



Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better

Skills for Recovery: Pupil resource



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Introduction

- These materials incorporate key ideas from the series of resources produced by Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA), 'Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better'. You can find these resources in full [here](#).
- These materials include some key psychological theories which can help people to cope with difficult events and contribute to improved wellbeing.
- This resource uses language and ideas consistent with the Living Life to the Full for Young People (LLTF) curricular lessons which many of the pupils in your school will be introduced to in PSE lessons. To reinforce the shared language and ideas, the LLTF posters should be prominently displayed around the school.

Who is this resource for?

- 'Skills for recovery' has been developed with secondary pupils in mind, however it may also be useful for children in the later stages of primary (P6 & P7).
- Pastoral/PSE teachers should use this resource to structure PSE lessons for the first 6 weeks of the new school session.

How to use this resource

- 'Skills for recovery' is available on the health and wellbeing blog. Schools could direct pupils and parents to this website to access the videos and information and/or share the information and tasks through 'show my homework' or similar platforms.
- It may be helpful to encourage young people to keep a reflective journal in their PSE jotters or online using this [Personal wellbeing Action Plan template](#) to reinforce what they have learned that week and what they want to try to do more of.
- The resource is laid out in 6 weekly themes, with 'week 1' starting at the return to school following the summer break.
- The themes for the weeks have been carefully considered to communicate what it is that we want adults and children to hear and feel from their school environment in the weeks following their transition back from lockdown. These themes have been developed on the basis of psychological theory and logical sequences of learning.
- Each theme includes:
 - What do young people need to know?
 - These messages should be the focus for PSE teaching and discussions
 - What can young people do?
 - Ideas about how the key messages for young people can be translated into actions
 - A regulating activity to start each PSE lesson ('Try this!')
 - A 5-10 minute video for each theme:
 - Explains some of the key learning points for that theme in a practical way.
 - This should be shown to all pupils through their PSE lessons
 - Infographics:
 - Visual reinforcement of the weekly theme which can be displayed in classrooms, staff rooms, offices.

Source materials

In addition to RNRA resources and LLTF, this resource has drawn upon a range of sources including:

- *Anna Freud Centre materials*
- *Beacon House materials*
- *Caring Compassionate Classroom Curricular resource (Education Scotland)*
- *Centre for Clinical Interventions (Australia)*
- *Dr Karen Treisman*
- *Dr Pooky Knightsmith*
- *Dr Tina Bryson & Dr Dan Siegel 'The Whole Brain Child'*
- *NHS Education Scotland*
- *Place2Be – we'll meet again*

Weekly plans

Week 1: Welcome Back, We've Missed You... *Reconnecting*

What do Young people need to know?

- You are welcome back; you have been missed and have been kept in mind.
- Friendships/relationships are an important part of school and will have been missed by other young people.
- Some young people will be anxious about coming out of lockdown and that is normal but there are things that you can do to help – we will talk about over the next 5 weeks.
- Some of you will have suffered bereavement during lockdown, maybe lost grandparents or others that you loved. We understand that you will be sad and might need help to deal with this.
- *(For staff: If you have completed the Season's for Growth Education Staff Seminar, consider using the Covid-19 Pupil Workshop materials this week. This can be split over 2 sessions)*

What can young people do?

- Participate in discussions about what worked for them in lockdown and how we help to create a sense of belonging back in the school building.
- Be open to discussing your feelings and respectful of others' feelings and contributions. We are all here to try and help each other.
- Keep things that are shared confidential to the group.
- Be open to the things suggested to help – give things a go. Keep trying even if they don't seem to immediately help. Our brains and bodies can take time to get used to different ways of doing things.

Try this!

- [Breathing with your diaphragm](#) (Breathpod, instagram)

Week 2: How are we coping with change? ...*Belonging*

What do Young people need to know?

- The good things and the difficult things we experience in our life help to shape who we are.
- It is normal to feel worried or anxious when activities and supportive relationships end during times of change and uncertainty. Everyone will have their good days and bad days.
- How we think affects how we feel and how we behave.
- We may experience feelings we have never felt before and these may be difficult to understand. This can be normal and that is okay.
- Positive relationships can help us.
- If we are more aware of each other's thoughts, feelings and experiences, we can be stronger together.
- *(For staff: If you have completed the Season's for Growth Education Staff Seminar, consider using the Covid-19 Pupil Workshop materials this week. This can be split over 2 sessions)*

What can young people do?

