

Monmouthshire Educational Psychology Service

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Transition, recovery and learning in the aftermath of a pandemic. A resource for secondary schools



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1. Transition and Recovery – some key ideas^{1,2}

Disasters and emergencies throw light on the world as it is. Some thinkers who study disasters frame crises not just in terms of what is lost but also what might be gained – seeing glimmers of possibility. Every disaster is different and it's never just one or the other: loss and gain always coexist.

Rebecca Solnit (2009) used case studies of disasters to argue that emergencies aren't just moments when bad things get worse, or when people inevitably become more scared, suspicious and self-centred. Instead she described the ways in which disasters open up human reserves of improvisation, solidarity and resolve, pockets of purpose and joy, even in the midst of loss and pain. Solnit's book was not a call to celebrate disaster – but to pay attention to the possibilities it might contain.

“Human beings reset themselves to something altruistic, communitarian, resourceful and imaginative after a disaster, we revert to something we already know how to do.”



¹ With reference to: A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster Rebecca Solnit 2009

² https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/31/how-will-the-world-emerge-from-the-coronavirus-crisis?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

2. What can adults working in secondary schools do to help themselves?³

Knowing your children and young people is what makes your school a place that the community will turn to as a key support for children and young people, and in whom the community is placing their trust to aid children and youth in their recovery.

It's a big responsibility, especially when we acknowledge that many adults in the school community will also be experiencing a similar range of emotions and reactions as the children, young people and their families. Experiences of bereavement and loss, caring for someone shielding, living with a frontline NHS worker or carer, coping with additional stressors, worry and anxiety will be shared and lived experiences for many.

However, we also know that resilience research frequently cites teachers as trusted significant adults and positive role models for children and young people. Teachers have the skills needed to support children and young people through difficult times, to help inspire their resiliency and hope and to help them recover their wholeness and find comfort in their community.

Now is the time that the work you have done previously with the students in your school will help them in their response to the challenges that the transition and recovery period will present. And, as always, we can continue to 'top up' resilience in the way we teach, interact with and model positive behaviour. This doesn't mean we pretend that nothing is different or that we haven't found the pandemic scary, difficult or sad. What it means is we show that people can endure such challenges and are especially able to withstand such hard times when those around them are supportive and caring. It is important to acknowledge that everyone will have their good and bad days and that there are things that we can do that will help us to feel less distressed. Remember:

*"Those who live through terrible times will often be able to help others....and some may go on to do something to make the world a better place. Even terrible things can teach some good things – like understanding, caring, courage... and how to be okay during difficult times"*⁴

Before we can help others, we need to help ourselves

As school staff we need to be seen to be practising what we are encouraging students to do. Congruence between our actions and our expectations is vital for trusting relationships with students, especially those of secondary school age. During the transition period after lockdown you will most likely be exposed to stories and information that are distressing to hear. This can result in

³ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

⁴ Marge Heegaard (1991) 'When Something Terrible Happens' Woodland Press.

stress and distress. Taking time to firstly recognise this and then to adopt strategies that provide psychological resilience and reduce stress is not only important, but professionally responsible.

Managing your own stress⁵

Try to:

- Take time out to get sufficient sleep and rest, relax and eat regularly and healthily.
- Talk to people you trust and allow yourself to be comforted. You don't have to tell everyone everything, but not saying anything to anyone is often unhelpful.
- Reduce outside demands and avoid taking on additional responsibilities.
- Spend time in a place where you feel safe and calm to go over what's happened over the course of the day/week. Don't force yourself to do this if the feelings are too strong or intense at the time.
- Try to reduce your access to the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Try scheduling 'digital power off' times.
- Use relaxation strategies e.g. slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, self-talk.
- Build in opportunities for recognising hope and positive strength.
- Allow yourself experiences of sadness and grief.

Try to avoid:

- Bottling up feelings. Consider whether it would be helpful to talk about them with someone you trust.
- Feeling embarrassed by your thoughts, feelings or those of others. These are normal reactions to a stressful event and period of time.
- Isolating yourself from those you trust and feel safe around.



What might be helpful during the transition period?

