed to help individuals understand and manage their emotions and behaviours ([Appendix 2: Cards with zones of regulation](#)). Emotions are categorising into four colour-coded zones: blue (sad or tired), green (calm and focused), yellow (frustrated or excited), and red (angry or out of control). *Zones of Regulation* can be used to teach emotional awareness and self-regulation by helping students identify their current emotional state and use strategies to move toward the “green zone”, where they are best able to learn and interact positively.

The teacher also distributes to the class the [Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection](#) with different feelings in visual supports and words. Inside the coloured boxes, students will write, draw and use visual supports about the emotions that they associate with rejection.

Prompts:

- What are some of the feelings a person could have when their feelings are not reciprocated (they do not feel the same way about you or they do not return your feelings)?
- How does rejection make you feel?
- What pictures show that feeling?



Activity 3: How to deal with rejection

As a class, watch [How to deal with rejection](#) video from Amaze.org on YouTube.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What were the four steps that can help us deal with rejection?
 1. Accept the other person's decision
 2. Acknowledge how it makes you feel
 3. Talk to someone you trust
 4. Do something that you enjoy that makes you feel good



Activity 4: Healthy coping strategies

The teacher distributes [Appendix 4: Who can I talk to](#) and [Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection](#) to the class.

Students will write, draw and use visual supports to create a ‘Healthy coping strategies’ table where they select different people for ‘Who can I talk to when I am sad/angry’ and ‘Activities I enjoy and make me feel good’.



Activity 5: Peer modelling - Dealing with rejection in a healthy way

The teacher will remind students of the four steps for dealing with rejection in a healthy way:

1. Accept the other person's decision
2. Acknowledge how it makes you feel
3. Talk to someone you trust
4. Do something that you enjoy that makes you feel good

The teacher distributes [Appendix 6: Feeling of rejection](#) to the class and reads the scenarios aloud to the class. The teacher reads a scenario aloud to the class, students can volunteer to come up and practice how to deal with rejection in a healthy way based on that scenario. Teachers will prompt students to refer to the worksheets they have created 'How does rejection make me feel', and 'Healthy coping strategies'.

Scenario 1: Not getting into a sports team	Scenario 2: Not being invited to a party	Scenario 3: Asking your crush to the movies
You love playing soccer and have been practicing with your friends at lunch every day. You tried out for the school soccer team. The coach announces the team members, your name is not called. You feel disappointed because you were looking forward to playing with your friends and being part of the team. Prompts: • How can you show you accept this situation? What could you do or say? • How does that make you feel? Let's look at your Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection worksheet. • Who could you talk to? Let's look at your Appendix 4: Who can I talk to worksheet. • What could you do to make yourself feel better? Let's look at your Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection worksheet.	You hear your classmates talking about a party that is happening over the weekend. You realise that you were not invited. You feel left out and sad because you wanted to join in on the fun and spend time with your friends. Prompts: • How can you show you accept this situation? What could you do or say? • How does that make you feel? Let's look at your Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection worksheet. • Who could you talk to? Let's look at your Appendix 4: Who can I talk to worksheet. • What could you do to make yourself feel better? Let's look at your Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection.	You gather up the courage to ask someone you have a crush on if they would like to go to the movies with you. They say "No, sorry. I have plans." You feel disappointed and a bit embarrassed because you were hoping to spend time with them. Prompts: • How can you show you accept this situation? What could you do or say? • How does that make you feel? Let's look at Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection worksheet. • Who could you talk to? Let's look at your Appendix 4: Who can I talk to. • What could you do to make yourself feel better? Let's look at your Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection.

Conclusion: Recap the key concepts discussed in the lesson, emphasising that rejection is a normal part of life. Ask students if they can list the four healthy coping strategies for dealing with rejection.



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- Were the learning outcomes clearly addressed and achieved? Did the students demonstrate an understanding of different strategies for coping with rejection?
- Were the materials and resources used relevant and accessible? Did they enhance the learning experience and facilitate student engagement?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills for students managing rejection?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

References

- 1 Mercer, J. E., & Allely, C. S. (2020). Autism spectrum disorders and stalking. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, 10(3), 201-218.

