



SUPPLEMENT TO GUIDANCE DOCUMENT:
PREPARING TO TEACH ABOUT
MENTAL HEALTH AND
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

LESSON PLANS FOR
KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

JULY 2015

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

This pack of eight lesson plans and two plans for longer workshops for key stages 3 and 4 accompanies the PSHE Association's guidance document, [*Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing*](#). We recommend that, if possible, the guidance should be read in full before teaching any of the lessons, but as a minimum teachers should ensure that they read pages 4 to 12 for the rationale for this learning and pages 13 to 20 for important pedagogical guidance on teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing safely and effectively.

The series of lessons comprises a lesson (for which there are two versions) designed to support either the transition into key stage 3 or into key stage 4; a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4; and four lessons that focus on resilience and reframing failure, self-harm, eating disorders, and anxiety and depression, which can be incorporated into your PSHE education programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils in either key stage 3 or 4. The lesson plans are designed to be used flexibly, so schools may wish to select the lessons most relevant for their pupils and it is not intended that lessons should be repeated in both key stages.

The lesson plans are based on one-hour lessons; however the timings indicated are the minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE education lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of the pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as the teacher is comfortable leading the discussion and feels that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for the group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

The two workshops, on healthy coping strategies and mindfulness, are designed to take approximately 90 minutes and are intended to be used as enhancement activities, perhaps as part of a focus day.

Every group of pupils in every school will have different starting points and needs, so inevitably the lesson plans will need to be adapted by teachers for their pupils. This might include differentiating to allow all pupils to access the learning activities, or modifying the intended learning outcomes, as appropriate for individual pupils' needs and circumstances.

The lessons are not designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. Links to the [PSHE Association programme of study](#) are included in each lesson plan.

A pack of resource sheets to accompany the lesson plans is also available.

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LESSON 1: Promoting emotional health during transition into key stage 3

KEY STAGE 3

This is the first of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

This lesson is designed to be used very near the beginning of Year 7. The remaining lessons need not follow on immediately after but can be incorporated into your PSHE education programme at any point that is appropriate for your pupils. Lesson 2 is a core lesson on understanding and promoting emotional wellbeing, while later lessons focus on specific aspects of mental and emotional wellbeing, such as depression, stress and resilience, and consider healthy and unhealthy coping strategies including reframing failure, strategies for coping with transition, eating disorders and self-harm. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that Lesson 2, the core lesson, is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them. The subsequent lessons are designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4, with the exception of this and the equivalent key stage 4 lesson on coping with transition, where separate versions are provided. It is not necessary to teach all the lessons together as a module.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing

Pupils should be taught:

- to recognise their personal strengths and how this affects their self-confidence and self-esteem

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Core theme 2: Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness
- to explore the range of positive qualities people bring to relationships

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the common anxieties that pupils face when starting key stage 3 • ways of managing these anxieties
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can identify the most common causes of worry for people starting at a new school • I know how and when to ask for help, what sources of support are available at school and how to access them • I have identified my personal support network • I know how to support my friends
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Paper and pencils or pens • Large sheets of paper and marker pens (in several colours) • Blotack • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed)
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, <i>Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing</i>, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning</p>

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	<p>anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible both during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
Key words	support network, emotional wellbeing, help-seeking
Baseline assessment	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Baseline assessment activity 10 min</p> <p>For this activity pupils should work on their own without discussing their ideas until afterwards, so that you can establish their individual starting points.</p> <p>Give each pupil a sheet of paper and share the following quotation from Cara Delevigne (celebrity model):</p> <p><i>I have a great support network – my family, my model agency, and people I work with in the fashion industry. And, of course, there are all my followers on Twitter who stop me from feeling lonely; I love them all. They keep me grounded.</i></p> <p>Ask pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does Cara mean by ‘support network’? On your sheet, explain what you think the term means. <p>Take some feedback and share this definition (adapted from different sources):</p> <p><i>A support network is a group of people who provide emotional and practical help to someone, both when they are in serious difficulty and in their everyday life.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does this definition work for us? Do we want to add or change anything in our definition? <p>Now ask pupils to write their own name about a third of the way down the sheet and underline it with a long line, so their name is in the middle of the long line.</p> <p>Ask pupils to think quietly about their own support network (do not give</p>

prompts about who this might include at this stage).

Now ask pupils to add initials or a symbol or picture to represent each person or group of people they are thinking about under the line their name is sitting on. (*This is so that they do not publicly identify individuals and are not 'put on the spot' in naming others, for example if one family member or friend is a greater support than another.*) They should put the people who they feel are the greatest source of support closest to the line and the more indirect/distant people further down the page.

Tell the pupils to put their sheet to one side for now as they will need it again at the end of the lesson.

Core activities

Someone new

5 min

The aim of this activity is to get the pupils to start to 'get to know' an imaginary new pupil. The pupil should feel 'just like them': an 'average' pupil. Discuss the new pupil with the class and jot down a few key points about them on the board. It could be a boy or a girl, or you may wish to choose a name for them yourself that could be either gender and give non-gender-specific prompts (such as 'who's their favourite group?').

- It's a few weeks into term and your teacher tells you that there will be a new pupil joining the class. What shall we call them? Let's think of a name that no one in the class already has.

Write the name on the board with space for a few bullet points underneath.

- OK, so let's imagine a few things about [Name] so that we can get to know them a little bit better. They're 11 years old, just like most of you.

Then ask the pupils a series of questions about the new pupil and note the answers – remember that you want them to be a fairly typical pupil. You might ask:

- Who do they live with?
- Where do they live?
- What's their favourite lesson?
- What's their least favourite lesson?
- Do they have any hobbies?
- Who's their favourite football team?
- Do they have any pets?

And so on. You might encourage pupils to generate some questions too or just to contribute answers, eg *Their favourite band is One Direction!*

Note all the answers briefly. This activity should only take a few minutes until you feel the pupils have got to know the new pupil well enough.

Hopes and fears

15 min

Ask the pupils to draw the invented pupil in the middle of a blank page, and to draw a vertical line through the middle of the page. Do this on the board too. A stick person is fine – draw them in the middle of the board with a line through the middle of them.

Tell pupils:

It's the night before they start here at [name of school] and they're in their bedroom thinking about the next day. Their uniform is all laid out and their bag is ready. They feel kind of excited, but a few things are worrying them too. Have a think about what they might be excited about and worried about. On the left-hand side of your paper write down their hopes and the things that are making them feel excited – what new opportunities might they have, for example? On the right-hand side of the paper write down anything that you think could be worrying them.

Write 'Hopes' on the left-hand side of the board. Write 'Fears' on the right-hand side of the board.

If they seem to be struggling, prompt them with:

Perhaps think through the next day from start to finish, noting down the possible positives and negatives.

Give pupils a few minutes to work quietly on their own before inviting them to share and pool ideas with the person next to them and discuss what they've thought of so far.

Ask pupils to share what they've come up with and note some of the examples on the appropriate side of the board. For example:

They're excited about joining the dance club

But they're worried they might get lost

They've heard about our great football team!

What if nobody likes them?

They're looking forward to making new friends

They don't know if they'll fit in

Or maybe they'll get too much homework

Make sure that there are some positives, and ensure that the common, relevant worries all make it onto the board. These might include:

- making friends / will they be liked / fit in?
- too much homework
- forgets homework / does it wrong
- doesn't understand new subjects
- gets lost
- not knowing the rules
- wrong uniform
- big lunch hall
- doesn't know what to do / where to go at breaks
- wants to join clubs but doesn't know how / who with.

Responding to worries

10 min

Pupils split into groups of no more than six. Each group has a big sheet of paper at the centre of the table and some marker pens. Assign each group one of the possible worries the class identified. Ask them to write their worry at the centre of their piece of paper and then to brainstorm, and note as a group, ways in which they could manage that worry. If possible, each group should write exclusively in one colour and every group should have a different colour.

Ask questions to prompt their thinking. For example:

- Who could they ask for help?
- What could the school / a teacher do to help?
- What could a friend do to help?
- Where else could they go for support?
- What if their worry came true – how could they fix things?
- What do you think their parents would suggest if they shared this worry?
- Are there any resources (eg a printed map) that might help?
- What could they do to prevent this becoming a problem?
- Is there anything that might make this worry worse? How could that be avoided?

Encourage the pupils to be as practical as possible in their solutions.

Pooling ideas

10 min

Ask each group to tack their brainstorm to the wall, then allow each group a few minutes to look at all the other groups' posters.

Ask them to discuss in their group what they think would work well and put a tick or a smiley next to it in their group's colour. Also ask them to add their own ideas in their group's colour if there's anything that hasn't already been

thought of. Tell them that we want to think of as many ideas as possible, there are no right or wrong answers, and it is OK if some ideas are repeated on more than one poster.

Discussion

5 min

Back in their groups, ask each group to share a few thoughts about another group's brainstorm poster. Each group should talk about one other poster, so that each poster is discussed once.

Ask the group to tell you what they thought were the really good ideas shared on that poster – why do they think they would work?

For example: *On the 'getting lost' poster – we really liked the idea of a teacher giving them a buddy to go round with, who had the same classes and already knew their way around, because it would stop them getting lost and also help them to make a friend.*

After, for example, the blue group has discussed the red group's poster, invite the red group to comment on any ideas that other groups added to their poster that they especially liked – or any new ideas they have now, having seen all the other posters.

The purple group added carrying a picture of their pet in their wallet to our poster. We thought it was a funny idea at first, but when we discussed it we thought that as well as making them feel less lonely and being something to cheer them up it might be a good thing to show new friends and start conversations about.

During the feedback, make sure the main sources of academic, pastoral and emotional support available to pupils in your school are discussed and that pupils are clear how to access them.

Plenary / Assessment for and of learning

Assessing learning

5 min

Ask the pupils to look again at their sheets from the baseline activity (with their name, and underneath it the people they rely on for support). Is there anyone else they now want to add to their original diagram (doing this in a different colour will show a 'before and after', highlighting whether the lesson has led pupils to think more deeply about this).

Now ask pupils to answer the following questions in their own head – no hands up, no answering out loud:

- Am I able to identify my own 'support network'?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would I call on different people for different types of support? Why?• Am I part of anyone else's support network? <p>In pairs: ask pupils to discuss with their partner what they think are the three most important ways someone can effectively support a friend. Take quick feedback and gather ideas on the board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a class, which would be our top three?
Extension activities / Home learning	<p>Each group creates a poster of top tips based on the final version of their 'responding to worries' brainstorm. These can be shared with the class next time and displayed. Later on in the year they can be shared with current Year 6s at your feeder school(s) before they go through transition into Year 7.</p>

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LESSON 1: Promoting emotional health during transition into key stage 4

KEY STAGE 4

This is the first of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

This lesson is designed to be used very near the beginning of key stage 4, or shortly before the end of key stage 3. The remaining lessons need not follow on immediately after but can be incorporated into your PSHE education programme at any point that is appropriate for your pupils. Lesson 2 is a core lesson on understanding and promoting emotional wellbeing, while later lessons focus on specific aspects of mental and emotional wellbeing, such as depression, stress and resilience, and consider healthy and unhealthy coping strategies including reframing failure, strategies for coping with transition, eating disorders and self-harm.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that Lesson 2, the core lesson, is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them. The subsequent lessons are designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4, with the exception of this and the equivalent key stage 3 lesson on coping with transition, where separate versions are provided. It is not necessary to teach all the lessons together as a module.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support

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- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the characteristics and benefits of positive, strong, supportive, equal relationships
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

Core theme 3: Living in the wider world

Pupils should be taught:

- about the information, advice and guidance available to them and how to access it

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the common anxieties that pupils face when starting key stage 4 • ways of overcoming these anxieties
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can identify the most common causes of worry for people moving into key stage 4 • I know what sources of support are available at school and how to access them • I know how to support my friends • I know how and when to ask for help • I have strategies for managing my worries.
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Paper and pencils or pens • Resource 1: <i>Transition poem</i> • Optional (see 'Plenary' section) – Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed) • Large sheets of paper and marker pens (in several colours) • Bluetack • Small (approx. A6) red and green pieces of paper • Two 'postboxes' or large envelopes

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<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, <i>Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing</i>, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school's safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today's learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible both during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or 'no question' – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>mutual support, support network, emotional wellbeing, transition</p>
<p>Starter activity / Baseline assessment</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Transition poem 5 min</p> <p>Project on the board, or give pupils copies of Resource 1: <i>Transition poem</i> and read it out, or ask a volunteer to read it to the class.</p> <p>In pairs: ask pupils to discuss and quickly note down their responses to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the author of the poem feeling?• What are the key concerns they are facing?• What other issues might they be worried about?• They end on an upbeat note – what other benefits are there to moving into key stage 4?

Take feedback, gauging the extent to which the group can relate to the feelings expressed in the poem.

Core activities

Moving to key stage 4 – the positives and the negatives

5 min

Place a few small pieces of red and green paper on each table.

Ask pupils to work on their own for a few minutes to think up some of the positives and negatives about moving into key stage 4, and write the positives on green slips of paper, negatives on red slips. They don't need to be directly related to school and can address wider worries like those covered in the poem, such as relationships and how we look.

They can write down things that they have not personally been affected by if they are things that might be a positive or a negative for other pupils their age.