- Think about having a buddy in school, so you can check in with each other at various times if needed. It might also be helpful to have someone on hand to help you think through any questions that might come up in class and work through them together
- Don't put any pressure on yourself to do any activities or have any discussions you don't feel up to, that is absolutely fine.
- Talk to each other, support each other- the staffroom can become a real sanctuary at times when things are feeling difficult. It never hurts to bring in a few snacks and treats to share or to try and come together for a quick catch-up at break time.
- Mindfulness based activities- having strategies you can use in the moment to support you to stop.....clear your mind for a few seconds.....focus on your breath....carry on again.

⁵ Adapted from Advice from NHS Guidance for Coping with Stress Following a Major Incident

- The British Psychological Society has written guidance surrounding Teacher Resilience during coronavirus school closures. Research suggests that belonging, help-seeking behaviour and learning are central to promoting resilience. The guidance suggests ways to achieve each of these. This advice will be useful to teachers and to senior leaders in schools who want to know how to promote and foster teachers' resilience. Further information can be found [here](#) (or see Additional Resources p.26 for web address)

3. Psychological First Aid- what can adults working in secondary schools do to help each other? ⁶

Psychological first aid refers to the actions that can be taken by people without formal psychological or counselling training to provide emotional support for people following an emergency or critical incident.

The following may be useful for staff when providing psychological first aid for each other:

- Ask simple questions to ascertain what help may be needed.
- Emphasise the support available.
- Initiate contact only after you have observed and appraised the situation. It is important to make sure that contact will not be seen as intrusive or disruptive.
- Review the situation and emphasise the positive actions taken by colleagues in managing the situation.
- Listen with compassion.
- Offer to make them a cup of tea/coffee.
- Reflect the words of the person. Don't judge the statements a person makes.
- Ask non-intrusive questions (e.g. "Where were you during...?")
- Keep the discussion based on what happened. Avoid "What if...?" or "I should have..." statements. If your colleague takes this line, bring the talk back to real events.
- In some instances staff members may have an intense and lasting response and need professional psychological help. However, your interventions as a line manager or a colleague can do much to reduce or even remove the need for counselling.
- Follow-up should be at a level appropriate to the relationship between the person and helper. In some instances it may be as simple as asking "How are you now?"
- Remember that psychological first aid is about reducing distress, assisting with the current needs of colleagues and making sure that colleagues are offered the support to allow them to function within their professional setting. It is not about revisiting traumatic experiences.

⁶ Government of Western Australia Department of Education Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan Nov 2011

4. Recognising the impact of thoughts and feelings on behaviour - an Attachment Aware Approach⁷

For many schools one of the key challenges will be working out how to uphold boundaries and school rules during any transition period following lockdown; particularly for those students who are vulnerable and may have experienced lockdown as a frightening and distressing time. We know that consistent boundaries help students feel safer, and that school needs to feel as predictable a place as it can be, after experiencing something that has been so unpredictable. However, knowing how to balance this with the need, for some students, to access more intensive support can feel challenging.

What do adults need to be aware of?

Whole school behaviour policies often work for the majority of students, however they are not successful with all. This is especially true for those who have experienced **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** (*traumatic life experiences that occur before the age of 18*) and could also be true for those young people who have experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma or bereavement as a result of the pandemic. Young people respond to adversity in a range of ways, including changes in their capacity for learning and physical and psychological wellbeing. These behavioural changes may indicate confusion and uncertainty, or underlying, ongoing distress.

Some young people might display observable and active 'acting out' behaviours that communicate a clear emotional need. Others might become withdrawn or appear unusually needy. We can try to notice our tendency to make judgements around behaviour (e.g. 'mad'/'bad') and remind ourselves to view all behaviour as an indicator of emotions to which we can respond in an empathic and caring manner. This can be particularly hard to do when a young person acts in a way that hurts or frightens others.

Some groups to be especially aware of are:

- Students who have experienced significant loss or bereavement.
- Students who have been shielding during the pandemic as a result of underlying health conditions, and siblings of those who have been shielding, whose experience of lockdown will have been even more restricted.
- Students with existing social, emotional and mental health needs (some might have EHCPs that identify this as an area of special educational need that requires intensive support).
- Students with other known special educational needs or disabilities.
- Students who are Looked After, Children in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Students who came under Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker status who may have previous experiences of trauma.