- Have conversations about:
 - What has been difficult for you.
 - What you have learned about your own ways of coping with challenge:
 - Try to make a note of what you learned
 - Think about how you could use these at home and in school when you need to.
 - You may find [this worksheet](#) taken from the Compassionate & Connected Classroom Resource helpful here.
 - What you feel hopeful about for the future. The message about hope for the future is important to all of us. We will revisit this in week 6.
- Make 'coping cards' by writing on a small piece of card that can be carried in your pocket or bag. What you write should remind you of a strategy that has helped you to cope with worries or stress before, or act as a positive mantra (words you repeat to help you concentrate on something in particular). For example:
 - 'There's always something that works'
 - 'I will feel better soon'
 - 'Breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth'

Try this!

[60 second meditation](#) (pixelthought)

Week 3: Doing things that make us feel better straight away...Regulating

What do Young people need to know?

- Adults understand it can be difficult being a teenager/adolescent
- Things will get better, seem a bit brighter and you are going to be okay. You might not think it just now but you will be able to change things and be okay.
- Understand that when you '[flip your lid](#)', regulating strategies can help you think straight again. By doing something different we can change how we feel.
- Regulating strategies can be used at any time, in any place.
- It's helpful to try regulating strategies to find what works best for you.
- ([The Compassionate & Connected Classroom Resource](#) may help teachers consider how to help young people understand these concepts – see Theme 5)

What can young people do?

- Try to notice how your body feels when you are anxious and what kind of activities help you to feel calmer. Try this version of the '[Incredible 5 Point Scale](#)' produced by Renfrewshire's Inclusive Communication Environments (RICE) team.
- Try short regulation breaks throughout the day (1-2 minutes can be enough!). E.g. breathing exercises, mindfulness, movement or checking in with a trusted person.
 - [Bubble breath](#) (Calm)
 - [Muscle tensing and releasing](#) (Dr Karen Treisman)
 - [What is Mindfulness?](#) (Smiling Mind)
 - [Mindfulness for High school students](#) (Smiling Mind)
 - ['The sushi train'](#) (Russ Harris)
- Make a self soothe/calm box filled with things which make you feel more relaxed. Young Minds have a 'how to' guide [here](#)
- This [self care strategies bank](#) can give you lots more ideas of things to try.

Try this!

- [If in doubt, breathe it out!](#) (Breathpod, Instagram)

Week 4: Connecting with our feelings ...*Relating*

What do Young people need to know?

- Understand it's ok to not be ok (watch this [video](#) from the Anna Freud Centre)
- Adults understand you might be stressed or anxious and struggling to understand and manage your emotions.
- We all react differently to different situations. Everyone experiences stress and sometimes it's difficult to think clearly when we are stressed.
- Fight, Flight and Freeze responses to stress are designed to help us survive, but the physical threat our brains and bodies are responding to is often imagined.
- Recognising stress and talking about it can help us cope.
- ([The Compassionate & Connected Classroom Resource](#)) may help teachers consider how to help young people understand these concepts – see Theme 4)
- Teenagers usually need about 9-10 hours sleep every night. If you don't get enough sleep, it can really affect how you feel and your ability to concentrate. The change to your usual routine during lockdown probably meant that you stayed up later at night and may be weren't as active as usual during the day. Perhaps you spent more time gaming or watching TV. All these things can affect how easy you find it to get to sleep and the quality of your sleep.

What can young people do?

- Ask a trusted adult/peer for help
- Try to find ways of expressing worries and get some 'distance' from these, e.g. writing things down/drawing/rapping/worry boxes/giving worries away. Dr Karen Treisman has shares some ideas in this [video](#) (some of the ideas are more relevant to younger children)
- Think about what you need to help yourself when you feel stressed:
 - Continue using [the Incredible 5 point scale](#), adding and adapting regulating strategies as needed
 - Dr Karen Triesman's '[take what you need](#)' graphic can be used as a way to further this discussion.
- Think about how what you do in the day is affecting how you sleep at night. Perhaps it would help to make a sleep plan? You can find more information about sleep at [Sleep Scotland: Teen Zone](#)

Try this!

- [Sleep meditation: Starry night](#) (Smiling mind)

Week 5: Supporting Ourselves and Others ...*Responding*

What do Young people need to know?

- Empathy is our ability to think about a situation from another point of view. This can help us to understand people's experiences and feelings better and help us to offer support.
- We can feel empathy and can offer compassion even when we don't get on with or even know the other person.
- Although we have all felt the impact of Covid-19, we will not all have experienced this in the same way.
 - *"We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar."* (Damien Barr, Scottish Author)
- Helping someone is important but rushing in when another person is upset and solving the person's problem might not be as helpful as letting the person know you are there for them to listen, and that you care.
- Sometimes you might not be able to contain your emotions – you might lose your temper or say or do things you regret
- Adults are there to help you understand and regulate your emotions
- There is a way back for them after this happens – every day is a new start

What can young people do?