Ideally everyone should write at least one red and one green, but no one should write more than three of each.

Once everyone has written them down, they should fold up the pieces of paper and place them in two 'postboxes' or large envelopes (one for positives, one for negatives). The idea is that they are able to keep their answers anonymous.

To ensure that all of the topics you need to address are covered, you should have pre-planted some slips for both positives and negatives. It is OK for things to be repeated.

The slips you plant will depend on your school and local environment, and your knowledge of this particular group of pupils, but the kind of things that might commonly come up include:

Positives:

- More independence
- Drop subjects you don't like
- Can go out with friends
- Less supervision at school
- New, interesting subjects
- Planning for the future

Negatives:

- Body image concerns

- Relationship worries (including sex/sexual health concerns)
- Too much homework
- Lessons get harder
- New, unfamiliar subjects
- Self-harm
- Alcohol/drugs
- Pornography
- Being cut out by friends

Sorting

10 min

On the board, quickly make a list of the positive things written on the green slips: just quick notes so you can refer back to them.

Next, work quickly through the negative slips, working with pupils to create categories on the board that summarise the types of worries highlighted in their red slips. These are likely to include things like:

- the internet
- bullying
- sex and relationships
- peer pressure
- academic work
- social media
- careers

Responding to worries

10 min

Pupils split into small groups. Ask pupils to imagine that the class is designing a section of the school website for their year group, specifically aimed at providing mutual support as they move into key stage 4. Explain that there will be links to different pages – one for each of the categories of worries that they have identified on the board.

Each group has a big sheet of paper at the centre of the table and some marker pens. Assign one category of worries to each group. If there are more categories than groups, then either divide into smaller groups or address the worries that seemed to be more prevalent first and any groups that finish quickly can move on to the remaining categories.

Ask each group to draft a web page for their worry category on their piece of paper. They might include 'FAQs', different sections of the page on different sources of support, top tips for managing anxiety about their category and so on. If possible, each group should write exclusively in one colour and every

group should have a different colour.

Ask questions to prompt their thinking. For example:

- Who could they ask for help?
- What could the school / a teacher do to help?
- What could a friend do to help?
- Where else could they go for support?
- What if their worry came true – how could they fix things?
- What do you think their parents would suggest if they shared this worry?
- Are there any resources that might help?
- What could they do to prevent this becoming a problem? Is there anything that might make this worry worse? How could that be avoided?

Pooling ideas

10 min

Leaving the 'web pages' on the group tables, rotate the groups around the tables, as many times as necessary for each group to visit each web page. Each time the groups move to a new web page, ask them to discuss what advice they think would work well and to put a tick or a smiley next to it in their group's colour. Also ask them to add their own ideas in their group's colour if there's anything that hasn't already been thought of, or that they would want to have approached differently. Tell them that we want to think of as many ideas as possible, there are no right or wrong answers and it's OK if some ideas are repeated on more than one web page.

Keep this activity pacy, moving the groups on quickly.

If there is insufficient time for the groups to rotate around all the web pages, make sure each group has visited at least one other.

Discussion

10 min

Ask each group to share a few thoughts about another group's web page. Each group should talk about one other page so that each page is discussed once.

Ask the group to tell you what they thought were the really good ideas shared on that page – why did they think they would work?

For example: *On the self-esteem page we really liked the idea of paying each other meaningful compliments.*

After, for example, the blue group has discussed the red group's web page, invite the red group to comment on any ideas that other groups added to theirs that they especially liked – or any new ideas they have now, having seen all the other pages.

The purple group added 'count to 10' to our FAQ section – it's a really simple way to manage difficult feelings but can be a good way to avoid a fight with a friend when you're angry and you might say something you'll regret if you speak too soon.

During the feedback, ensure the main sources of academic, pastoral and emotional support available to pupils in your school are discussed and that pupils are clear how to access them.

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Identifying our personal support networks

10 min

Ask pupils to think for a moment about their own support network: the people who provide practical and emotional support for them, both when they are in difficulties and also in their daily lives.

Now ask pupils to answer the following questions in their own head – no hands up, no answering out loud:

- Am I able to identify my own 'support network'?
- Would I call on different people for different types of support?
- Who would I turn to for support with worries related to:
 - Schoolwork? Why?
 - My future career or education? Why?
 - Emotional problems and issues? Why?
 - My physical and mental health? Why?
- Are there any gaps in my personal support network?
- Which organisations, helplines or people could provide support to fill any gaps in my support network?
- Am I part of anyone else's support network?
- How can I best support a friend or family member?

Give each pupil a slip of paper for them to anonymously write any questions they have, especially in relation to their support needs at this time. So that nobody feels self-conscious about being seen to be writing something, you could say that everyone has to write what they had for breakfast this morning (or something else) first, and then their question. Ask pupils to fold their slips of paper and put them in the anonymous question box (see 'Climate for learning' section).

Before the next lesson, analyse the questions and responses. Provide additional information or clarification about the relevant sources of support in the next lesson.

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	<p>You could give each pupil the resource <i>Further support handout</i> at this point, or wait until you have analysed the anonymous questions and use this to adapt the template ready for next lesson.</p>
Extension activities / Home learning	<p>Each group creates their web page for real, to be shared later on in the year with the year group below them before they transition into Year 10.</p>

LESSON 2: Promoting emotional wellbeing – core lesson

KEY STAGE 3

This is the second of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association’s guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson was specifically designed to support the transition into Year 7, but this lesson and the subsequent lessons can be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point in key stage 3 for your pupils. Two versions of this lesson are available: this one for key stage 3 and one for key stage 4. It is not envisaged that pupils will do both lessons but they have been provided as subsequent lessons are designed for use in either key stage. The later lessons focus on specific aspects of mental and emotional wellbeing, such as depression, stress and resilience, and consider healthy and unhealthy coping strategies including reframing failure, strategies for coping with transition, eating disorders and self-harm.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that this core lesson is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one’s own or a friend’s emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them. It is not necessary to teach all the lessons together as a module. You may, for example, choose to teach the core lesson and the lesson on promoting mental health during transition at the beginning of Year 7 and then to teach the remaining lessons across Years 8 and 9, as appropriate for the needs of your pupils.

The baseline assessment (draw and write activity) should ideally be carried out *before* teaching this lesson to give you an understanding of the group’s existing knowledge, understanding, beliefs and attitudes and any misunderstandings or gaps in their understanding. This can then inform your approach to the lesson: do they have a clear understanding of emotional health and wellbeing? Do they see the link between physical and emotional health? Do you need to spend longer on some sections than others?

The timings given are the minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils, so it may be more appropriate for your group to spend longer on some activities and extend the lesson plan across two lessons. If you carry out the baseline assessment activity at the beginning of the lesson, rather than in advance, you may choose to deliver the lesson over two sessions, or adapt the activities to shorten them, but check that you are still able to meet the learning objectives.

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it
- ways of recognising and reducing risk, minimising harm and getting help in emergency and risky situations
- about how to access local health services

Core theme 2: Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about what emotional wellbeing is • how we can promote our own emotional wellbeing
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand what emotional wellbeing is and why it is important • I can identify ways to promote my own emotional wellbeing • I can explain who, how and why to ask for support when it's needed • I know how to be a supportive friend and how to promote my friends' wellbeing
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • A4 sheets of plain paper – 1 for each pupil • Resource 1: <i>A day in the life of Logan</i> – enough for 1 or 2 for each small group • A class set of traffic light cards (ie a set of small cards per pupil, one red, one orange (amber), one green; if you don't already have these, they are a useful resource for many different activities) • Resource 2: <i>A day in the life of Celia</i> – 1 copy (for you to read to the class) • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large sheets of paper (eg flip chart paper), pens and Blotack
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, <i>Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing</i>, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, healthy relationships, help-seeking, support</p>
<p>Baseline assessment</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Baseline assessment: draw and write (see ‘Context’)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">10 min</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(ideally carried out in advance of the lesson)</p> <p><i>It is important not to discuss ‘health’, ‘what makes us healthy’ or to share the learning objectives and outcomes of the lesson before doing this activity.</i></p> <p>Give each pupil a sheet of A4 paper and a pencil. Ask them to only use the pencil (they will come back to this with other colours later to show their</p>

learning).

IMPORTANT! Ask pupils to work on their own and quietly. Tell them that the purpose of the activity is to find out their own ideas, so you do not want them to share their thoughts while they are working. Tell the pupils that there are no right or wrong answers, and not to worry about spelling. Throughout the activity do not prompt pupils in any way.

- Ask the pupils to draw a quick picture of a 'healthy person'. Give no further clarification, hints or prompts. Reassure them that it does not have to be a perfect drawing. If they choose, they can draw a stick person with a face.
- Now ask the pupils to think about what makes a person healthy and keeps them healthy.
- Ask the pupils to write around their picture what makes the person healthy and keeps them healthy. Encourage them to write as many ideas as they can think of.
- If asked for help, repeat that you want their ideas.
- Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers, and not to worry about spelling for this activity.

If doing this activity in advance of the lesson, collect in the pupils' work and use this to inform your teaching of the rest of the lesson (see 'Context' section).

If doing this activity at the beginning of the lesson, circulate around the class as they are working (without making any comments), looking for ideas that arise frequently and for any gaps, and especially noting the extent to which they identify emotional aspects of health.

Follow-up activity/reconnecting activity 10 min

If you carried out the baseline assessment in advance of the lesson, give pupils their work back and start the lesson from here.

Discuss quickly with the class:

- What do we agree on about 'being healthy'? This might include ideas about:
 - food
 - exercise/physical activity
 - personal hygiene
 - things to avoid, eg smoking, drugs, alcohol

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- relationships
- environment
- What have we all put?
- What have none of us talked about?
- What have some of us got but others haven't?
- Are the people that we have drawn smiling?

Look especially for how many people have included things like having friends/a good social life/healthy relationships/not being too stressed. This will quite naturally lead into a conversation about whether your emotional health is an equally important part of your wellbeing as your physical health.

- What does emotional health look like? *(Take quick feedback, which should now summarise the previous discussion, and stress that our emotional health is as important to our wellbeing as our physical health.)*

Ask pupils to put their pictures to one side as they will need them again at the end of the lesson.

Now share the learning objectives and outcomes for the lesson.

Ask for suggestions for a definition of the term 'emotional wellbeing', then share the following (adapted from various sources):

Broadly, emotional wellbeing refers to the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others. It includes being able to adapt and deal with daily challenges (resilience and coping skills) while leading a fulfilling life.

Emotional wellbeing includes being happy and confident and not anxious or depressed; the ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy, be resilient and attentive; having good relationships with others.

- Are these essentially the same as our definition?
- Do we want to make any changes to ours? Or does ours work better for us?
- Do we all now have an understanding of 'emotional wellbeing', as it is a term we will be using throughout this and future lessons?

Core activities

Identifying feelings and when they can become a problem

10 min

In small groups:

Ask the groups to explore different types of feelings. On a blank piece of paper ask them to write down the key 'feelings' words they can think of – eg happy, sad, angry, calm.

They should then write as many words as they can that express different *degrees* of the feelings words they have already identified. So, for example, around the word 'angry' they might have 'annoyed, irritated, furious, livid, incensed'. This can work well as a timed activity with an element of competition.

Once the groups have pages covered in feeling words, ask them to identify which words describe positive feelings and which describe negative feelings (they could circle them in two different colours).

You might then ask them to think about any that could be either positive or negative depending on the circumstances (for example, feeling a little stressed and nervous before an exam can improve performance, whereas too much stress or being overcome with nerves will have an adverse effect on performance).

As a whole class:

Stress that it is important to have a broad vocabulary of words to describe how we feel as this helps us identify when we or others might need some support and also helps us explain our feelings to others when seeking support.

Ask:

- If we experience any of the feelings we've written down every now and again, is that in itself a problem? Should we be worried? (*Draw out that feeling furious, for example, every now and again for a good reason, is not necessarily a problem. If they have written words such as 'suicidal' you would want to discuss the fact that some extreme feelings are always a problem. It is likely to be the case, though, that the majority of the feelings they have written down are not necessarily a problem if experienced every now and again.*)
- At what point can our feelings become a problem? (*Draw out that if someone is experiencing an overwhelming number of negative feelings, or does not have healthy ways of coping with negative feelings and is at risk of turning to unhealthy or dangerous coping strategies, or is experiencing these feelings for no apparent reason, then that would be a cause for concern and would constitute a problem for that person.*)

A day in the life ...

15 min

In small groups:

Part 1: Give the groups Resource 1: *A day in the life of Logan*.

Ask the groups to read the diary account of Logan's day.

- As you read through Logan's day, note down or highlight everything that happens, or that Logan does, that could have either a positive or negative effect on his emotional wellbeing.

Take feedback from the groups. The following questions can be used to prompt

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the discussion:

- Is it a problem that the last thing Logan does at night and the first thing he does in the morning is check his phone for messages and to see what's happening on social media sites? (*This could cue a conversation about the pros and cons of the online world in terms of wellbeing.*)
- Is Logan's diet healthy? Would a better diet contribute to his emotional wellbeing – what is currently wrong with Logan's diet and what changes could he make easily?
- Is it a problem that Logan snacks between meals but doesn't seem to eat proper meals?
- Why does Logan find it hard to concentrate in his lessons?
- Logan seems to enjoy football – how is this contributing to his wellbeing (*exercise, connecting with friends, good for managing stress and anxiety*)?
- Logan has a good friend, Matt – are friends an important factor in emotional wellbeing?
- How might leaving his homework for later, because he doesn't understand it, make Logan feel? What could he do now or tomorrow to relieve those feelings? Where could he go for help or support academically? What could he do to relieve feelings of stress or anxiety?