For these students, approaches that tend to focus mainly on behaviour can have further negative effects and tend not to provide opportunities for young people to learn to express their emotions in a more socially acceptable way.

⁷ With reference to i) materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network and ii) Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools.

What might help?

- The general principle of providing a safe environment, high in nurture and structure, with adults responding in a consistent manner, maintaining clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour is still important, most particularly, when other areas of a student's life may not feel as structured. This consistency is containing for young people. *(see section 4 Tips for creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom).*
- Trust your instincts in knowing when ignoring low level behaviour is needed. Reflecting on whether students would typically exhibit these types of behaviours, or whether it is "out of character" will help to make informed judgements. Hold on to the importance of **flexibility** for these students.
- Discuss the relationship between behaviour, thoughts and feelings with students, and how we often use our behaviour to communicate our feelings, particularly when we are unable to label the emotion.
- The use of an '**authoritative**' versus '**authoritarian**' approach where adults are 'in control' versus 'controlling' can be very powerful. We know that fostering **connection, inclusion, respect and value** for all members of the school community supports students to feel a sense of belonging, being heard, understood and cared about, and provides a context in which they can start to express their emotions in a more socially acceptable way.

Top Tips for implementing an Attachment Aware Approach⁸

Recognise behaviour as a form of communication - the behaviour might be a very normal response to adverse life experiences

Promote a positive approach - offer specific and descriptive praise or discrete non-verbal feedback

Differentiate expectations - set the expectations so that children and young people aren't set up to fail

Differentiate response - express disapproval of the behaviour and not the person

Relationships first - 'Engage, don't Enrage' - empathy comes before problem-solving around the behaviour

Small actions can make a big difference - smiling at/greeting a CYP on their way into school can really add to their sense of belonging

Don't expect immediate results or returns - a CYP might be dismissive of you but this doesn't mean that your actions weren't valued

Expect sabotage from some CYP and name it, where appropriate - 'Name it to tame it'. Dan Siegel⁹

Recognise that what you feel is a likely indication of how the CYP feels

⁸ Adapted from Sarah Ahmed 2017 *Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton and Hove Schools*.

⁹ *The Whole-Brain Child* 2011 Siegel and Bryson

5. Tips for creating a resilient and well-being focused classroom¹⁰

As much as returning to school may feel like a relief, or even feel exciting for some young people, it is also likely to be a time when many young people feel anxious, particularly those who have underlying health conditions or who live with someone who is shielding. Feeling safe may have come to be associated with 'staying at home', 'social distancing' and frequent handwashing and so we all need to learn new ways to continue to feel safe whilst connecting with our friends and peers and learning together back in our school setting. Teachers can help to create classroom environments that provide reassurance, for example, how they are following the latest government and scientific guidelines, and make expectations clear about how we can all look after ourselves and each other. This may take time and it is important for us to hold on to the idea of a **transition period** as we develop new ways of learning together in the aftermath; rather than rushing or putting unnecessary pressure on ourselves or each other to 'feel or get back to normal'.

- **Look after your own emotional needs**

Many of you within the school community could be experiencing a similar range of reactions and feelings in response to the pandemic and lockdown period as the young people in your classes. This can make it particularly difficult to focus on the needs of the others. As adults, we have a wider range of coping skills than are available to young people and know that we can survive adversity. Young people often haven't yet learnt through experience that they too have these coping capacities.

Working with young people who have had a particularly stressful and frightening experience of the pandemic could be challenging, and it is possible that in hearing their stories you may also experience stress symptoms. It is not uncommon for teachers to feel some of the anxiety, helplessness and anger that their young people feel.

- **Create a safe classroom and school environment**

For young people to feel safe, schools and classrooms need to be high in both nurture and structure, and need to be predictable and organised, with clearly stated, reasonable expectations. Ground rules focusing on how we can keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible together can be co-constructed with groups and classes, with reviews planned to allow for changes and adaptations in response to new developments. New routines and boundaries can be discussed and agreed to provide reassurance to allow young people to negotiate their day with confidence.

