

## Resilience and Well-Being: KS2

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 KS2 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:

1. What is resilience?
2. Promoting resilience after COVID-19.
3. Strategies.
4. Toolkit: signposting to further resources.



## What is resilience?

**NB.** This section is designed for children to read on their own

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

Resilient people and children can:

- Keep going despite setbacks.
- Be flexible and adapt to change.
- Ask for help if they need it.

If you'd like to know more, read on to find out about how to become resilient.

## Promoting resilience after COVID-19.

You won't be alone in feeling confused or worried by the effects of the global pandemic. Young Minds carried out one of the first surveys investigating the impact of COVID-19 on young people.

Findings showed that: -

- Over half (51%) agreed that they were worried and anxious about the pandemic

So how would being resilient help? Research shows that resilient children and young people know that:

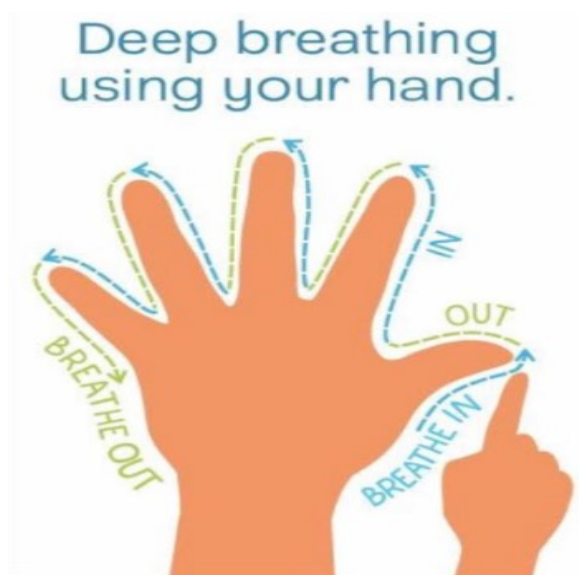
- That challenge, change and disappointment are a normal part of life and learning.
- Feeling pain is unavoidable, you will sometimes feel hurt, embarrassed, sad, foolish, ashamed etc and this is okay.
- You can't always control what happens (like the Covid-19 pandemic) but you can control how you respond to it and good things may even come out of it. Look out for the silver linings.

- The people we most admire most are those who stumble and fall but find a way to get back up again and keep going
- And best of all, YOU CAN LEARN TO BE RESILIENT by practising and trying some of the techniques below.

## Strategies

What can you do if you feel anxious or upset as things start to return to normal?  
Here's a few ideas:

- imagine your favourite place;
  - think of your favourite things;
  - list animals in alphabetical order - alligator, bear, cow, dog;
  - get a drink of cold water; and
  - remember words to a song you love.
- Try deep breathing. You can breathe tracing the outline of your hand with a finger. Breathe in as you trace up, out as you go down. Keep going until you've traced all five of your fingers. You could draw around your hand and make your own handprint picture, decorate it and keep it nearby in case you need it.



- If you want you could make a coping skills toolbox. Put in your favourite things like a drink, cards with ideas about what to do if you're worried, a fidget toy like bubble wrap or blu-tack to squeeze etc.

-Read stories about resilient people. Here's a few The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba. Or any of the Harry Potter stories. Think about the resilience and grit shown by Harry, Ron and Hermione in their fight against Voldemort. Or you could listen to Story Podcasts for children like Tales from the Lilypad, Story time, Stories Podcast or Storynory.

- You could also write your worries and concerns down, put the writing to one side and then look at it later. Are your worries as bad as you think? What could you do to help yourself?

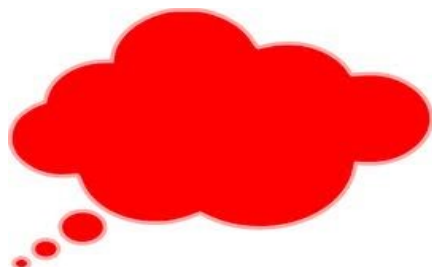
- If writing things down appeals, you might find it helpful to use a journal. This can be a simple notebook where you write or draw anything you want, or a printed one like 'Don't Worry, Be Happy' by Poppy O'Neill. There are many other free templates for journals online too.

- Why not research similar times in history? Did you know in the Plague in the 1660s one village in Derbyshire, Eyam, self -isolated for over a year to stop the Plague, a very deadly disease (far worse than Covid-19) from spreading. How do you think the children in that village coped when they eventually started to get back to normal? It will make you think and realise that children in the past have dealt with similar difficulties. Children of Winter by Berlie Doherty is a brilliant book which is set in this time if you want to read more.

- Challenging negative thought patterns

This is when 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. So, if we challenge our negative thoughts 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 test.	I haven't concentrated in all classes.	I normally do okay in tests.	What would my Mum/ Dad or carer say?	I think I will do okay in my test.


- Try mindfulness. This is a big word for something which is simple.

'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

-Mindful mouthful- take a tasty piece of food. First look at the food, smell the food, pause then bring attention to the sensations as you hold it in your mouth. What did you notice?

-Meditation- this is when you sit comfortably in a quiet place and focus on your breathing. There are examples of meditations on  YouTube<sup>GB</sup> - 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 great 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. Or 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/>

- Make a Happiness Box where you fill a shoebox with anything you can think of to help you feel calm or happy, photos, toys, special objects or treasures. Get it out and spend some time with it whenever you need. Maybe you can suggest this to your teacher too.

### Additional techniques to promote positive mental health

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

Draw, colour, paint e.g. [The Mindfulness Colouring Book](#)



Volunteer- do a small act of kindness.



Make a self-regulating box- see COVID folder [www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk](http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk)

Spend time with pets.

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

## Toolkit

Source	Where to find information and help.	
 <p>Apps</p>	<p>Mood Panda</p> <p>Mindshift</p> <p>Calm</p> <p>Headspace</p> <p>Sam</p>	<p>Youper (social anxiety)</p> <p>Moodkit</p> <p>Positive Penguins</p> <p>Mood Journal</p> <p>Calm Harm</p>
 <p>Websites</p>	<p><u><a href="http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk">www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="https://youngminds.org.uk">https://youngminds.org.uk</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="https://www.themix.org.uk">https://www.themix.org.uk</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="https://www.annafreud.org">https://www.annafreud.org</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="https://www.place2be.org.uk">https://www.place2be.org.uk</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="https://www.giveusashout.org">https://www.giveusashout.org</a></u></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</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>
	<p><u>Books and Podcasts</u></p> <p>The Harry Potter series by JK Rowling</p> <p>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamwamba</p> <p>Children of Winter by Berlie Doherty</p> <p>Story Podcasts</p> <p>Tales from the Lilypad</p> <p>Stories Podcast</p> <p>Storynory</p>





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July 2020