As a whole class:

Part 2: Give each pupil a set of traffic light cards (see 'Resources' section).

Explain that you are going to read them another 'day in the life ...' diary entry – this time it's about Celia, who goes to the same school as Logan and is in the same year group.

This time you'd like them to hold up their traffic light cards as you're reading: if something happens or Celia does something that promotes or is good for her emotional wellbeing, they hold up their green card; if something happens or Celia does something that is not so good for her emotional wellbeing, they should change their card and hold up their amber card; if at any point they feel worried or concerned for Celia because of what's happening or what she's doing, they should hold up their red card.

Read Resource 2: *A day in the life of Celia* to the class as pupils show their chosen traffic light cards.

Discuss what the triggers were in the diary that caused pupils to change their cards, or to be concerned for Celia. (*Depending on the group's responses, you can either pause during the activity to discuss changes pupils have made to the card they're holding up, or discuss at the end the points at which you noticed people changing cards.*)

The following questions might be helpful to prompt responses and explore

further the points at which pupils might have changed their traffic light cards:

- Celia is upset when she sees her reflection. Why might she feel this way? What could she do to help manage these feelings?
- How does Celia's parents' arguing make her feel?
- Celia is getting on well in class – will this contribute to her wellbeing? *(Yes, it increases her self-esteem, but she needs to be careful not to become obsessed; importance of downtime.)*
- Why does Celia throw her sandwiches in the bin? Do you think anyone would notice she's not eaten? What might they think/say if they did notice?
- Why do you think Celia finds it hard when her parents argue quietly or pretend everything is OK when it's not? Is there anything she could do to address this? Should she talk to her parents about it? What could she say?
- Why does Celia fake a smile before taking a selfie? *(This could cue a conversation about the online world and how people airbrush their lives as well as their photos. Discuss how Celia's friends may not know there is a problem because she is hiding it – is this a problem? What could she do instead?)*
- Celia's friends note her weight loss – how would this make Celia feel? Is this positive or negative? *(She may be developing an eating disorder and the comments may fuel her thoughts and behaviours.)*
- How important is Celia's relationship with Casey? *(Cue a conversation about the positives of the online world.)*
- Celia cries herself to sleep – what would be a better way to end the day? Is there anything Celia can change?

Thinking back to both diaries:

- Where could Logan and Celia go for help if they needed it? *(Encourage pupils to consider different types of support, eg academic support, emotional support and support with their health and diet. Also prompt them to consider different sources of support, eg at school/at home/in the local community/on the phone/online.)*

When to seek help and conversation starters

15 min

Explain that Celia's friends are worried about her: she seems down, she's wrapped up in her schoolwork and doesn't really talk to them much or go out with them outside school any more.

- What do you think Celia's friends should do? Why?
- They have different options here. They could:
 - do nothing

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- talk to a teacher
- talk to Celia's parents
- talk to Celia
- do something else? – if so, what?
- What are the possible consequences of each option? (*Quick think, pair, share discussion.*)

Give each group a large sheet of paper and a different coloured pen for each group (so that it is clear which group different ideas have come from). Allocate each group one of the following people and ask them to write their person's name at the top:

- Celia
- Celia's Mum
- a teacher
- someone else they have identified

Ask the groups to brainstorm as many different ways of starting a conversation with that person as they can on their paper.

Ask each group to stick their sheet on the wall in different areas of the room.

If time allows, ask the groups to go together as a group to look the other groups' work and add their own ideas in their colour pen and put a tick or a smiley next to other ideas they've seen that they can imagine using themselves.

Quick feedback: ask each group to select the best conversation starter on their sheet (whether it was one of their own or one another group added). If there is time, select a range of suggestions and discuss in greater detail the pros and cons of each conversation starter.

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Assessing progress

10 min

Revisit the draw and write activity pupils either did in advance or at the beginning of the lesson. Ask them to make any additions or relevant notes they'd like to add with a different coloured pen. This can be kept as assessment evidence and used to inform future teaching.

Revisit the learning outcomes and ask pupils either to reflect privately or discuss with a partner how much they feel they have achieved or made progress against each learning outcome.

Give each pupil the prepared list of sources of support (the Resource sheet: *Further support handout*). Make sure the pupils are all aware of how to access the support you've included and are clear on any school procedures, for

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	<p>example to arrange to see the school councillor or school nurse (see 'Resources required').</p>
<p>Extension activities / Home learning</p>	<p>Pupils could keep a diary for a week of everything they do that has a positive effect on their emotional wellbeing, from laughing with friends to getting a good night's sleep, getting on top of their homework, or going for a walk.</p> <p>And/or they could list everything they can think of that someone could do to boost their own, or someone else's emotional wellbeing and then see how many of these they are able to do in a day or a week – who can do the most before next lesson?</p>

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LESSON 2: Promoting emotional wellbeing – core lesson

KEY STAGE 4

This is the second of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association’s guidance document [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson was specifically designed to support the transition into key stage 4 but this lesson and the subsequent lessons can be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point in key stage 4 for your pupils. Two versions of this lesson are available: one for key stage 3 and this one for key stage 4. It is not envisaged that pupils will do both lessons but they have been provided as subsequent lessons are designed for use in either key stage. The later lessons focus on specific aspects of mental and emotional wellbeing, such as depression, stress and resilience, and consider healthy and unhealthy coping strategies including reframing failure, strategies for coping with transition, eating disorders and self-harm.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that this core lesson is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one’s own or a friend’s emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them. It is not necessary to teach all the lessons together as a module. You may, for example, choose to teach the core lesson and the lesson on promoting mental health during transition at the beginning of Year 10 and then to teach the remaining lessons across Years 10 and 11, as appropriate for the needs of your pupils.

The baseline assessment (creating a character activity) should ideally be carried out *before* teaching this lesson to give you an understanding of the group’s existing knowledge, understanding, beliefs and attitudes and any misunderstandings or gaps in their understanding. This can then inform your approach to the lesson: do they have a clear understanding of emotional health and wellbeing? Do they see the link between physical and emotional health? Do you need to spend longer on some sections than others?

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

If you carry out the baseline assessment activity at the beginning of the lesson, rather than in advance,

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you may choose to deliver the lesson over two sessions, or adapt the activities to shorten them, but check that you are still able to meet the learning objectives.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing

Pupils should be taught:

- to evaluate the extent to which their self-confidence and self-esteem are affected by the judgements of others
- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the characteristics and benefits of positive, strong, supportive, equal relationships
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about what emotional wellbeing is • how we can promote our own emotional wellbeing
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand what emotional wellbeing is and why it is important • I can identify ways to promote my own emotional wellbeing • I can explain who, how and why to ask for support when it's needed • I know how to be a supportive friend and how to promote my friends' wellbeing
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • A4 sheets of A4 paper – 1 for each pupil • Resources 1a, 1b and 1c: <i>A day in the life of ...</i> – approximately 4 copies of each • Resource 2: <i>Discussion questions</i> – 1 per group of 4–6 pupils • Resource 3: <i>When to seek help</i> – 1 per group

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed) • Large sheets of paper and marker pens (in several colours)
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, <i>Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing</i>, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, healthy relationships, help-seeking, support</p>
<p>Baseline assessment</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Baseline assessment: creating a character (see ‘Context’) 10 min</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(ideally carried out in advance of the lesson)</p> <p><i>It is important not to discuss ‘health’, ‘what makes us healthy’ or to share the learning objectives and outcomes of the lesson before doing this activity.</i></p> <p>Give each pupil a sheet of A4 paper and ask them to work only in one colour pencil or pen throughout the activity. (This will allow you to revisit the activity,</p>

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asking them to add to it/adapt it in a different colour in order to show progress at the end of the lesson.)

Ask pupils to work on their own without discussing their ideas with their neighbours, as you want to find out as many individual ideas as possible. Do not prompt pupils, give suggestions, ideas or steers, even if they are struggling for ideas – you want to know what comes into their minds without any other influences.

Explain the task:

- You have been commissioned to create a fictional character for a Year 9 resource on emotional wellbeing. The character you've been asked to create is a teenager who is emotionally healthy and well.
- Draw a quick picture of your character. (Stress that this isn't about how good they are at art – it's just a very quick picture to give us an idea of their character.)
- In thought bubbles around the outside of your picture answer, in words or pictures, the following questions:
 - What is their home life like?
 - Who are they close to?
 - What do they do in their spare time?
 - What are they like at school?
 - How do they keep themselves emotionally healthy? (Encourage pupils to put as many things as they can here but do not prompt them with ideas.)

If carrying out the activity before the lesson, collect up the pupils' work without further discussion. Pupils will revisit it to demonstrate their progress later but at this stage it can be used to identify the group's starting point in the concept of emotional health, to inform your approach to the lesson.

Follow-up activity/reconnecting activity 5 min

If you did the baseline assessment in advance of the lesson, give pupils their work back and start the lesson from here, with the reminder of ground rules above.

In small groups:

Without making any changes to their work at this point, ask pupils to quickly share their fictional characters with their group and decide between them a definition of what we mean by 'emotional wellbeing'.

Take quick feedback from the groups and agree a class definition on the whiteboard.

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Compare the class definition with these examples (adapted from various sources):

Broadly, emotional wellbeing refers to the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others. It includes being able to adapt and deal with daily challenges (resilience and coping skills) while leading a fulfilling life.

Emotional wellbeing includes being happy and confident and not anxious or depressed; the ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy, be resilient and attentive; having good relationships with others.

- Are we still happy with our definition? Anything we want to add to ours? Does ours work better for us than these?

Core activities

A day in the life of ...

20 min

Pupils work in six small groups. Each group needs a note-taker and a spokesperson.

Give two groups Resource 1a, two groups Resource 1b and two groups Resource 1c (*A day in the life of ...*).

Ask the groups to read the diary of someone's day. Display the following questions on the whiteboard, or provide Resource 2: *Discussion questions*, and ask the groups to brainstorm their responses:

- How is he/she feeling?
- Why is he/she feeling this way?
- What do you think might happen next?
- In terms of his/her emotional wellbeing, what are the positive things about his/her day?
- What are the negatives?
- What changes could he/she make that would improve his/her emotional wellbeing?
- Should we be worried about him/her? Why?

Read each diary entry in turn to the class (as they will only have read one so far), and for each one ask one group to lead on feeding back briefly and allow the other group who were considering the same diary entry to contribute.

Some or all of the following questions can be used to prompt the discussion in each case.

Logan:

- Is it a problem that the last thing Logan does at night and the first thing he

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does in the morning is check his phone for messages and to see what's happening on social media sites? *(This could cue a conversation about the pros and cons of the online world in terms of wellbeing.)*

- Is Logan's diet healthy? Would a better diet contribute to his emotional wellbeing? What is currently wrong with Logan's diet and what changes could he make easily?
- Is it a problem that Logan snacks between meals but doesn't seem to eat proper meals?
- Why does Logan find it hard to concentrate in his lessons?
- Logan seems to enjoy football – how is this contributing to his wellbeing *(exercise, connecting with friends, good for managing stress and anxiety)?*
- Logan has a good friend, Matt – are friends an important factor in emotional wellbeing?
- How might leaving his homework for later, because he doesn't understand it, make Logan feel? What could he do now or tomorrow to relieve those feelings? Where could he go for help or support academically? What could he do to relieve feelings of stress or anxiety?

Deena:

- Why is Deena oversleeping? Are her poor sleep habits likely to detract from her wellbeing? How could she address them?
- Deena has a balanced breakfast – why is this important?
- Deena lives close to school but gets a lift – is this a problem? Would walking be better? Why?
- Deena feels better after a balanced lunch and a chat with her friends – why?
- Why was Deena so tired in maths? How might this impact on her wellbeing *(overtired, might get anxious if she doesn't understand the work, may get in trouble)?*
- Deena eats with her sister and Mum – how might this contribute to her wellbeing *(connecting with family, a chance to air issues and explore solutions, good diet)?*
- Deena is staying up late and drinking coffee to keep herself awake – what would be a healthier bedtime routine?
- Reading can be a great way to relieve stress but is reading until 2am a great idea?

Celia:

- Celia is upset when she sees her reflection. Why might she feel this way? What could she do to help manage these feelings?
- How does Celia's parents' arguing make her feel?
- Celia is getting on well in class – will this contribute to her wellbeing? *(Yes, it increases her self-esteem, but she needs to be careful not to become*

obsessed; importance of downtime.)