- **Help students to regulate their emotions so that they can learn**

In addition to having a calm classroom, teaching young people strategies to self-calm is useful and conducive to creating a positive learning atmosphere. Sometimes for there to be calmness there needs to be opportunity for movement and the expenditure of energy. Young people who seem to be particularly jumpy, anxious, nervous or on edge may find that a brief time out that allows for time

¹⁰ With reference to materials developed by Australia Child & Adolescent Trauma Loss & Grief Network

outside or even being able to get out of their seat and hand out sheets for a class task allows them to resettle.



Talking about feelings, having posters around the classroom that provide words for feelings and emotions and cueing children and young people into their feelings are all strategies that develop emotional literacy and help children and young people to understand their own and others' feelings. If a student seems particularly upset, distressed or angry, it is important to first let them calm down- perhaps have some time out of the classroom, before helping them to identify their feelings.

- **Believe that students can achieve academic success**

The temptation to expect less from young people after frightening events is common. Although their capacity for concentration may be affected it can be re-developed through good teaching strategies, support and time. Make all expectations clear, break tasks down to subsets and provide supportive and clear feedback during and after each subtask to check that the student is on task and has understood the task correctly. Scaffold the task and the skills required to achieve learning. Acknowledge successes and provide explicit feedback on what has been achieved.

- **Restore a sense of control and personal efficacy**

Provide a place to calm down such as a 'peaceful corner' or a quiet reflective place in school where young people can take time out in a quiet place to regain composure and reduce stimulation. Zoning out with music, spending time in libraries, beanbag areas for chilling out with creative arts or a game of basketball are all strategies that students have found useful. Talk to students about how they can support their own sense of well-being by building positive actions into their daily life such as **'Keeping active, connecting with others, taking notice, giving and keeping learning.'**¹¹

- **Build strengths and capacity**

Every child and young person has strengths, aspirations, hopes and dreams. Use solution focused conversations to find out about these. (Asking with interest, *'what are you good at? And what else?'* and if possible deepening the conversation *'When you are at your best what are you pleased and proud to notice about yourself? What does this tell you about what you might be capable of?'*). Promote opportunities for the child or young person to experience success and help them to work out ways they can put these skills to use in other areas of their learning and life. Sometimes they will need help to make the connections and generalise the skills.

¹¹ *Five Ways to Wellbeing* New economics foundation. Centre for Well-being. 2008

Values in Action Character Strengths



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Social scientists tell us that everyone possesses all 24 of the above character strengths in different degrees, and these are universal across cultures and nations. Ask young people to identify their top 5 strengths (and do the same for yourself!). Discuss other strengths you and they have noticed and build in opportunities to remind them of these. Planning actions and activities to help children and young people to be their best helps to bring a sense of personal control and achievement to the day-to-day life.

- **Be hopeful and optimistic**

Some young people may experience a loss of trust in the world after something as frightening and unpredictable as a global pandemic; they may believe that because a terrifying thing has happened, they can no longer dare to hope that life can be happy and safe again. Modelling optimism and encouraging them to see the strengths and coping skills they have and encouraging them to notice acts of courage and kindness will help develop a sense of personal efficacy and future.



It is not uncommon for students to have a less optimistic view of the future after events such as these. Reminding them of their strengths, hopes and aspirations and providing opportunities for them to achieve and experience success will help them to take a positive view of their lives. Remember optimism can be taught and that it is contagious.

¹² Values in Action Character Strengths

- **Engagement, social connection and trusting relationships that are built on respect and positive regard**

Communities and societies provide resources which are key to facilitating resilience - being part of a social group is protective and can help people overcome adverse events. However, after events that are frightening such as a global pandemic and social distancing, communities and school communities can change. School provides a community of care for children and young people and it is through the relationships that they have with friends and teachers that they can begin to recover from and make sense of the events.

Some children and young people (and staff) come to school for normality. They may not want to have to talk or think about what's happened as a result of the pandemic, but would rather have as normal as possible a school day of learning and play. Being sad and dealing with the emotions and consequences takes a lot of energy and head space. Not talking about what happened doesn't mean that the child or young person isn't thinking about it or is being unusually avoidant. It's important to take our cues from the child or young person and for them to know there is no one right reaction. It's okay to ask them quietly what their preference is.



