

Resilience and Well-Being: KS3 and 4

Staffordshire County Council's Recovery Plan has been devised in the context of COVID-19. This plan incorporates a number of projects across SCC services including the Educational Psychology Service to support educational settings in the aftermath of emergency restrictions. The EPS has devised materials in a number of areas with the aim of providing educational settings with support that can be accessed immediately in the new academic year, without the need to refer into the service directly.

AIM: This leaflet aims to provide KS3 and 4 pupils with information to help build resilience and promote positive emotional mental wellbeing in the aftermath of COVID- 19.

This leaflet is divided into 4 sections:

Contents

1. Promoting resilience after COVID-19	2
2. Resilience and well-being	3
3. Strategies.....	4
1. Positive Psychology- PERMA Model.....	4
2. Challenging negative thought patterns.....	5
3. Using mindfulness techniques to promote positive emotional well-being	6
4. Additional techniques to promote emotional well-being.....	7
4. Toolkit.....	9

1. Promoting resilience after COVID-19

In 2020 the world has been affected by a global pandemic, COVID-19. Young Minds carried out one of the first surveys investigating the psychological impact of COVID-19 on young people. This survey was carried out between Friday 20th March (when schools were closed to pupils with exception of children of keyworkers/ vulnerable children) and Wednesday 25th March (when restrictions were tightened).

Young Minds surveyed 2,111 young people with pre-existing mental health needs. Although this is a snapshot study, it does give an insight to the psychological effects of coronavirus. Findings showed that: -

- 32% agreed their mental health had become much worse.
- 51% agreed their mental health had become a bit worse.
- 9% agreed it made no difference to their mental health.
- 6% agreed their mental health had become a bit better.
- 1% agreed their mental health had become much better.

Given these findings, researchers from Young Minds also asked young people what would be the most helpful during the pandemic to promote positive mental health. Apart from accessing face to face therapeutic support young people reported: -

- Online and digital support (information about online chat services).
- Guides on how to remain calm due to the uncertainty of everything.
- Information and tools on how to manage symptoms of anxiety (techniques, strategies).
- Information, advice, guidance and signposting to additional resources.

In conclusion, Young Minds suggested that young people need to know where to go for help during this time, with clear signposting and access to digital support.

It is also anticipated young people who may not have had pre-existing mental health difficulties prior to the pandemic may experience anxiety, trauma due to the five losses of routine, structure, opportunity, friendship and freedom (Carpenter, 2020). Since current research has indicated that young people would prefer information on tools, strategies and signposts to apps, websites (Young Minds) the following sections of this leaflet have been divided into these discrete sections

2. Resilience and well-being

Resilience can be defined in several ways, most referring to overcoming adversity (Grotberg, 1997) and being able to bounce back and adapt (Rae, 2019).

More recently, research exploring resilience has looked at ways it can be promoted over time. Thus, this suggests that research is a process rather than an internal trait. Therefore, resilience can change over time depending on the context or situation. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have, it involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Thus, resilience can be promoted and enhanced; it doesn't matter how resilient someone is now they can change their behaviour to become more resilient tomorrow.

Dr Michael Ungar has written extensively about resilience and refers to key ingredients that are essential in order for young people to grow. Each of these ingredients is a protective process that helps young people to cope with adversity. Ingredients such as structure, having lots of strong relationships, access to basic needs, physical and psychological safety, having a sense of control and a sense of belonging and encouraging powerful identities (i.e. having a safe space to express strengths) are all important in influencing young people's development and building resilience.

Resilience is not a special quality, trait or special power that only some children are born with. It is in fact considered to be a type of 'Ordinary Magic' (Masten, 2004) and some level of resilience is within reach for everyone.

3. Strategies

During this unusual time, you may feel that you need to make sense of what is going on around you. If you feel you need a safe space to talk about how you are feeling, seek out family, friends or a teacher. Alternatively, there are telephone numbers of organisations that you can call or text in the toolbox section of this leaflet. The following part of this leaflet provides strategies you can try to promote your emotional well-being.

1. Positive Psychology- PERMA Model

Seligman (2011) has suggested that our sense of well-being can be promoted by positive actions in five areas: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

Domain	Contributory Factors	Example
Positive Emotion	Spend time on positive experiences. Engage in an activity which gives you enjoyment.	Reading, writing, listening to music, taking the dog for a walk, watching a film, or taking part in exercise.
Engagement	What are your strengths? How can you apply your skills?	Playing an instrument, writing, drawing, organising a video call with friends, helping or listening to a friend/ neighbour.
Relationships	Who can you connect with today?	Connect with family or a close friend via video call or 'phone call.
Meaning	What are your goals? What are your values?	Can you volunteer? Can you help your friends or family? Can you share knowledge?

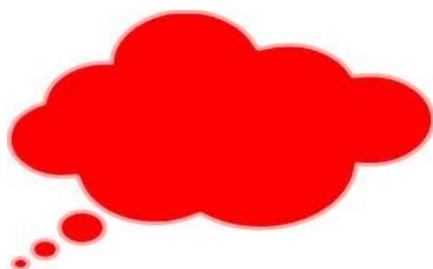
Accomplishment	What can you accomplish today?	No matter how small what have you achieved today? Make a to do list, tidy your room, complete some online learning.
----------------	--------------------------------	---

Next Step: can you apply the PERMA model to promote your emotional well-being?