- Why does Celia throw her sandwiches in the bin? Do you think anyone would notice she's not eaten? What might they think or say if they did notice?
- Why do you think Celia finds it hard when her parents argue quietly or pretend everything is OK when it's not? Is there anything she could do to address this? Should she talk to her parents about it? What could she say?
- Why does Celia fake a smile before taking a selfie? *(This could cue a conversation about the online world and how people airbrush their lives as well as their photos. Discuss how Celia's friends may not know there is a problem because she is hiding it – is this a problem? What could she do instead?)*
- Celia's friends note her weight loss – how would this make Celia feel? is this positive or negative? *(She may be developing an eating disorder and the comments may fuel her thoughts and behaviours.)*
- How important is Celia's relationship with Casey? *(Cue a conversation about the positives of the online world.)*
- Celia cries herself to sleep – what would be a better way to end the day? Is there anything Celia can change?

Sources of help

10 min

In groups:

Ask pupils to imagine that the three characters went to your school, and to brainstorm where the characters could go for help if it was needed. Encourage pupils to consider support for different types of issues, for instance:

- academic support
- emotional support
- health and diet support

Also prompt them to consider different sources of support, for instance:

- at school
- at home
- in the local community
- on the phone
- online

Taking feedback, look for sources of support pupils are familiar with and look for gaps in their knowledge.

Pose the question:

- How can we decide on the reliability of a source of support such as a website?

Explain that we need to be 'critical consumers' of information, advice and support, rather than accepting everything we are told at face value, however well meant it is. Useful questions pupils can ask themselves when trying to assess whether a source is accurate, helpful or harmful are *who? why? when?*:

- **Who** wrote it? (*If it is, for example, a well-known charity, we can be relatively confident. If it is an individual, who are they? Why would they know about the topic?*)
- **Who** is telling us this? (*Are they a well-meaning friend or family member who cares about us and wants to help? If so, do they have the necessary experience or knowledge to advise us on this?*)
- **Why** did the author share this / **Why** did the person say this: what was their purpose? (*What messages are they trying to convey and why? If it is someone we know, do they have their own reasons for giving this advice?*)
- **When** was the material written? (*There is new research coming out all the time – older material may be inaccurate but may remain un-updated online.*)

Give each pupil the prepared list of sources of support. Make sure the pupils are all aware of how to access the support you've included and are clear on any school procedures, for example to arrange to see the school councillor or school nurse (see 'Resources required').

When to seek help

5 min

In small groups:

Give out the activity sheet *When to seek help*. Ask pupils to consider the conversation between Celia's friends.

- Suggest that Celia's friends have a choice to make. They could choose to:
 - do nothing
 - talk to a teacher
 - talk to Celia's parents
 - talk to Celia
 - do something else – if so, what?
- What might be the different consequences of each of these actions?
- What should they do and why?

Take quick feedback.

	<p>Conversation starters 10 min</p> <p>Split the class into four (or an appropriate number of) groups and ask each group to brainstorm different ways of starting a conversation with one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celia • Celia’s Mum • a teacher • someone else they have identified <p>Allow two to three minutes only, so that there are more to add, and each group writes on a large sheet of paper using a different colour for each group.</p> <p>Ask each group to visit the other groups’ work and add their own ideas (in their colour pen) and put a tick or a smiley next to ideas they’ve seen that they can imagine using themselves. (The group colours will allow you to know which group’s work is which.)</p> <p>Afterwards ask each group to return to their original sheet, look at the additions and suggest their best conversation starter, taking all the ideas into account. If time allows, select a range of suggestions and discuss in greater detail the pros and cons of each conversation starter.</p>
<p>Plenary / Assessment <i>for</i> and <i>of</i> learning</p>	<p>Assessing progress 10 min</p> <p>Revisit the baseline assessment activity (create a character) which pupils did either before, or at the beginning of the lesson and ask them to make any additions or relevant notes they would like to add, with a different coloured pen. This can be kept as assessment evidence and used to inform future teaching.</p> <p>Revisit the learning outcomes and ask pupils either to reflect privately or discuss with a partner how much they feel they have achieved or made progress against each learning outcome.</p>
<p>Extension activities / Home learning</p>	<p>Pupils could keep a diary for a week of everything they do that has a positive effect on their emotional wellbeing, from laughing with friends to getting a good night’s sleep, getting on top of their homework, or going for a walk.</p> <p>And/or they could list everything they can think of that someone could do to boost their own or someone else’s emotional wellbeing and then see how many of these they are able to do in a day or a week – who can do the most before next lesson?</p>

LESSON 3: Resilience and reframing failure

KEY STAGE 3 or 4

This is the third of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson (for which there are two versions) is specifically designed to support either the transition into key stage 3 or into key stage 4. The second lesson is a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4.

This lesson, focusing on resilience and reframing failure (and the subsequent lessons) are designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4 and can be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils. The later lessons focus on specific aspects of mental and emotional wellbeing, such as depression, stress and resilience, and consider healthy and unhealthy coping strategies including strategies for coping with transition, eating disorders and self-harm.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that the core lesson is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to recognise their personal strengths and how this affects their self-confidence and self-esteem

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism
- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness

Core theme 3: Living in the wider world key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their own core values and how their values influence their choices
- the knowledge and skills needed for setting realistic and challenging personal targets and goals

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- to make effective use of constructive feedback and differentiating between helpful feedback and unhelpful criticism
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

Core theme 3: Living in the wider world key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- to evaluate their own personal strengths and areas for development and to use this to inform goal-setting

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Learning objectives	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about resilience • how to reframe our response to failure
Intended learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can explain what is meant by resilience • I understand the role of resilience in success • I understand what we mean by failure • I can reframe and learn from failure
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • A soft ball (eg a baby’s plush toy ball or similar) • Video clips: Catching Kayla and Michael Jordan on failure • Resource sheet 1: <i>Reframing failure activity</i> – enough for 1 between 2 • Resource sheet: <i>Reflection on today’s learning</i> (see template in the accompanying resources) – 1 each
Climate for learning	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
Key words	<p>resilience, failure, reframing, perseverance, bouncing back, adversity, misfortune, succeed</p>

Baseline assessment / Reconnecting activity

Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.

Reconnecting with prior learning and baseline assessment

5 min

Remind the class that in the last lesson (Lesson 2: Core lesson – Promoting emotional wellbeing) they were thinking about ways of promoting their own emotional health and wellbeing.

Ask the class to stand up, then ask who can explain what we mean by emotional wellbeing. Throw the soft ball to the pupil who gave the best answer.

The pupil with the ball throws it to someone else, who has to try and remember one way of promoting our emotional wellbeing. They then sit down if they managed to come up with an idea, having thrown it on to someone else. Keep going, repeating as above until the class runs out of ideas or you feel you've spent long enough to gauge how well they've remembered the last lesson's learning.

Now share the learning objectives and intended outcomes for the lesson.

Defining resilience

5 min

In small groups:

Ask the groups to define what they think is meant by 'resilience'. Take feedback and agree on and write up a definition for the class that everyone is happy with.

Share this definition (adapted from various sources):

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, change or misfortune; to adapt to and overcome risk and adversity; to persevere and 'bounce back'.

- Do we agree with this?
- Do we want to change our definition or are we happy to keep ours?

Core activities

Catching Kayla – part 1

15 min

Tell the pupils that you're going to watch a video about a champion high school athlete from North Carolina. Discuss with the class why you would need to be resilient to become a great athlete and what part failure might play along the

way. Jot down relevant ideas on the board.

You can stimulate discussion using a few questions such as:

- What makes a great athlete?
- What difficulties might athletes face?
- How much would you need to train? Would that be easy?
- Would you have to make compromises? Like what?
- How do you think it would feel to win a race? Why?
- How do you think it would feel if you didn't win a race? Why?

Explain that Kayla Montgomery's story is a great lesson in resilience. Ask pupils to note down any thoughts or feelings the video provokes for discussion afterwards and ask them to especially think about what lessons we can learn from Kayla.

Play [Catching Kayla](#) up to 09:30 then pause.

Lessons from Kayla's story

10 min

In small groups:

Ask groups to discuss:

- their immediate reflections from the video
- the ways in which Kayla was resilient
- how Kayla responded to being told she couldn't do something (ie having MS would usually mean people couldn't or wouldn't do sport)
- why they think she responded as she did
- what lessons we can all learn from Kayla's story

Still in their groups, ask pupils to brainstorm examples (real or imaginary, remembering the ground rules about not mentioning names of people we know or disclosing personal stories) of different ways people can demonstrate resilience.

Take feedback and list some examples on the board.

Show the 30-second video: [Michael Jordan on failure](#).

Afterwards ask the pupils:

- Why does he say 'I've failed over and over again in my life – this is why I succeed'? What does he mean by this?

Reframing failure

5 min

Ask the class:

- What does the word 'failure' mean?
- What are some examples of failure from everyday life (*eg failing an exam or driving test, not getting to the next level of an electronic game, being dropped from a team, or a relationship*)?

In pairs: check that pupils understand the concept of reframing failure, i.e. looking at failure in a different way in order to use the failure to help us succeed and become more resilient.

Give each pair Resource sheet 1: *Reframing failure activity*. Pupils explore five ways of reframing failure, using Kayla as a case study.

Explain that there are several ways we can reframe failure. In Kayla's case, the failure was a physical one when she developed multiple sclerosis, but she was determined not to let this stand in her way. Talk through the five ways of reframing failure (on the sheet) with the class as a whole and answer any questions before asking pupils to consider in pairs:

- How did Kayla reframe failure? For each of the five ways of reframing failure: could this be applied to Kayla's story and if so, how?

Bill, Belle and Bailey

5 min

Discuss what the class came up with then ask them to consider the next part of the handout, which explores how Bill, Belle and Bailey could learn from the five ways of reframing failure.

- What might a friend, parent or teacher advise them?

Take feedback and discuss the answers as a class.

Catching Kayla – part 2

10 min

Ask the pupils to imagine that Bill, Belle and Bailey are competing in a race like the ones Kayla runs in. They trip and fall and can see all the other runners gaining a huge lead.

- Would Bill, Belle and Bailey respond in different ways?
- How do pupils think each might respond? Why?
- How do you think Kayla would respond? Why do you think that?

Discuss whether it's better to respond like Bill, Belle, Bailey or Kayla and why.

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	<p>Show Catching Kayla from 09:30 to the end (3.5 minutes) to see how Kayla actually responded to falling in a race.</p> <p>Give pupils a couple of minutes to discuss in pairs or groups what they can learn from Kayla's fall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How could this lesson be applied to an everyday scenario like failing a maths test or missing a netball shot? <p>Sum up by reinforcing the inspirational message of Kayla's story and remind pupils that the next time they fall, either physically or metaphorically, to ask themselves "What would Kayla do?".</p>
<p>Plenary / Assessment <i>for</i> and <i>of</i> learning</p>	<p>Assessing learning 5 min</p> <p>Revisit the learning outcomes with the class. Taking each in turn, ask pupils to use the understanding that they now have to review the learning outcomes, writing down a number from 1 to 5 (where 1 means lowest level, 5 means highest) to rate the extent to which they could say 'Yes' to each statement before the lesson and another number for after the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have they moved up to a higher number for each outcome? <p>Give each pupil a copy of the resource sheet <i>Reflection on today's learning</i> and ask them to complete it on their own. This can be kept in their book/folder.</p>
<p>Extension activities / Home learning</p>	<p>Pupils could collect examples of people failing to achieve something and write them an email explaining how they could reframe that failure to make them more resilient and more likely to succeed in future.</p>

This is the fourth of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson (for which there are two versions) is specifically designed to support either the transition into Year 7 or the transition into key stage 4. The second lesson is a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4. The third focuses on resilience and reframing failure and, like this and the subsequent lessons, is designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4, to be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils.

This is the first lesson focusing on unhealthy coping strategies, in this case self-harm. This is a subject that needs very careful handling and should always be taught in line with best practice principles, as outlined in the guidance document. In this lesson, it is important not to talk about specific ways in which people harm themselves or ways in which people might hide their self-harm, as this could provide instruction to any vulnerable pupils in the room.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that Lesson 2, the core lesson, is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism

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- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it
- about how to access local health services

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning about self-harm</p>
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more comfortable talking about self-harm • I understand that self-harm is an unhealthy coping strategy and can identify some of the things that might trigger it • I know the signs to look out for in a friend • I know where and how to get support for myself or a friend

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Box or envelope for anonymous questions• Video clip: Alyssa's story• Young Minds self-harm information leaflet – 1 for each pupil (free to download or 70p per copy)• Resource 1: <i>Self-harm: What, when, who, how?</i>• Resource 2: <i>What next?</i>• Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed)
Climate for learning	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p><i>It is important not to talk about specific ways in which people harm themselves or ways in which people might hide their self-harm, as this could provide instruction to any vulnerable pupils in the room.</i></p> <p>Lessons such as this are likely to result in an increase in disclosures, so it is important to make sure you are familiar with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures for managing disclosures. The PSHE Association has produced guidance on talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures.¹</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>In addition to the baseline activity, which ideally should be carried out before the lesson (for example in the last five minutes of the preceding lesson), ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today's learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or 'no question' – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>

¹ https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=506

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Key words	self-harm, coping strategies, misconception, support, triggers
Baseline assessment / Reconnecting activity	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <h2>Questions please! 5 min</h2> <p><i>(Allow time for this before the lesson if possible.)</i></p> <p>Give each pupil a slip of paper and invite them to write down any questions or comments they have about self-harm and put these in the anonymous question box or envelope. To make sure pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something: either a question or ‘no question’.</p> <p>Explain that as many as possible of these questions will be addressed during the lesson but we may need to return to some later. Address them at appropriate points throughout the lesson and return to any that remain outstanding at a later point.</p> <h2>Introduction</h2> <p>Share the learning objectives and intended outcomes for the lesson. Explain that while self-harm is often seen as a taboo topic, today we can talk about it. It is OK to ask questions and explore the subject. If something is not appropriate to answer with the whole class then you will explain why or address it individually after the lesson. Make it clear at this point that you won’t be talking about specific methods of self-harm and ask them not to either, as this can put vulnerable friends in danger of trying out unhealthy behaviours.</p> <h2>Baseline assessment:</h2> <h3>What, when, who, how? 5 min</h3> <p>Using Resource 1: <i>Self-harm: What, when, who, how?</i>, or in their books/folders, ask pupils to briefly write down (on their own, without discussing with neighbours) their current understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what self-harm is

- what triggers self-harm
- who self-harms (boys, girls, old people, young people etc)
- warning signs they might see in a friend
- how can we help
- what support is available

This activity should be completed briefly, *independently* and with one colour pen.

