

Looking to the future

As things change, we must learn how to change too. Changing all the time, or not changing quick enough, can be frustrating. It is important to remember there are things we can do to support ourselves and each other to cope.

Using advice from Dr Radha and our mental health and wellbeing experts in the psycho-social team, this resource focuses on supporting children and young people to cope with their situation better. The activities below are designed to suit various ages.

Learning objectives

Learners will:

- Think about a more positive future
- Reflect on coping and kindness
- Build resilience
- Plan for a kinder future

Primary ages (5-11)

Reflective activity: Five favourite things

We can help ourselves deal well with change by learning coping skills. Dr Radha tells us one thing we can do to help with this is to keep doing some things the same as before. Even if other things are changing, we have things we enjoy doing every day that help us feel comfortable.

Think about four things you always do at the same time every day – like eating, sleeping, getting dressed.

Think about one more thing you really like that you want to do every day. Maybe it's read a story, or dance.

Write down your five things and add it to your routine planner or keep it as your five favourite things checklist. Tick it off every day you do it.

Creative activity: What the future looks like

Thinking about the future can help us to focus and think positively. It helps us to learn how to think about and get ready for change.

Draw a picture of you and your family in your community one year from now. What will have changed? What do you hope you will be doing? What will your community look like?

Now draw another picture of you and your family in your community in many years time. Maybe now you are the parent with your children. What will have changed now? What do you hope you will be doing? What will your community look like?

Writing activity: A message of kindness to yourself

Write a message of kindness to your future self. Think about where you will be next year or many years in the future. Write a supportive message.

What do you think will change? Think of 3 positive things to say to yourself that you hope you always remember.

Reflect on why kind messages are important.

- > How does it feel to receive a positive message?
- > Who else could you send a message to, what message would you give them?

Secondary ages (11-19)

Reflective activity: 6 Rs of resilience

We can help ourselves deal with difficult situations by developing coping skills. There are many things we can do to help us cope. Doing some things that you enjoy doing every day can help bring some stability into your life. 6 things that can make you feel better are 'the 6 R's of resilience':

- > Responsibility: This means thinking about how you feel and finding ways to make you feel better. Take care of yourself. You could do the circles of control activity to help you understand what you can and cannot control.
- > Reflection: take some time to think about the kind acts you have done recently, and the kind acts people have done for you. Use your kindness calendar.
- > Relaxation: Try the breathing with colour exercise to clear your mind.
- > Relationships: Think about the people you have around you that can support you. Do the web of connections activity to explore.
- > Refuelling: Take some time to refuel. Eat well and sleep well.
- > Recreation: Do something active. Do the stay safe and active at home activity.

Think of one activity you can do every day to go with these 6 R's of resilience. Add them to your routine planner or make a checklist.

Expressive activity: A letter to your future self

Write a letter to your future self about where you hope you will be 1 year from now and 10 years from now.

- > What would you tell yourself?
- > Where do you think you will be in 1 year and 10 years?
- > Think about the encouragement you could give yourself, or the things you feel and know now that you hope you remember.

Also think about what questions you want to ask your future self.

- > What challenges do you think you'll have to overcome; how do you think you will overcome it?

Imagine activity: What does the future look like?

Write a short story or draw a comic strip showing what you hope the future will look like for you and your community.

You can expand to talk about the whole country or the whole world if you prefer but remember to think about your community as well and how this new future will affect you.

Why do you think the future will look like this? What can you do to help make this future happen? Think of the kind acts you can do day to day to make this future come true.