For many young people, their teachers and supportive adults in school are adults in whom they can confide and ask difficult questions. Many young people express the view that they don't want to upset their parents or further stress them by asking questions or saying that they are struggling. This is when a trusted relationship with an adult at school will allow the young person to gain the help and support they need.

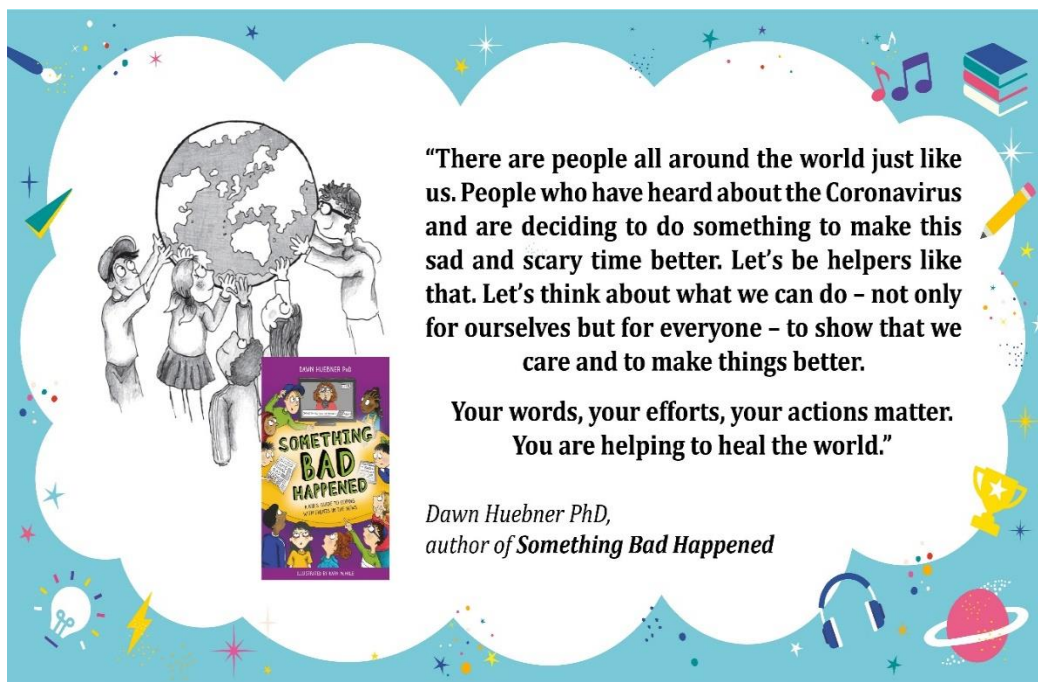
6. Activities promoting connectedness and resilience

Some activities within this booklet may need to be adapted, to meet current guidance regarding social distancing and safe practices in schools

During disasters and emergencies, alongside the stories of loss and grief, we also hear extraordinary stories of how different individuals, families and communities come together and act with kindness, courage and initiative. We can encourage children and young people to share their stories about ways in which their community helped each other. For example, neighbourhood delivery networks springing up to provide medicines or shopping to people who couldn't get out. We can reflect on what might have changed possibly for the better or what has been brought into sharper focus for us. For example, stories about the impact on the climate such as reduced industrial activity, road traffic and expanded bike lanes leading to air pollution plummeting and birdsong returning to neighbourhoods.

***Many events plant seeds, imperceptible at the time,
that bear fruit long afterward.¹³***

Reading Well - Books on Prescription! A survey by the Reading Agency (April 2020) indicated that 31% of people in Wales are reading more during lockdown. **Reading Well for young people** recommends expert endorsed books about mental health, providing 13 to 18 year olds with advice and information about issues like anxiety, stress and OCD, and difficult experiences like bullying and exams. <https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-mental-health>



¹³ *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster* Rebecca Solnit 2009

Depending on the age of the children and young people, activities listed below may be helpful in promoting connectedness and resilience. Teachers should work together with colleagues to agree which of the activities would be most relevant and appropriate for their class. Be aware of individuals who may not want to take part and provide alternative meaningful activities for those who do not want to participate without them feeling 'different' or less relevant in any way. For older children and young people team projects can develop a sense of shared experience and togetherness. Activities can focus on the positive gains made.