Pupils need to understand that it is not a test and it is OK to be unsure of the answers. The aim is that by the end of the lesson they will feel more confident.

Circulate while the pupils are doing this and gauge the starting point of the group, but do not prompt, give ideas or discuss their answers at this stage.

Ask pupils to put their sheets to one side for now as we will be returning to them at the end of the lesson.

Core activities

Class discussion

10 min

Have a class discussion about the first three questions they answered in the baseline assessment, explaining that we will return to the others later.

Start with 'What is self-harm?' and try to come up with a class definition and explore any misconceptions. A common misconception is that cutting is the only form of self-harm. *Without describing behaviours in detail* (see 'Climate for learning') make it clear to pupils that self-harm describes a wide range of ways in which someone might hurt themselves, put themselves at risk, or neglect to take care of themselves in order to manage difficult thoughts, feelings or experiences.

Various misconceptions often arise at this point and you should actively explore them with the class – or you may introduce them as questions.

The most common are:

'Self-harm is attention-seeking' and *'People who self-harm are suicidal'*

It is important to address these misconceptions as they are a key barrier to seeking help for those at risk.

Attention-seeking? Some people work very hard to keep their self-harm hidden, wearing long sleeves, avoiding PE etc, so they could not be labelled attention-seeking – but some people do not hide their injuries. This can be a way of outwardly showing inner hurt or communicating that they need help but don't know how to ask.

You could explore the terms 'attention-seeking' and 'cry for help' with the class

– stress that these are not negative behaviours. A good friend would respond to, rather than dismiss these messages.

Suicidal? Most people who self-harm never have any associated feelings of suicide: this is their way of coping with difficult feelings and a sign that they want to be alive. Some people might accidentally die while self-harming and some people may go on to have suicidal feelings if underlying issues are not resolved, but we should not assume that a person who self-harms is also suicidal.

Next explore the question ‘What triggers self-harm?’ Pupils are likely to name a range of different reasons including bullying, exams, depression, anxiety, problems at home, issues with friends and so on.

Explain that people turn to self-harm when they have overwhelming feelings that they don’t know how else to cope with, as they haven’t developed any healthy coping strategies.

These feelings might be the result of:

- underlying mental health issues (eg anxiety or depression)
- a bereavement or trauma
- difficulties at home
- peer relationship issues
- stress related to schoolwork or exams
- feeling different, due to ethnicity or sexual orientation for example
- the general stresses of day-to-day life

Alyssa’s story – part 1

15 min

Before playing the video, explain that we are using Alyssa as a case study. Alyssa is a girl who cuts herself, but it is important to note that boys self-harm too and that there are many different types of self-harm, not just cutting.

Play [Alyssa’s story](#) to the class up to 2:05 minutes.

In small groups:

During the video, Alyssa says she did not tell anyone about her self-harming. Ask the groups to discuss reasons why Alyssa may have felt she couldn’t talk about it. Take feedback.

Pupils may suggest things like:

- she’s too embarrassed
- she’s scared they’ll tell her to stop
- she doesn’t want to upset them

- she thinks she'll be judged
- everyone will think she's attention-seeking
- she doesn't think anyone can help
- she doesn't think they'll understand

Ask each group to consider one salient theme and explore whether Alyssa was right to think this way and how this barrier to her talking about her issues could be overcome.

Try to ensure a range of issues are explored by assigning the themes to different groups. Try to cover at least three themes.

Invite input from each group about what they came up with. Allow pupils to self-select who speaks up as some pupils may feel uncomfortable doing so.

Warning signs

5 min

Still in their groups:

Alyssa didn't tell her friends that she was cutting herself. If you were Alyssa's friend, what signs do you think might have indicated there was a problem – or what might her teachers or parents have noticed?

See how many warning signs each group can come up with in a minute.

Then give them a further couple of minutes to think about how they might be able to tell if an injury they noticed on a friend was self-harm or accidental.

Explore the ideas as a class – take feedback and write a list of warning signs on the board. (*See the appendix below with teachers' notes on the key warning signs.*)

What would a good friend do next?

10 min

Give each group a copy of Resource 3: *What next?* Ask pupils (still in their groups) to discuss what a good friend would do next if they were worried about Alyssa, imagining that Alyssa was also a pupil at our school. They should discuss all of the responses on the sheet then discuss their answers as a class.

You can use this opportunity to explore:

- at what point we must involve a trusted adult
- Alyssa's right to know who knows what about her – we should talk to her first
- the school's policy and what would happen if they told a teacher
- what help is available at school

- useful websites for further information

Key points to stress include:

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Help her find help.

NB this activity also features in Lessons 5 and 6 on eating disorders and depression. If you do the lessons in relatively quick succession you might choose just to recap briefly and remind pupils of appropriate help-seeking.

Alyssa's story – part 2

10 min

Play [Alyssa's story](#) to the class from 2:05 minutes onwards.

When the video finishes, invite any questions or reflections.

Then ask the class, 'Now that Alyssa's stopped cutting herself, do you think everything is fine?'

Give pupils a chance to discuss this in pairs or small groups then invite group discussion.

Key points to cover include:

- The body often heals more quickly than the mind. She may still hurt inside but this doesn't show any more.
- But she might not want to be labelled as a 'self-harmer' or 'cutter' forever, so we shouldn't treat her with kid gloves.
- We should keep listening to and supporting her.
- If we become worried we should follow up on it.

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Assessing progress:

revisit *What, when, who, how?*

5 min

Revisit the *What, when, who, how?* baseline assessment activity from the beginning of the lesson and give pupils a couple of minutes to add any additional comments or make any changes as a result of their learning this lesson, *using a different colour* so you and they can see the progress in their learning. This can be kept in their books/folders as assessment evidence.

While they are doing this, briefly speak to each group, making sure there is an opportunity to ask any final questions in the smaller group setting as some

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	<p>pupils may not want to speak out in front of the whole class.</p> <p>Briefly discuss the questions explored on the sheet, making sure to specifically reinforce where and how to seek help at school if they are worried about themselves or a friend.</p> <p>Give out the Young Minds self-harm leaflet to each pupil. You could also make it available to pupils via the school website.</p> <p>Remind pupils that they can talk to Childline (0800 1111) or the Samaritans (08457 90 90 90) online or on the phone at any time and they will always be listened to non-judgementally and confidentially. They can call if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.</p> <p>Address any outstanding questions or queries and establish whether there are any further questions to be researched and revisited next time. Remind pupils that they can post anonymous questions in the question box after the lesson and make sure they know where to access it.</p> <p>If possible, remain available to pupils for a few minutes after the lesson in case they have any concerns they wish to explore or share.</p>
Extension activities / Home learning	<p>Pupils could design a page for the school website giving advice to fellow pupils on what to do, who to speak to and where to get support for themselves or a friend if they are worried about self-harm.</p>

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

LESSON 5: Unhealthy coping strategies: eating disorders

KEY STAGE 3 or 4

This is the fifth of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson (for which there are two versions) is specifically designed to support either the transition into Year 7 or the transition into key stage 4. The second lesson is a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4. The third focuses on resilience and reframing failure and, like this and the subsequent lessons, is designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4, to be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils.

This is the second lesson focusing on unhealthy coping strategies, in this case eating disorders. This is a subject that needs very careful handling and should always be taught in line with best practice principles, as outlined in the guidance document. In this lesson, it is important not to talk about specific ways in which people lose weight, purge or hide eating disorder symptoms, as this could provide instruction to any vulnerable pupils in the room. It is also important not to discuss numbers when discussing weight loss, or to share extreme images, as this can provide a 'benchmark' or aspirational example for vulnerable young people (see the guidance document for further information).

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that Lesson 2, the core lesson, is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism

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- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it
- what might influence their decisions about eating a balanced diet
- how the media portrays young people, body image and health issues and that identity is affected by a range of factors, including the media and a positive sense of self
- about eating disorders, including recognising when they or others need help, sources of help and strategies for accessing it
- about how to access local health services

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

Learning objectives

We are learning about eating disorders

Intended learning

- I feel more comfortable talking about eating disorders
- I know the signs to look out for in a friend
- I know where and how to get support for myself or a friend

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outcomes	
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Video clip: Understanding eating disorders • Young Minds eating disorders information leaflets – 1 for each pupil (free to download or 70p per copy) • Resource sheet 1: <i>Eating Disorders: What, when, who, how?</i> • Resource sheet 2: <i>What next?</i> • Resource 3: <i>Myth-busting True or False cards</i> – 1 set of cards for each pair or small group • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed)
Climate for learning	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p><i>It is important not to talk about specific ways in which people lose weight, purge or hide eating disorder symptoms, as this could provide instruction to any vulnerable pupils in the room. It is also important never to encourage pupils to research eating disorders online as they will inevitably encounter pro-anorexia or pro-bulimia sites and forums.</i></p> <p>Lessons such as this are likely to result in an increase in disclosures, so it is important to make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy and procedures for managing disclosures. The PSHE Association has produced guidance on talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures.²</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>In addition to the baseline activity, which ideally should be carried out before the lesson (for example in the last five minutes of the preceding lesson), ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning</p>

² https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=506

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	<p>anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson.</p> <p>You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
Key words	eating disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, unhealthy coping strategy, purge, binge, restrict
Baseline assessment	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>The short video used in this lesson is quite moving and should be handled sensitively. See ‘Climate for learning’ on giving notice that the topic is going to be discussed in this lesson.</p> <p>Questions please! 5 min</p> <p><i>(Allow time for this before the lesson if possible.)</i></p> <p>Give each pupil a slip of paper and invite them to write down any questions or comments they have about eating disorders and put these in the anonymous question box. Explain that as many as possible of these questions will be addressed during the lesson but we may need to return to some later. Address them at appropriate points throughout the lesson and return to any that remain outstanding at a later point.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Share the learning objectives and intended outcomes for the lesson. Explain that while eating disorders are often seen as a taboo topic, today we can talk about them. It’s OK to ask questions and explore the subject. If something is not appropriate to answer with the whole class then you’ll explain why or address it individually after the lesson.</p> <p>Baseline assessment:</p> <p>What, when, who, how? 10 min</p>

Using Resource sheet 1: *Eating Disorders: What, when, who, how?*, or in their books/folders, ask pupils to briefly write down (on their own, without discussing with neighbours) their current understanding of:

- what eating disorders are and the different types
- what causes them
- who is at risk
- warning signs they might see in a friend
- how can we help
- what support is available

This activity should be completed briefly, *independently* and with one colour pen.

Pupils need to understand that it is not a test and it is OK to be unsure of the answers. The aim is that by the end of the lesson they will feel more confident.

Circulate while the pupils are doing this and gauge the starting point of the group, but do not prompt, give ideas or discuss their answers at this stage.

Ask pupils to put their sheets to one side for now as we will be returning to them at the end of the lesson.

Core activities

Understanding eating disorders

10 min

Give pupils a brief, factual explanation of the main eating disorders:

Anorexia nervosa (which we commonly refer to simply as ‘anorexia’) is the least common but most publicised of all the eating disorders. People with anorexia restrict their food intake and lose weight as a result.

Bulimia nervosa (commonly referred to as ‘bulimia’) involves bingeing and purging – so a sufferer will eat large amounts of food and then they will use different strategies to remove the calories from their body. (Do not talk about the specific methods to pupils as it is too instructive, but vomiting, laxative use, fasting and heavy exercise are common). People with bulimia are often very ashamed and secretive about their behaviours and their weight is often within a healthy range so it can be a very hard illness to spot.

Binge eating disorder is similar to bulimia but without the purging – consequently sufferers gain weight, sometimes very rapidly.

Explain that we are going to watch a short (3.5 minute) animation with the voice of someone talking about her eating disorder and how it made her feel.

Play the video [Understanding eating disorders](#) and then ask the class to reflect on what they have seen. You can lead the discussion with questions including:

- The girl in the video sounds very isolated. Why do you think this is? She says recovery was harder than being ill – how could friends, family or other trusted adults support her at that time?

How to help a friend

10 min

NB this activity also features in Lessons 4 and 6 on self-harm and depression. If you do the lessons in relatively quick succession you might choose just to recap briefly and remind pupils of appropriate help-seeking.