Appendix 1: Zones of regulation

[BACK](#)

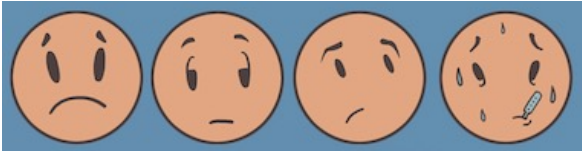
Red zone



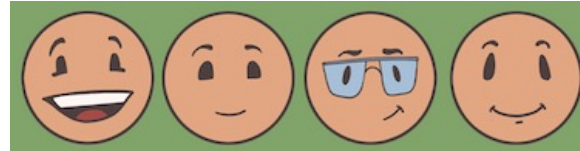
Yellow zone



Blue zone



Green zone



Appendix 2: Cards with zones of regulation

BACK

Blue zone



How might you feel?

Sad

Tired

Bored

Sick

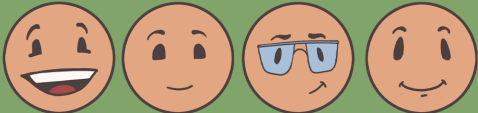
What might help you?

Stretch

Talk to so

Close my eyes

Green zone



How might you feel?

Happy

Calm

Ready to learn

Feeling ok

What might help you?

What can i do
to be happy, calm
and ready to
learn?

Yellow zone



How might you feel?

- Frustrated
- Excited
- Nervous
- Silly

What might help you?

- Deep breath
- Count to 20
- Squeeze something

Red zone



How might you feel?

- Angry
- Terrified
- Frustrated
- Out of control

What might help you?

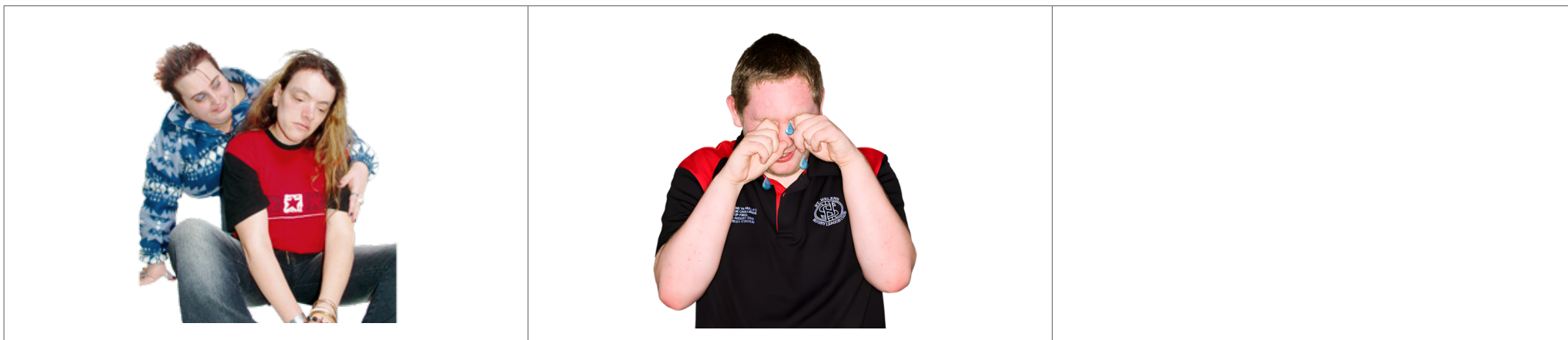
- Stop what I'm doing
- Take a break
- Ask for help
- Find safe place

Appendix 3: How a person might feel after rejection

[BACK](#)

I feel sad	I feel angry	I feel frustrated
I feel disappointed	I feel happy	I respect that someone can say “no”
I feel okay	I feel lonely	





Appendix 4: Who can I talk to

BACK

	
Family	Friend
	
Support person	Teacher

Appendix 5: Strategies for coping with rejection

[BACK](#)


I spend time with my family



I play with the cat



I spend time with friends



I go for a walk

I go for a walk with the dog



Appendix 6: Feelings of rejection

[BACK](#)

Scenario 1: Not getting into a sports team

You love playing soccer and have been practicing with your friends at lunch every day.

You tried out for the school soccer team.

The coach announces the team members, your name is not called.

You feel disappointed because you were looking forward to playing with your friends and being part of the team.

Scenario 2: Not being invited to a party

You hear your classmates talking about a party that is coming up on the weekend.

You realise that you were not invited.

You feel left out and sad because you wanted to join in on the fun and spend time with your friends.

Scenario 3: Asking your crush to the movies

You gather the courage to ask someone you have a crush on if they would like to go to the movies with you.

They say "No, sorry. I have plans."

You feel disappointed and a bit embarrassed because you were hoping to spend time with them.