Topics that can be used in discussions, digital media and projects may include:

- **The role of the individual, family and community.** Thinking about how different communities came together through this time. For example, #Viralkindness, COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK, Community Choirs, Clap for Carers, 5k for Heroes.
- **Reflecting on what might have changed for the better.** For example, impact on the climate, opportunities to pursue a new interest, appreciation of loved ones.
- **Local heroes** – family and friends who are carers or keyworkers, work for the NHS, leaders in the local community etc

Strategies and approaches that have really helped when things have felt tough, this could include mindfulness for example, or sharing stories about social activities that stand out for them. See *Appendix 2 for Mindfulness Based Activities*.

- Sharing the creative ways that children, young people and families have expressed themselves over the lockdown period - by drawing, painting, writing, or through music, drama, dance, Tik-Tok challenges etc.
- **Cook & Talk activities** Groups of 8 children with 2 adults come together to make a fruit salad. The table leader gives step by step cooking instructions and at each step the leader reads out a scripted question for the pairs or groups to discuss. For example, '*It's important to try to find times to relax and have fun even when scary or sad things have happened. Talk about a time when you were able to relax and have fun.*' See *Appendix 4 for a Cook & Talk Fruit Salad activity sheet*.

What challenges have you had to overcome?



We have all had to find ways to cope and to try to stay strong and carry on this year.

- **Writing to Heal (Pennebaker).** Research suggests that expressive writing can be a route to healing. Writing to Heal is an activity that involves people writing down deepest feelings about

an emotional upheaval in their life for 15 to 20 minutes a day for four consecutive days. See *Appendix 1 for a Writing to Heal activity handout.*

- **Ways to Wellbeing activities.** Plan curriculum activities throughout the day/week linked to the 5 ways to wellbeing: [Connect](#), [Take Notice](#), [Keep Learning](#), [Keep Active](#) and [Give](#).

Rhwydwaith Pum Ffordd at **Les Gwent**



Gwent Five Ways to Wellbeing Network

- **THUNKS on DEATH (Winston's Wish).** Thunks are beguilingly simple questions developed by Winston's Wish with Independent Thinking 'that make your brain go ouch'. This set was designed to open up group discussion about grief, death and bereavement. *See Appendix 5 for Thunks activity.*
- **WORDLES** can be helpful in allowing young people to explore the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing - using online tools, children can generate word clouds from the text that they input. The Wordle gives more prominence to words that appear more frequently in the inputted text.



Guidelines for supporting students during these activities:

- Acknowledge losses, fears and other emotions when present.
- Provide reassurance that the thoughts, feelings and reactions are a normal part of recovering from the losses associated with the pandemic, even though they may be upsetting, and that they will lessen in intensity over time.
- Help children and young people to feel safe in their contributions.
- Celebrate strengths and progress.
- Have supportive and trusted adults available to help in case children and young people become overwhelmed by their feelings and reactions.
- Remind children and young people of their coping strategies through your genuine observations and knowledge of them.
- Focusing any discussions around group collaborative, practical activities or tasks can be helpful with additional adults to support.
- Remember that sometimes when students are finding something emotionally difficult, the first signs might be through changes in their behaviour. This can be especially true for students with existing needs or those that were most affected and are finding it difficult to communicate how they are feeling.



Appendix 1: Writing to Heal¹⁴

Dr. Pennebaker's Basic Writing Assignment

Over the next four days, write about your deepest emotions and thoughts about the emotional upheaval that has been influencing your life the most. In your writing, really let go and explore the event and how it has affected you. You might tie this experience to your childhood, your relationship with your parents, people you have loved or love now, or even your career. Write continuously for 20 minutes.

Tips for Writing to Heal

- Find a time and place where you won't be disturbed
- Write continuously for at least 20 minutes
- Don't worry about spelling or grammar
- Write only for yourself
- Write about something extremely personal and important for you
- Deal only with events or situations you can handle now

"People who engage in expressive writing report feeling happier and less negative than before writing. Similarly, reports of depressive symptoms, rumination, and general anxiety tend to drop in the weeks and months after writing about emotional upheavals."