Ask pupils if the girl in the video was their friend, what warning signs might have alerted them that there was a problem? Gather their ideas on the board. *(See the appendix below with teachers' notes on the key warning signs.)*

In small groups:

Give each group a copy of Resource 2: *What next?* Ask pupils to discuss what a good friend would do next if they were worried about the girl in the video, imagining that she was also a pupil at our school. They should discuss all of the responses on the sheet then discuss their answers as a class.

You can use this opportunity to explore:

- at what point we must involve a trusted adult
- the girl's right to know who knows what about her – we should talk to her first
- the school's policy and what would happen if they told a teacher
- what help is available at school
- useful websites for further information

Key points to stress include:

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Help her find help.

Myth busting: true or false?

20 min

Give each pair or small group a set of 'True or False' cards made from Resource 3. Ask them to sort them into those they think are true and those they think are false.

Go through each one, confirming whether it is true or false, and for those that

are false, ensuring pupils understand the points below.

You can invite pupils to share their own myths too and you can share any that have been placed in the anonymous question box.

True statements

3 Binge eating disorder is the most common eating disorder

6 Eating disorders can affect people of any age, gender or culture

7 Anorexia is the least common eating disorder

11 People with an eating disorder may not be able to recognise that they have a problem

False statements/common myths

1 Eating disorders are a result of vanity and are caused by the media

It is commonly believed that people with anorexia are starving themselves in pursuit of thinness and beauty, and that these behaviours are caused by the artificially enhanced images we are all bombarded with daily in magazines, online, on TV and on billboards.

It's true that being surrounded by the 'thin ideal' and images of unobtainable beauty can lower self-esteem and make us strive for perfection, and may contribute to the early stages of an eating disorder. But eating disorders are serious mental health issues which go far beyond diet and vanity. With a full-blown eating disorder, the sufferer's food, weight and shape are used as a coping mechanism – that might mean depriving themselves of food, or it might mean bingeing on food to comfort themselves or respond to difficult circumstances, or even to try and make themselves look ugly and 'disappear'.

Extension questions could include:

- What role does the media have to play?
- What about social media?
- Does pressure to look a certain way have an impact on us in other ways?

2 Only girls get eating disorders

About 10% of people admitted to hospital with an eating disorder are male – and about 25% of people who are suffering in the community (who may not have been diagnosed) are thought to be male

Extension questions could include:

- Why might we think eating disorders affect only girls?
- Why do fewer boys seek treatment?
- How can we help boys to speak up?

4 People with eating disorders are attention-seeking

Eating disorders are generally very secretive diseases. People with bulimia can go undetected for many years unless they seek help, while people with binge eating disorder often go to great lengths to eat healthily in the company of others and binge only in private. People who are severely anorexic tend to draw a certain amount of attention due to their emaciated appearance, however this attention is often misinterpreted, with the sufferer genuinely believing that people are staring at them because they are so fat rather than because they are so thin.

People with eating disorders will frequently go to great lengths to hide their illness; often wearing baggy clothes to hide weight loss or weight gain, and their self-esteem is generally so low that they can't believe that anyone would ever care about them. Attention-seeking is often the last thing on their mind.

Extension questions could include:

- Don't we all need attention sometimes?
- If someone needs support or attention, how else can they find it?

5 People who binge eat should just eat less and exercise more

Binge eaters are unfairly viewed by many as fat and lazy people who should take control of their diet and try to eat and act more healthily. However, it is not that simple. For someone who suffers from binge eating disorder, food is often the only mechanism they have for dealing with their emotions and the difficulties they face in their day-to-day life. Food is like a drug to them, that numbs their pain. They know that they should stop bingeing and will often be thinking about the fact that they shouldn't binge even as they prepare to do so. However, they tend to lose all control when they're eating – binge eaters often talk about feeling almost like they're being possessed while they're bingeing. They want to eat less, they want to lose weight, but they simply can't do it until they receive the support they need to learn new coping mechanisms.

Extension questions could include:

- Why is binge eating taken less seriously than anorexia?
- What could be the impact of bullying about weight?
- What could someone who binges do instead of using food to numb their

feelings?

6 Eating disorders only affect people of a certain age, gender and class

The highest rate of onset of eating disorders is in females aged 13 to 20, but it's important that we do not allow this stereotype to make us blind to other cases of the disorders. Approximately one in ten patients diagnosed with anorexia is male. Eating disorders do not discriminate and can affect anyone. They occur across all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds; amongst people of all ages, from children to the elderly; and in both males and females.

Extension questions could include:

- Why are eating disorders often considered a white Western phenomenon?
- Do you think that for instance men or older people would be less likely to seek treatment or a diagnosis?

8 You can tell if someone has an eating disorder by looking at them

People with eating disorders can be any size or shape. They may be thin, average weight or overweight. Somebody's weight and appearance can be a symptom of their eating disorder and it takes time to lose or gain a lot of weight. Somebody who has recently developed anorexia or binge eating disorder may be completely gripped by the terrifying thoughts and feelings that accompany these disorders without having experienced (or yet experienced) significant weight loss or gain. Many people who suffer with bulimia maintain a roughly normal weight so the disorder can be impossible to detect simply by appearance alone at any stage in their illness.

Extension questions could include:

- If someone is thinner/fatter does it mean they are in more distress?
- What about during recovery – if someone's weight is restored, does that mean everything is fine now?

9 Eating disorders are a lifestyle choice – sufferers can choose to stop

Eating disorders are not a lifestyle choice; they are serious mental health conditions which can completely take over an individual's ability to make reasoned decisions. There are many online websites, blogs and forums (pro-ana and pro-mia) which promote anorexia and bulimia as lifestyle choices, where sufferers provide each other with support and share tips for weight loss and purging. These sites can significantly contribute to sufferers' decline, normalising their illness and causing it to become more and more severe. *(If you're going to talk about pro-anorexia or pro-bulimia sites and forums, you should not name the specific sites and should never encourage pupils to research eating disorders online as they will inevitably encounter these sites.)*

Many sufferers describe eating disorders as an addiction and believe that they are just as difficult to break.

Extension questions could include:

- Why do you think it is hard for someone with an eating disorder to change?
- How do you think someone could overcome their eating disordered thoughts, feelings and behaviours?

10 Eating disorders are a teenage phase

Eating disorders are serious mental health conditions. Sufferers rarely recover without significant support to develop healthier coping mechanisms and to address any underlying issues which may have triggered their eating disorder.

While the peak age of onset of eating disorders is between the ages of about 13 and 20, they can affect people of any age, including very young children and the elderly.

Extension questions could include:

- Why do you think the peak age of onset is between 13 and 20?
- Why do people think eating disorders are a fad or a phase?
- What is the difference between a faddy diet and an eating disorder?

12 Purging is an effective way to lose weight

People with bulimia have a cycle of bingeing on large amounts of food and then ridding themselves of that food through different purging mechanisms – generally self-induced vomiting, or laxative abuse. This tends to result in weight maintenance rather than weight loss as most purging mechanisms will rid the body of only about 50% of the calories that have been consumed. Laxative abuse also tends to result in dehydration, which can give the illusion of weight loss, but this is only temporary.

13 Eating disorders aren't life threatening

Eating disorders can be fatal. Approximately 10% of people with anorexia die either as a complication of the disease (eg organ failure) or as a result of suicide. In addition to the risk of suicide and fatal complications of the illness, all three of the major eating disorders can result in long-term physical damage to the body, which can affect sufferers for the rest of their lives. However, some people go on to make a full physical recovery.

14 You can't recover completely from an eating disorder

There are two schools of thought on this. Many people believe that eating disorders are like the common perception of alcoholism and that once you have suffered, you have to make a positive decision to eat healthily every day for the

rest of your life. Others believe that it is possible to make a complete recovery. Either way, it is perfectly possible for someone with an eating disorder to go on to live a completely normal and happy life, especially if their illness is picked up in the early stages.

It is common for people with eating disorders to relapse repeatedly during their initial recovery period while they learn to employ healthier coping mechanisms. Learning to spot the early warning signs of relapse and to respond appropriately is often considered a key aspect of recovery.

Some people suffer with eating disorders for years, decades or their whole lives, while others recover for a very long period and then relapse after many years – for example as a result of trauma. There are also examples of people who have suffered from disordered eating for several decades but have gone on to make a full recovery.

Extension questions could include:

- What is the difference between ‘recovered’ and ‘in recovery’ – do you think there is one?
- What does recovery mean – could someone be recovered if their weight was restored but they still had disordered thoughts and feelings?
- What if their thoughts and feelings were healthy but they were still significantly over- or underweight as a result of past eating disordered behaviours?

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Assessing progress:

revisit *What, when, who, how?*

10 min

Revisit the *What, when, who, how?* baseline assessment activity from the beginning of the lesson and give pupils a couple of minutes to add any additional comments or make any changes as a result of their learning this lesson, *using a different colour* so you and they can see the progress in their learning. This can be kept in their books/folders as assessment evidence.

Briefly recap the questions explored on the sheet, making sure to reinforce where and how to seek help at school if they are worried about themselves or a friend. Give out the Young Minds eating disorders leaflet to each pupil. You could also make it available to pupils via the school website.

Remind pupils that they can talk to Childline (0800 1111) or the Samaritans (08457 90 90 90) online or on the phone at any time and they will always be

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	<p>listened to non-judgementally and confidentially. They can call if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.</p> <p>Address any outstanding questions or queries and establish whether there are any further questions to be researched and revisited next time. Remind pupils that they can post anonymous questions in the question box after the lesson and make sure they know where to access it.</p> <p>If possible, remain available to pupils for a few minutes after the lesson in case they have any concerns they wish to explore or share.</p>
Extension activities / Home learning	<p>The extension questions given above in the true or false activity can be used as a stimulus for discussion or for written work as an individual activity.</p> <p>Pupils should never be asked to research eating disorders online as pro-anorexia or pro-bulimia websites can be instructional, encouraging or inspiring for vulnerable pupils.</p>

This is the sixth of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, written to accompany the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons.

The first lesson (for which there are two versions) is specifically designed to support either the transition into key stage 3 or into key stage 4. The second lesson is a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4. Lessons 3, 4 and 5, focusing on resilience and reframing failure, self-harm and eating disorders, like this lesson, are designed for use in either key stage 3 or 4, to be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

If it is not possible to include all the lessons in your programme, it is important that Lesson 2, the core lesson, is taught before moving on to any of the others. It provides a baseline assessment and introduces the concept and importance of emotional health, identifying when to be concerned about one's own or a friend's emotional health, as well as sources of support and how to access them.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives. When this is the case, it may be more appropriate for your group to extend the lesson plan across two lessons.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism
- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it
- about how to access local health services

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Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- the qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships
- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are learning about depression and anxiety</p>
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more comfortable talking about depression and anxiety • I know the signs to look out for in a friend • I know where and how to get support for myself or a friend
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Resource 1: <i>Depression and anxiety: What, when, who, how?</i> • Resource 2: <i>What next?</i> • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to the national support already listed)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The video clips: Understanding depression and anxiety (a good introduction to the issue from Headspace Australia) and I'm Fine by Fixers UK • Optional additional video about how I'm Fine was made • Flip chart or sugar paper • Marker pens of different colours • Activity handouts
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Lessons such as this are likely to result in an increase in disclosures, so it is important to make sure you are familiar with the school's safeguarding policy and procedures for managing disclosures. The PSHE Association has produced guidance on talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>In addition to the baseline activity, which ideally should be carried out before the lesson (for example in the last five minutes of the preceding lesson), ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today's learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after every lesson. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or 'no question' – if taking anonymous questions during the lesson. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of each lesson for this.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>depression, anxiety, offensive, inoffensive, appropriate</p>
<p>Baseline assessment / Reconnecting activity</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p>

Questions please!

5 min

(Allow time for this before the lesson if possible.)

Give each pupil a slip of paper and invite them to write down any questions or comments they have about depression or anxiety and put these in the anonymous question box or envelope. Explain that as many as possible of these questions will be addressed during the lesson but we may need to return to some later. Address them at appropriate points throughout the lesson and return to any that remain outstanding at a later point.

Introduction

Share the learning objectives and intended outcomes for the lesson. Explain too that while depression and anxiety are often seen as taboo topics, today we can talk about them. It's OK to ask questions and explore the subject. If something is not appropriate to answer with the whole class then you'll explain why or address it individually after the lesson.

Baseline assessment:

What, when, who, how?

10 min

Using Resource sheet 1: *Eating Disorders: What, when, who, how?*, or in their books/folders, ask pupils to briefly write down their understanding of:

- what depression and anxiety are
- what causes them
- who is at risk
- warning signs they might see in a friend
- how we can help
- what support is available

This activity should be completed briefly, *independently* and with one colour pen.

Pupils need to understand that it is not a test and it is OK to be unsure of the answers. The aim is that by the end of the lesson they will feel more confident.

Circulate while the pupils are doing this and gauge the starting point of the group, but do not prompt, give ideas or discuss their answers at this stage.

Take quick feedback on each question, but ask pupils not to add anything to their sheet at this point as they will be using it to demonstrate their learning

during and at the end of the lesson.

