

Preparing for the future

This document is separated into a session plan for 5-7 year olds and another for 7-11 year olds with alternative activities. Educators are encouraged to adapt all activities to the needs of their specific learners.

Preparing for the future is difficult when things change often and we aren't sure what challenges we will face. We can still do many things to prepare ourselves by recognising feelings and creating ways to help us cope with these feelings. Use the three activities below to explore feelings about the future and learn how to feel prepared for it.

Recommended ages: 5-7



Suggested timing: 45 minutes



Learning objectives

Learners will:

- identify and recognise feelings about the future
- learn how to manage negative feelings
- think about preparedness and resilience

Starter activity: Future feeling butterflies



Ask learners to think about the future. What thoughts and feelings do they have when they think about the future?

Sometimes people like to imagine feelings as other things – such as when people say “I have butterflies in my belly” to describe when they feel excited or nervous. Encourage the learners to describe their feelings like this, what would they describe them as?

Core activity: Let them fly away



Sometimes we can have uncomfortable feelings about the future, because it is so unknown or because we worry about what will happen.

Ask learners to draw each thought or feeling as a butterfly. How big is the butterfly? What colour is it? Where in your body do you feel the butterfly fluttering?

If they can, ask learners to identify what the thought or feeling is and name each butterfly after the feeling, such as “excitement” or “worry” if they can.

Extension activity: shield of strength



We might not know what will happen in the future, but we can prepare ourselves by remembering the things that make us feel strong.

Ask learners to draw the outline of a shield and draw or write all the things that make them feel strong in the face of challenges. This could be personal skills they have, or people in their lives.

Encourage learners to think about how they can help other people feel strong too.

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Starter activity: Future thoughts



Ask learners how they feel about the future. Create a word cloud or have them share one word or phrase to describe the future and how they feel about it.

Ask learners to write down all the feelings they have about the future. Maybe these feelings are different colours or sizes. Some may be big feelings or small ones. They might be positive colours or negative colours. Encourage learners to draw them and name them if they can.

Core activity: Traffic lights



Now think about how we can help to manage some of these feelings. Some of the feelings we have about the future, such as worry or confusion, can be difficult to deal with. One way to manage is to turn a 'red' thought into a 'green' one.

Tell learners to pick one of the negative feelings they have about the future. Ask them to think about why it's negative. Encourage learners to turn that "red" overwhelming problem into an "amber" one by remembering that it is normal to feel that way and to focus on the parts of the problem they can control and solve.

Encourage the learners to think about the problem again and see if they can turn it "green". What are the positive things about the feeling? Maybe it is good to be worried about this thing, because it shows they understand it might be a challenge. What skills or ideas do learners already have to deal with this challenge? Can they ask for help or take steps to improve it?

Encourage learners to go through each worry and see if they can follow this process. They can even draw the process if it helps them, starting with the problem in a red circle, then breaking it down in an amber circle, and writing the positives in a green circle.

Extension activity: Future steps



Breaking things down into smaller steps can help us deal with challenges and can help us plan and prepare for the future.

Encourage learners to think about how they can help themselves prepare for something in the future one step at a time. Have learners think about a challenge they foresee in the future, or maybe something they've dealt with in the past but may happen again. On the [footsteps template](#), have them write out what they would do to manage this challenge in the future. It can be broken down into as many small steps as they like.

Educators could use the footsteps they have created over all these resources to create a visual display of their journey back to better.