From "Writing to Heal"
by James W. Pennebaker

¹⁴ Reference Vive Griffith Children and War Foundation Childrenandwar.org.uk

Appendix 2: Mindfulness Based Activities¹⁵

i. Finger Breathing

- 1) Rest your hands on your lap or a table and tune into the feeling of your breathing.
 - 2) Feel the in and out movements of your breath wherever you notice it in your body.
 - 3) Secondly hold one hand up to your face and trace with a finger from the other hand up and down the fingers.
 - 4) Trace the breath flow with your finger, pausing at the tip of your finger at the end of the in-breath and at the bottom of your finger at the end of the out-breath.
 - 5) Do this along the other fingers on your hand, breathing in and out as your trace up and down your finger.
- If your mind wanders, that's ok, just begin again whenever you need to at the next in-breath or out-breath you notice.



¹⁵ Based on *Mindfulness in School Project .b* and *Paws.b* materials

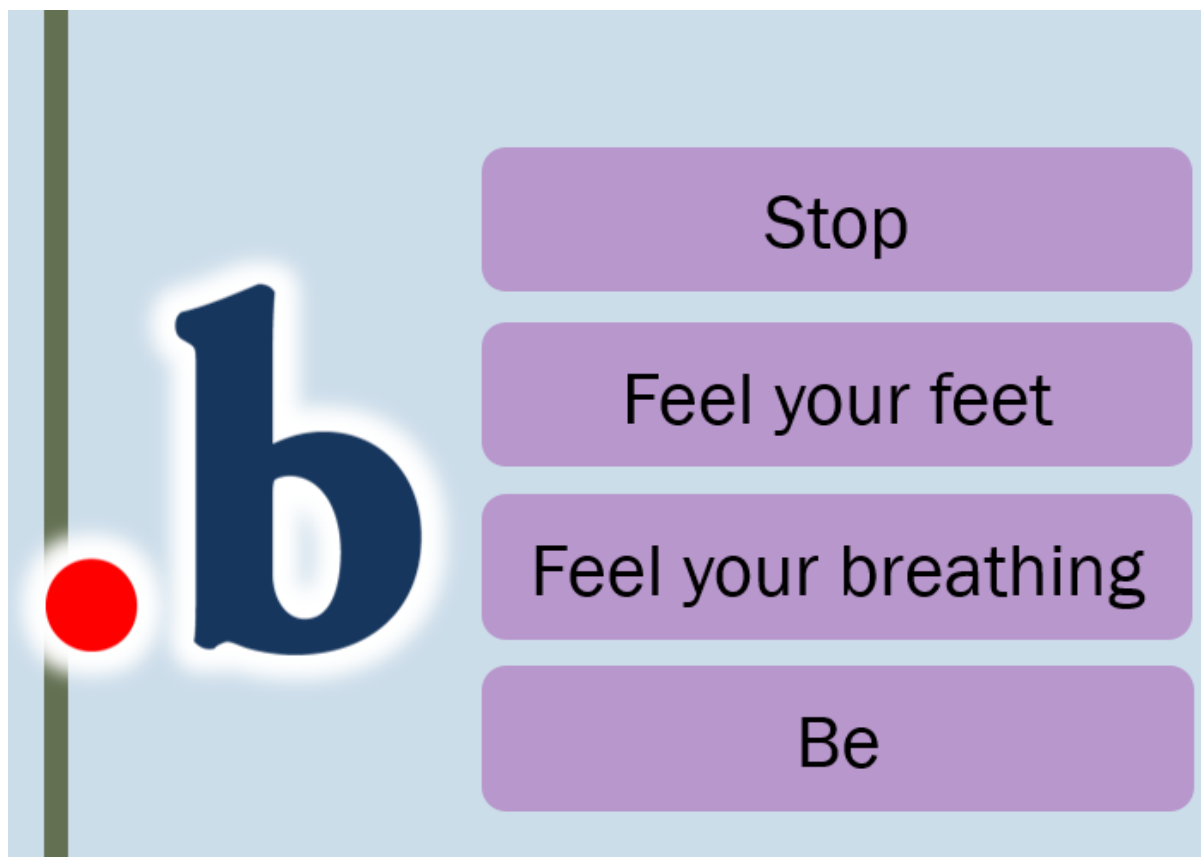
ii. Stop and breathe

During the day, there usually isn't time to do a lengthy meditation exercise. Instead, it is possible to do a brief .b to freshen your awareness, change mental gear, and wake up to exactly what's going on in the moment. Doing a .b is a quick way to help your brain change mode – from being busy and thinking and doing to sensing / and being. The basics of mindfulness are summed up in this practice. Shifting mode, or changing the gear of the mind is the “Core Skill” of mindfulness.

Doing a “.b” is the way to achieve this. .b is a portable 4-step exercise which goes like this:

1. STOP whatever you're doing, maybe noticing you've been in autopilot.
2. FEEL YOUR FEET on the ground. Let this ground/anchor you.
3. FEEL THE SENSATIONS OF BREATHING as it moves through your body.
4. Practise BEING – relaxing into the present moment, BEING HERE NOW!

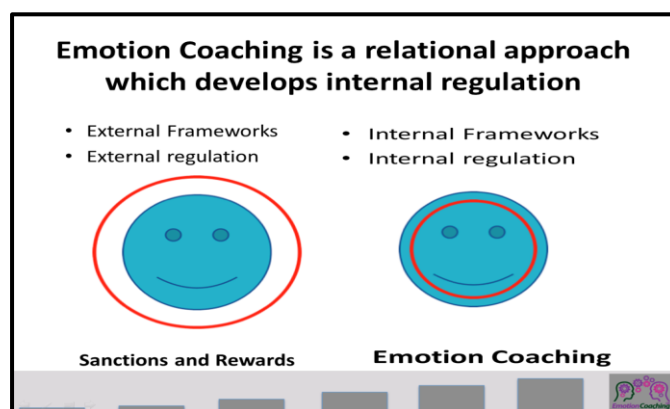
Very easy one to do with students- in the moment- if they are especially anxious or upset. Anchoring and calming.



Appendix 3: Emotion Coaching