Core activities

Understanding depression and anxiety 15 min

Play the 4.5-minute video [Understanding depression and anxiety](#)³ and ask pupils to add anything they now can to their *What, when, who, how?* activity in a different colour.

Discuss with pupils anything that was new or that they'd like to ask about.

Play the 3-minute video [I'm Fine](#).⁴

In the video, the boy at the start says he's depressed about being dropped from the football team. Later Sarah says 'I'm fine' when asked how she is.

Invite pupils to share their initial reactions, thoughts and feelings. Discuss this briefly and gauge pupils' reactions.

You could explore further, asking:

- How do you think Sarah feels when her friend says he's depressed?
- The boy says he's 'depressed' because he might be dropped from the team: is he actually depressed?

Draw out that the boy uses the term 'depressed' inappropriately because he is not actually depressed, which has an effect on the girl as she does have depression. We often use terminology associated with depression inappropriately, and also slang terms associated with mental illness used inappropriately can be offensive to others and should not be used (eg 'I went completely mental').

- What other similarly inappropriate phrases do people use (eg *crazy, psycho, loopy*)?
- Why does Sarah say 'I'm fine' when asked?

Group brainstorms 10 min

Split the pupils into six groups, with two groups working on each activity.

Give each group a large piece of paper and marker pens of one colour (a different colour for each group). Each group will write up their brainstorm in their group colour and later add their own ideas to other groups' brainstorms.

Groups 1 and 2 should brainstorm:

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjK6yfpaxew&index=5&list=PL1HN98dJOCA9ehPvJOv_rk410Vh-kz-wh

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3yq_nhzFQc&list=PL1HN98dJOCA9ehPvJOv_rk410Vh-kz-wh&index=6

Inoffensive/appropriate phrases to discuss our feelings – eg what could the boy in the video have said instead of ‘I’m feeling depressed?’

Groups 3 and 4 should brainstorm:

If I’m not ‘fine’ then I’m ... – we often say ‘I’m fine’ when we don’t mean it at all. How can we express to friends that things aren’t OK and we need their help?

Groups 5 and 6 should brainstorm:

Starting the conversation – if you were Sarah’s friend and you didn’t think she was fine, how could you start the conversation with her?

After a few minutes the paired groups come together to share what they came up with, then the three larger groups each elect two people to share the merged groups’ feedback with the class.

How the video was made

5 min

Show pupils this video about [how I’m Fine was made](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x8-MGm34pc)⁵ by a group of sixth-form pupils in Chippenham and their motivations behind making the video, which includes exploring the inappropriate and casual use of language related to mental health conditions.

Invite pupils to share their reactions to the film.

How to help a friend

10 min

NB this activity also features in Lessons 4 and 5 on self-harm and eating disorders. If you do the lessons in relatively quick succession you might choose just to recap briefly and remind pupils of appropriate help-seeking.

Ask pupils if Sarah in the video was their friend, what warning signs might have alerted them that there was a problem? Gather their ideas on the board.

In small groups:

Give each group a copy of Resource 2: *What next?* Ask pupils to discuss what a good friend would do next if they were worried about Sarah, imagining that she was also a pupil at our school. They should discuss all of the responses on the sheet then discuss their answers as a class.

Key things to cover include:

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x8-MGm34pc>

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Help her find help.

You can use this opportunity to explore:

- at what point we must involve a trusted adult
- the girl's right to know who knows what about her – we should talk to her first
- the school's policy and what would happen if they told a teacher
- what help is available at school
- useful websites for further information

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Assessing progress:

revisit *What, when, who, how?*

10 min

Revisit the *What, when, who, how?* baseline assessment activity from the beginning of the lesson and give pupils a couple of minutes to add any additional comments or make any changes as a result of their learning this lesson, *using a different colour* so you and they can see the progress in their learning. This can be kept in their books/folders as assessment evidence.

Briefly recap the questions explored on the sheet, making sure to reinforce where and how to seek help at school if they are worried about themselves or a friend.

Reflection on today's learning

Give each pupil a copy of the resource sheet: *Reflection on today's learning* and ask them to complete it on their own. It can be kept in their book/folder as part of their self-assessment.

Recapping support

Remind pupils that they can talk to Childline (0800 1111) or the Samaritans (08457 90 90 90) online or on the phone at any time and they will always be listened to non-judgementally and confidentially. They can call if they are concerned about themselves or a friend. Give each pupil a copy of the resource: *Further support* (see 'Resources required') if you have not given it out in a previous lesson.

Address any outstanding questions or queries and establish whether there are

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	<p>any further questions to be researched and revisited next time.</p> <p>If possible, remain available to pupils for a few minutes after the lesson in case they have any concerns they wish to explore or share.</p>
<p>Extension activities / Home learning</p>	<p>Pupils could plan and organise a campaign to be run for a week in school, including assemblies, posters, leaflets etc, to challenge the use of inappropriate and offensive terminology relating to mental illness and to raise awareness of the support available in school, locally and nationally/online.</p> <h3>Additional resource</h3> <p>In April 2015, seven young people who had been to a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for help with their depression came together with the aim of making a short animated film about what it is like to suffer from depression as a teenager. As the young people are a mixture of young men and young women, it is a useful discussion stimulus for exploring a number of issues including the fact that anyone can be affected by anxiety and depression. The film is available on the In Our Hands website.</p>

WORKSHOP 1: Healthy coping strategies

KEY STAGE 3 or 4

This is the first of two longer workshops designed to enhance the series of lessons that accompanies the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons and workshops.

The series of six lessons comprises a lesson (for which there are two versions) designed to support either the transition into key stage 3 or into key stage 4; a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4; and four lessons, focusing on resilience and reframing failure, self-harm, eating disorders, and anxiety and depression, which can be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils in either key stage 3 or 4.

This workshop will take approximately 90 minutes and is intended to be used as an enhancement activity, perhaps as part of a focus day, although it could be adapted to form two separate lessons if desired.

Neither this, nor any of the lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE sessions to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- to be able to accept helpful feedback or reject unhelpful criticism
- to understand that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment
- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it
- the importance of balance between work, leisure and exercise
- about how to access local health services

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

- to further develop the communication skills of active listening, negotiation, offering and receiving constructive feedback and assertiveness
- how to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of change, including loss, separation, divorce and bereavement
- the safe and responsible use of information communication technology

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of emotional and mental health and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders (including stress, anxiety and depression)
- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings
- strategies for managing changes in personal relationships, including the ending of relationships
- the role peers can play in supporting one another (including helping vulnerable friends to access reliable, accurate and appropriate support)

Learning objectives	We are developing healthy ways to manage difficult feelings
Intended learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can recognise a range of difficult emotions • I can use a range of strategies for managing difficult emotions • I know where and how to access further support
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Resource 1: <i>Healthy coping group research</i> – 1 set of the 4 sheets, or 2 sets if you prefer to have 8 small groups • Resource 2: <i>Ideas to Try</i> – 1 for each pupil • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to, or instead of the national support already listed)

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart or sugar paper – 1 sheet for each small group • Blotack • Pre-prepare a ‘graffiti wall’ with a section of wall covered in paper large enough for the whole group to write on at the same time • Marker pens – enough for at least 1 each • Paper and pens (if pupils do not use an exercise book/folder)
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, <i>Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing</i>, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after the session. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the workshop. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of the workshop for this and follow up in the next PSHE lesson.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>healthy coping strategies, managing feelings, positive strategies, depression, anxiety disorders, (feelings words in the baseline activity below)</p>
<p>Baseline assessment</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Explain that today’s workshop will focus on a range of different emotions that can sometimes be difficult to manage, and that pupils will be working in groups to research and suggest strategies for managing these difficult feelings in a</p>

positive way.

Graffiti wall: difficult feelings and emotions

15 min

Ask pupils to think quietly to themselves, without any discussion, about the kinds of emotions and feelings we might be talking about:

- What emotions or feelings might be difficult to know how to respond to or manage?
- What feelings or emotions can get in the way of people doing the things they want to?
- What feelings or emotions can prevent people enjoying or achieving?
- What feelings or emotions can feel uncomfortable or emotionally painful?

Invite pupils to come up to the pre-prepared 'graffiti wall' and write all their ideas on the wall. It does not matter if someone else has put the same ideas as they have – it is not a problem if the same words crop up again and again – but ask pupils to think of as many different feelings as they can. Encourage them to go beyond 'sad' and 'angry'!

Feelings they might identify (or that you might suggest when they have come up with all they can) include:

- angry
- frustrated
- overwhelmed
- lonely
- sad
- down
- disconnected
- out of control
- feelings of failure
- lost
- confused
- different
- self-hate
- unable to cope
- helpless
- unreal
- numb
- stressed
- anxious

- worried
- upset

While pupils are still gathered around the graffiti wall, ask:

- What can happen if difficult feelings like these go unmanaged?

Take feedback and draw out that these feelings can stop us enjoying and achieving each day, and left unmanaged longer term they can contribute to mental health and emotional wellbeing issues such as depression, anxiety disorders and unhealthy coping strategies such as eating disorders or self-harm.

So today we're going to focus on positive ways to manage difficult feelings and emotions, and hopefully go away with some ideas that everyone in the room could use to manage difficult feelings.

Baseline assessment of healthy coping strategies

5 min

Back in their seats, ask pupils to work on their own in their book/folder or on paper and write down any positive strategies a young person of about their age might use to help them manage difficult emotions. If they need a prompt, give 'going for a run' or 'listening to loud music' as examples, then leave them to come up with their own.

When they have finished, ask them to put their list to one side as we will come back to it later.

Core activities

Healthy coping group research

35 min

Split the class into four or eight groups, depending on the size of the class and the space available. Resource 1: *Healthy coping group research* contains four separate group tasks labelled Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 and Group 4. Give one of the sheets to each group (or pair of groups if using eight small groups) so that they have a different set of unhealthy feelings to consider how to manage. Give each group a sheet of flip chart or sugar paper and marker pens for writing up and sharing their ideas in response to the two questions on the sheet.

Give the groups a good amount of time to brainstorm how best to manage the difficult feelings, using the case study material as a stimulus. During their discussions they should consider how best to present their ideas in a way that will make sense to the rest of the class at the end of the activity.

When the groups have finished, ask each group in turn to present their work to

the class, including their ten ideas for managing the difficult feelings they've been focusing on. After each presentation, tack each sheet of paper to the wall.

Sharing ideas and ideas to try 15 min

Give each pupil a copy of Resource 2: *Ideas to Try*. Pupils visit the work done by the other groups in turn and note down on their own sheet any ideas that sound like something that might work for them in a given situation.

Once all pupils have had a chance to review all the other groups' work, provide a brief opportunity for questions in case a pupil has a question about any of the strategies they've read about on other groups' work.

Sources of support 10 min

In pairs or small groups:

Ask pupils to discuss the following questions:

- If someone in our school was experiencing difficult feelings or emotions that they're not able to manage completely on their own, what support is available in school and how would they go about getting the support they need?
- What other sources of support might there be for them outside school, including in the local community?
- And what about nationally, online or on the phone? Can you think of any organisations that might help?

Take feedback, looking for sources of support that pupils are familiar with and for gaps in their knowledge, and checking that pupils know who/what is available to them in school and how to access support, eg from pastoral leads, school nurse, school councillor, peer mentors etc. Also invite suggestions from pupils about local organisations or national helplines, forums or online support that they have heard about and think friends might find helpful.

Pose the questions:

- Is it always a good idea to look for online forums for support with difficult feelings?

Take feedback, making sure pupils understand that while some forums offer genuine help and advice with overcoming difficulties, there are others that might encourage unhealthy behaviours as a means of coping with difficult emotions. Explain that we should always avoid forums and websites that

encourage and support people to use unhealthy coping strategies such as harming themselves, rather than encouraging healthy ways of managing feelings. (Do not list or refer specifically to such sites.)

- How can we decide on the reliability of a source of support such as a website?

Explain that we need to be ‘critical consumers’ of information, advice and support, rather than accepting everything we are told at face value, however well meant it is. Useful questions pupils can ask themselves when trying to assess whether a source is accurate, helpful or harmful are who? why? when?:

- **Who** wrote it? (*If it is, for example, a well-known charity, we can be relatively confident. If it is an individual, who are they? Why would they know about the topic?*)
- **Who** is telling us this? (*Are they a well-meaning friend or family member who cares about us and wants to help? If so, do they have the necessary experience or knowledge to advise us on this?*)
- **Why** did the author share this / **Why** did the person say this: what was their purpose? (*What message are they trying to convey and why? If it is someone we know, do they have their own reasons for giving this advice?*)
- **When** was the material written? (*There is new research coming out all the time – older material may be inaccurate but may remain un-updated online.*)

Give each pupil the prepared list of sources of support. Ensure pupils are all aware of how to access the support you’ve included and are clear on any school procedures, for example to arrange to see the school councillor or school nurse (see ‘Resources required’).

NB this is revisiting learning in other lessons, so if this has already been covered with your group take the opportunity to check how much they remember, recap and reinforce the information and learning.

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Assessing and reflecting on progress 10 min

With everyone back in their seat, see how quickly you can go right round the class with each person saying one strategy they liked and might use when they have difficult emotions to manage.