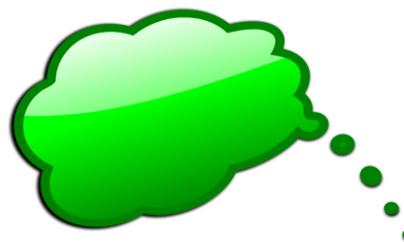
2. Challenging negative thought patterns

This strategy will help you challenge negative thought patterns. Our thoughts can impact on how we feel and behave in any situation. If we feel negatively about a situation this can affect how we think and feel in a situation. This can sometimes result in feelings of sadness, anxiety and stress. Therefore, if we challenge our negative thought patterns this can help us manage difficult situations and have a positive impact on our emotional well-being.

Firstly, it is helpful to think of thoughts as being red and unhelpful or green and helpful (Rae, 2020).



I can't do it!



I will get there in the end!

Rae (2020), suggests that we need to challenge red unhelpful thoughts by collecting evidence that challenges these negative thought patterns.

Thought	Support	Challenge	Others	Revised thought
What is the thought?	Evidence for this thought.	Evidence against this thought.	What would my friends/ family say?	What do you think now?

I am going to fail my maths GCSE.	I haven't concentrated in all classes. I am behind with my coursework.	I normally do okay in tests. My teacher has said I will have time to finish my coursework.	What would my Mum/ Dad or carer say? Mum would say I have plenty of time to revise.	I think I am likely to do okay in my GCSEs.
-----------------------------------	---	---	--	---

Next step: if you have an unhelpful red thought, challenge these thought patterns.

3. Using mindfulness techniques to promote positive emotional well-being

'Mindfulness helps train your attention to be more aware of what is actually happening, rather than worrying about what has happened or might happen' (Mindfulness in Schools Project). Therefore, mindfulness is paying attention to the here and now (Association for Mindfulness in Education).

Mindfulness helps us pay attention to our emotions, have time for reflection and helps create self-acceptance.

Mindful activities

Using the senses- focus on one sense at a time and name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can smell, 2 things you can touch and 1 thing you can taste.

Mindful walk- take a walk either alone or with a family, friend. As you walk, pause reflect and listen to the sounds around you. What can you hear e.g. birds chirping? Can you smell anything e.g. flowers?

Meditation- this is when you sit comfortably in a quiet place and focus on your breathing. There are examples of meditations on  YouTube^{GB} - Mindfulness exercises for kids: Still Quiet Place (Go Zen) also Mindful Minute: Quick Mindfulness Meditation Exercise for Kids by Go Zen.

Alternatively, there are mindful apps such as Calm and Headspace.

Being grateful- finding time to reflect on three things you are grateful every day can help to improve mental well-being. You could also make a happy jar; this is when you write down something you are grateful for everyday and put it in the jar. Every week open the jar and read your positive notes! Create a happy journal or gratitude diary.

Gratitude diaries have specifically been found to be beneficial for young people (*Diebel, Woodcock, Cooper & Brignell, 2016*). The diary can take any form, it could be a homemade book, traditional diary or blank notebook. Conversely, you might prefer to record electronically. For a free print-out version of a gratitude diary see: <https://heartandgratitude.com/lets-choose-to-be-grateful-free-gratitude-journal-for-kids/>

Next step: try one mindful activity this week.

4. Additional techniques to promote emotional well-being

Plan in some physical exercise. The main aim is to find a type of exercise which is enjoyable to you e.g. football, swimming, climbing, dancing, gymnastics, walking, running or cycling. Also consider indoor exercise, join in with Joe Wicks on his  YouTube channel.

Eat well- try to eat a balanced, healthy diet which include fruit and vegetables.

Keep hydrated- drink plenty of water and avoid lots of sugary drinks.

Make sure you get plenty of rest, have a bedtime routine. Try to avoid playing on electronic devices before bedtime as they can stimulate the brain rather than calming you down.

Find time to relax- watch a film, listen to music, take a bath.

Stay connected to friends and family- although due to COVID-19 we remain socially distant it is important to keep emotionally connected to people for positive mental health (Perry, 2020).

Grow something in the garden.

Be creative- draw, colour e.g. The Mindfulness Colouring Book

Volunteer- do a small act of kindness.

Make a self-regulating box- see COVID-19 www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk

Spend time with pets.

Try out a new mental health app.

Limit the time you watch the news and COVID-19 related programmes.

Learn something new- the open university has got lots of free courses

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-course/full-catalogue>

Write a list of things you are good at. Also ask a friend or family member to write down your strengths.

Join a yoga class.

Write or draw a journal.

Action: pick one strategy to try this week.

4. Toolkit

Source	Where to find information and help.
 <p>Apps</p>	<p>Mood Panda Youper (social anxiety)</p> <p>Mindshift Moodkit</p> <p>Calm Positive Penguins</p> <p>Headspace Mood Journal</p> <p>Sam Calm Harm</p>
 <p>Websites</p>	<p>www.safehandstinkingminds.co.uk</p> <p>https://youngminds.org.uk</p> <p>https://www.themix.org.uk</p> <p>https://www.annafreud.org</p> <p>https://www.place2be.org.uk</p> <p>www.mind.org.uk</p> <p>https://www.giveusashout.org</p>
	<p>The Mix- 0808 808 4994 (4-11pm)</p> <p>Childline- 0800 111 (24hr)</p> <p>Young Minds Messenger- text 85258 (24hr)</p> <p>Young Minds Helpline- 0808 802 5544 (weekdays-9:30am- 4pm)</p> <p>Text Shout- 85258 (24hr)</p> <p>Samaritans- 116 123 (24hr)</p> <p>Mind- 0300 123 3393 (weekdays 9am-5pm)</p> <p>Beat (beating eating disorders) 0808 801 0711</p>



Developed by:
Dr. Vanessa Willis
Dr. Mark Bowler
Suzi Cresswell
John Newton
Dr. Mary Mullin

Educational Psychologists
July 2020