- Know where to get support for your mental health: information should be clearly displayed in the school (including times that key staff are available for listening to worries, school counselling service, [living life to the full panic button](#) and signposting to organisations such as [Childline](#), [The Mix](#) and [Mind](#)).
- Be kind to yourself.
- Understand and use the [5 steps towards showing empathy](#) (extract from the Compassionate and Connected Classroom Resource)
- Use positive approaches to support your friends:
 - Try to be patient with them
 - Try not to make fun of them or get annoyed with things they do
 - Listen carefully to what they say (you can show this by giving them eye contact, responding with a nod or repeating back what they have said to make sure you understand)
 - Your friends may not be looking for you to solve their problems. Just listening and empathising with them can really help. Saying things like *"That sounds really hard, I'm sorry that you're feeling like this"* or *"I can hear that you feel like everything is going wrong just now. I'm here to listen if you need to talk"* will show your friend that you care about them.
- Have a look at this advice about ['how to help someone else'](#)
- Understand when you may need to seek adult advice about supporting a friend.

Try this!

- Try this exercise to ['soak in a positive moment'](#) (Dr Karen Treisman)

Week 6: Looking Forward with Signposts for Help...*Hoping*

What do Young people need to know?

- When times are hard, and maybe you feel that everything is going wrong, try saying this to yourself “*I won’t always feel like this*”. Even if you don’t believe it as you start saying it, just hearing that more helpful thought can change how you feel and what you do.
- One way to counteract the negativity bias is to become aware of the things we can be grateful for. But this can sound easier than it is. However, when we find things that we are grateful for, no matter how small, this can help to change our focus and promote wellbeing. Paying attention to what you are grateful for becomes easier the more you practice it.
- There are lots of people who care about you and who want to help you.
- Difficult times can lead to positive changes – like a rainbow after a storm. Through hardship we can learn a lot about ourselves, learn new skills and make new connections. How can we hold onto these things?

What can young people do?

- Think about your [‘Happy List’](#) – write down the things that you’ve enjoyed, thought were jobs well done or have helped you feel close to someone else.
- To remind yourself to pay attention to what you are grateful for, try this:
 - Find a rock or other small object that you like
 - Carry it around in your pocket or leave it on your desk where you will see it throughout the day
 - Whenever you see or touch it, pause to think about at least one thing you are grateful for (this could be as small as the sun shining outside!)
 - When you take it out of your pocket at the end of the day, take a minute to remember all the things that you were grateful for throughout the day.
 - When you put it in your pocket again in the morning, remember what you were grateful for yesterday.
- Think about how you stayed hopeful during lockdown:
 - Interview classmates and staff about how they stayed hopeful.
 - Interesting excerpts from the interviews could be written up in an article for the school magazine or posted on the website or displayed around the school
- [Music can quickly change how we feel](#) (video from Dr Pooky Knightsmith), help us relax and give us a new perspective on life. Try creating a ‘Hope playlist’ full of optimistic songs that make you feel good about the future. You could even try this as a whole class!
- Write a letter to your future self, telling yourself about the things you have learned, how you got through ups and downs and what skills and strengths you drew on, and how you will use them in the future.
- Plan how you will continue to practice some of the skills you have learned over the last 6 weeks. Who can support you to do this? (try using the [Personal wellbeing Action Plan template](#))

Try this!

- [‘I Am Hopeful’ guided meditation](#)

Changes

Changes



(Extract from 'The Compassionate and Connected Classroom Curricular Resource',
Personal Journals, p10)

Everyone experiences change, sometimes there are changes which are planned for and we have time to prepare. Other times there may be changes which are more unexpected and happen suddenly and without warning. We may also experience some changes which are difficult and some which are exciting, and we look forward to.

A type of change I have experienced is (choose from the list)

Sudden change Difficult change

Exciting change Small change

What helped me to manage this change was...

If I were to experience change like this again I would...

5 Steps toward Showing Empathy

Five Steps towards Showing Empathy

(Extract from 'The Compassionate and Connected Classroom Curricular Resource', Personal Journals, p14)

Step 1	Watch and listen How is the person acting? What is the person saying?	
Step 2	Remember Think of a time when you felt the same way.	
Step 3	Imagine How would you feel in this situation?	
Step 4	Ask Find out how the person is doing. Find out how the person is feeling.	
Step 5	Show you care Let the person know you care through your words and actions e.g. Can I help you? Are you ok? Do you want to talk about it?	