Ask pupils to revisit their list of positive strategies a young person of about their age might use to help them manage difficult emotions that they made at the beginning of the session. Ask them to add as many as they now can to this list but in a different colour, so that you and they can see their progress.

Explore as a class whether they feel more confident that they would be able to

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	<p>manage difficult feelings and emotions now in a healthy, positive way. Give each pupil a slip of paper and ask them, on their own, to write down what they ate for supper last night (so that everyone is writing something) and then to write down anything they would like to know more about, strategies they would like more opportunity to explore or practise, and any areas where they feel they would like support. Ask them to post these in the anonymous question box or envelope. These might be brainstormed briefly by the class, or returned to in another lesson.</p> <p>Unless you have already given it out in a previous session, give each pupil a copy of the <i>Further support handout</i> (see 'Resources required').</p>
Extension activities / Home learning	<p>Pupils could keep a reflective journal for a week, noting down the difficult feelings they encounter and any strategies they use to manage them.</p> <p>Challenge pupils to try four of the strategies they identified on their <i>Ideas to Try</i> sheet during the coming week and score each strategy out of ten for how helpful it was and how it made them feel.</p>

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WORKSHOP 2: Mindfulness

KEY STAGE 3 or 4

This is the second of two longer workshops designed to enhance the series of lessons that accompanies the PSHE Association's guidance document, [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#). We strongly recommend that you read the guidance document before teaching these lessons and workshops.

The series of six lessons comprises a lesson (for which there are two versions) designed to support either the transition into Year 7 or the transition into key stage 4; a core lesson on promoting emotional wellbeing, again with two separate versions for key stages 3 and 4; and four lessons, focusing on resilience and reframing failure, self-harm, eating disorders, and anxiety and depression, which can be incorporated into your PSHE programme at the most appropriate point for your pupils in either key stage 3 or 4.

This workshop will take approximately 90 minutes and is intended to be used as an enhancement activity, perhaps as part of a focus day, although it could be adapted to form two separate lessons if desired.

A growing body of evidence suggests that mindfulness practice could be beneficial to teens, helping them cultivate empathy, as well as skills for concentration and impulse control. In short, mindfulness can help adolescents navigate the challenges of adolescence and can provide an additional positive coping strategy, building on the learning from Workshop 1.

Neither this, nor any of the lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

The timings given are the absolute minimum times required to deliver the activities. And while it is always important for PSHE sessions to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives.

Links to the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 3

Pupils should be taught:

- the characteristics of mental and emotional health and strategies for managing it

Core theme 1: Health and wellbeing key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

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- strategies for managing mental health including stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide, and sources of help and support
- where and how to obtain health information, advice and support

Core theme 2: Relationships key stage 4

Pupils should be taught:

- strategies to manage strong emotions and feelings

<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>We are practising mindfulness and finding ways to use it in our everyday lives</p>
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know what mindfulness is • I can explain how it might benefit me • I have practised mindfulness • I can incorporate mindfulness into my daily routine
<p>Resources required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box or envelope for anonymous questions • Video: Headspace – ‘Mind’ animation • Optional videos: The Science of Mindfulness by Professor Mark Williams or his Introduction to Mindfulness • Optional video: 3-minute mindfulness meditation • Resource 1: <i>Mindful Breathing Script</i> • Bubbles – ideally 1 pot each • Resource sheet: <i>Further support handout</i> (see template in the accompanying resources, which can be populated with school and local sources of support in addition to, or instead of the national support already listed)
<p>Climate for learning</p>	<p>Before starting, make sure you have read the accompanying guidance, Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and that you understand how to establish a safe learning environment (as outlined in the guidance).</p> <p>Make sure you are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils’ circumstances. Where you are aware of any relevant issues, it may be advisable to give prior notice that this subject will be covered. Notice should be given to</p>

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	<p>pastoral staff in the school, and details of local support groups or helplines should also be made available for further support after the lesson.</p> <p>Ask pupils to write down any questions they have relating to today’s learning anonymously at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box – which should be accessible before, during and after the session. To ensure that pupils do not feel self-conscious about being seen to be asking a question, you can tell all pupils that everyone has to write something – either a question or ‘no question’ – if taking anonymous questions during the workshop. You may wish to set aside some time at the end of the session for this and follow up in the next PSHE lesson.</p>
<p>Key words</p>	<p>mindfulness, relaxation, mindful breathing, meditation</p>
<p>Baseline assessment / Reconnecting activity</p>	<p>Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. It is important to ensure that pupils all know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories.</p> <p>Introduction to mindfulness 10 min</p> <p>Ask pupils what they think ‘mindfulness’ means. Take ideas and gauge pupils’ current understanding of the term. Do they understand it in the sense of being aware of something? Have they heard of mindfulness as a technique/strategy?</p> <p>If necessary, clarify that there are two slightly different meanings. Literally the word mindfulness means ‘The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something’ – for example, ‘He was mindful of his responsibilities’. The second meaning is ‘A mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.’ This is a great way of relaxing and helping us to understand and manage difficult emotions and will be the focus of today’s workshop.</p> <p>Show the video Headspace – ‘Mind’ animation.</p> <p>This provides a simple explanation of the basis of mindfulness that is suitable for pupils of all ages. It is simple and only 90 seconds long. If you want a more biological explanation, you might like to show either The Science of Mindfulness by Professor Mark Williams – or his Introduction to Mindfulness, both of which refer more to the role of mindfulness in protecting against mental ill health.</p> <p>Invite any questions the pupils might have and ask if anyone has tried it before.</p>

If they have, you can explore this with them. Explain that during the course of the workshop we will be trying a few different mindfulness techniques so they can give it a go. It doesn't work for everyone, but for lots of people it can be a great way to calm their mind, especially at stressful times like before an exam.

Core activities

What's in it for me?

5 min

Some pupils will not need to be convinced of the benefits of mindfulness, but for some it can be helpful to share some of the evidence which demonstrates that it is a worthwhile technique to learn. Taking five minutes to share some of the evidence about mindfulness may result in better buy-in – but don't feel the need to labour these points if your pupils are open to the idea. Instead, you can spend extra time practising.

If your pupils see mindfulness as unrelated to their busy and connected lives, here are a few research findings that you could share with them:

- Studies show that [students who meditate before an exam perform better](#) than students who do not.
- Mindfulness practice can [improve concentration](#).
- Mindfulness-based interventions have been demonstrated to [reduce the symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression](#).

For more information [about the benefits of mindfulness and meditation, click here](#).

How does it work?

5 min

Explain that mindfulness is based on an ancient Buddhist practice which is very relevant for life today. Mindfulness is a very simple concept. It means paying attention to our thoughts, feelings and body in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally. This increases awareness, clarity and acceptance of our present-moment reality.

Mindfulness does not conflict with any beliefs or tradition – religious, cultural or scientific. It is simply a practical way to notice thoughts, physical sensations, sights, sounds, smells – anything we might not normally notice. The actual skills might be simple, but because it is so different to how our minds normally behave, it takes a lot of practice.

Mindfulness can simply be noticing what we don't normally notice, because our heads are too busy in the future or in the past – thinking about what we need to do, or going over what we have done.

Being mindful helps us to train our attention. Our minds wander about 50% of the time, but every time we practise being mindful, we are exercising our attention 'muscle' and becoming mentally fitter. We can take more control over our focus of attention, and choose what we focus on ... rather than passively allowing our attention to be dominated by that which distresses us and takes us away from the present moment.

Mindfulness might simply be described as choosing and learning to control our focus of attention.

Let's give it a try!

5–10 min

Tell pupils that we are going to give mindfulness a try. It can feel a little bit strange at first but it's a great technique to master.

You can either practise using a video such as this [3-minute mindfulness meditation](#) (search for 'guided meditation' to find alternatives) or you can read Resource 1: *Mindful Breathing Script*. Alternatives are readily available.

(As an extension activity, pupils could create their own guided meditation script and try it out.)

There's an app for that!

5–15 min

(longer if pupils try out the apps)

There's a certain irony in recommending apps to practise mindfulness, especially to encourage young people to practise disconnection from their overly connected 'cyberworlds'. However, it can be a motivating and easy way to engage them with the idea.

If you plan to regularly practise mindful breathing in class, you could use an app such as the [Insight Meditation Timer](#). Pupils will love seeing the map graphic on the Insight Timer that shows all the locations worldwide where people are meditating.

Here are some recommended meditation apps for young people:

- [Stop, Breathe, and Think](#) Many young people like this app because it opens with a short 'interview' where the user selects several words to describe how they are feeling, and then the app recommends guided meditations for their current state.
- [Smiling Mind](#) Designed specifically for adolescents.
- [Take a Break!](#) Not necessarily just for young people, but it provides short guided meditations for stress relief.
- [SPARX](#) A fantasy role-playing game for young people who are dealing with stress or mild to moderate anxiety or depression. A clinical trial published in

the *British Medical Journal* demonstrated that playing SPARX was more effective than traditional psychotherapy in causing young people with depression to experience remission.

Show the apps to pupils, and if possible give them a chance to try them out on their own devices. They are all free to download.

Mindful every day

20 min

In addition to guided meditation, we can become more mindful in our approach to a wide range of activities every day. Take a typical example and talk about how you could be more mindful in that moment – for example:

‘When I wash the dishes each evening, I tend to be “in my head” as I’m doing it, thinking about what I have to do, what I’ve done earlier in the day, worrying about future events, or regretful thoughts about the past. My young daughter comes along. “Listen to those bubbles Mummy. They’re fun!” She reminds me often to be more mindful. Washing up is becoming a routine mindful activity for me. I notice the temperature of the water and how it feels on my skin, the texture of the bubbles on my skin, and yes, I can hear the bubbles as they softly pop continually. The sounds of the water as I take out and put dishes into the water. The smoothness of the plates, and the texture of the sponge. Just noticing what I might not normally notice.’

Or

‘A mindful walk brings new pleasures. Walking is something most of us do at some time during the day. We can practise, even if only for a couple of minutes at a time, mindful walking. Rather than be “in our heads”, we can look around and notice what we see, hear, sense. We might notice the sensations in our own body just through the act of walking. Noticing the sensations and movement of our feet, legs, arms, head and body as we take each step. Noticing our breathing. Thoughts will continuously intrude, but we can just notice them, and then bring our attention back to our walking.’

In pairs:

Ask pupils to think of five opportunities that might arise in a typical day where they could practise mindfulness. Suggest they start from the moment they wake up and think through a typical day – even before school they could take a mindful shower, brush their teeth mindfully or eat a mindful breakfast!

For the five activities they choose, ask them to consider what sensations they should draw their mind to. There might be sounds, sights, smells, tastes or internal or external sensations/feelings that they usually don’t pay attention to

– who can even remember the scent of the shower gel they used this morning?

When pupils have had enough time to come up with and work through their ideas, share some ideas as a class.

Mindful bubble blowing

15 min

We can practise everyday mindfulness using really simple activities we might never have stopped to truly appreciate – today we'll try it with bubble blowing. You'll need a nice day and a bit of space for this.

Hand out a pot of bubbles to each pupil (you can buy cheap multipacks in the party aisle of most supermarkets). Ask pupils not to open them yet, but to feel the container.

Ask:

How does it feel in your hands? Cool? Smooth?

Then ask pupils to mindfully unscrew the cap.

Ask:

How does it feel to be opening the bubbles?

Are you noticing the ridges in the cap?

Do you feel excited to be beginning this activity?

Encourage pupils to take their time with that first dip into the soapy liquid, noticing all the while your wet, slimy, sticky fingers.

When you pull out the wand, wait.

Wait and watch. Encourage pupils to note the wonderful colours in the swirls of liquid trapped in the wand, stretched across the circle.

Then take mindful breaths and blow.

Noticing your in-breaths and your out-breaths, blow bubbles a few times – mindfully.

Next, ask pupils to notice the bubbles they are blowing.

Are there many bubbles?

Just one?

How large are they?

How small?

What colours do they reflect?

Do you notice anything else about them?

Carefully watch where the bubbles go.

Do they land near or far away?

Is the wind blowing them in a certain direction?

Or back at your face?

Pay attention to what happens to your bubbles.

Do they float away until we cannot see them anymore?

Do they land on the grass and last a few minutes?

Do they pop immediately?

Notice how quickly they go away.

Finally, pay attention to how you are feeling. Take the feeling and blow it into the bubbles – and watch your thoughts and feelings float away with the bubbles.

Repeat this several times.

Regardless of their feelings in that moment, all of the pupils can take something from the exercise:

If we pay attention to what we are doing, the experience is somehow different.

We don't have to hold onto all of our thoughts and feelings.

Plenary /
Assessment for
and of learning

Reflecting on the learning

10 min

Revisit the intended learning outcomes and ask pupils, either on their own privately, or through discussion with a partner, to reflect on how far they have achieved the intended outcomes and how confident they feel to 'have a go' at using some of the techniques they tried out today.

Remind pupils about the anonymous question box and give them the opportunity to ask questions and identify any further support or information they would like.

Unless you have already given it out in a previous session, give pupils a copy of the *Further support handout* (see 'Resources required').

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Extension
activities /
Home learning

Set the pupils a challenge of trying to carry out at least one activity mindfully each day. Ask them to keep a record of what they tried, how well it worked and how it made them feel. Try to make time to briefly discuss this next time.