Emotion coaching builds a power base that is an emotional bond – this creates a safe haven, a place of trust, a place of respect, a place of acceptance, a sense of self. This in turn leads to children and young people giving back respect and acceptance of boundaries’ (Rose & Gus, 2017).¹⁶

Emotion Coaching tools can be a quick and easy way to support students in developing emotional regulation strategies, where they begin to make explicit links between their thoughts and feelings and how they are behaving. This approach is based on key attachment concepts, such as the importance of **connection**.



The following principles are central to Emotion Coaching:¹⁷

- All emotions are natural and normal, and not always a matter of choice
- Behaviour is a form of communication
- Emotional ‘first aid’ (calming, soothing) is needed first: ‘connect before re-direct’ (Siegel, 2013), ‘Rapport before reason’ (Riley, 2009)
- Children cannot successfully self-regulate their emotions unless they have experienced and internalised co-regulation i.e. an adult tuning in/empathising with their emotional state and thus ‘containing’ - sharing, supporting and carrying- their emotional state.

What Emotion Coaching means in practice

(how co-regulation works)

Step 1: **Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm** (‘I understand how you feel, you’re not alone’)

Step 2: **Validating the feelings and labelling** (‘This is what is happening, this is what you’re feeling’)

Step 3 (if needed): **Setting limits on behaviour** (‘We can’t always get what we want’)

Step 4: **Problem-solving with the child/young person** (‘We can sort this out’)

¹⁶ From *Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton & Hove Schools*

¹⁷ *Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy: Guidance for Brighton & Hove Schools*

Appendix 4: Cook & Talk - Fruit Salad Activity¹⁸



This recipe is vegan and does not contain any of the 14 major allergens

Ingredients

Total ingredients needed (for 8)	Ingredients per pair
4 small cups of fresh strawberries	1 small cup of fresh strawberries
4 small cups of green seedless grapes	1 small cup of green seedless grapes
4 firm bananas	1 firm banana
1 cantaloupe melon	2 slices of cantaloupe melon
4 Granny Smith apples	1 Granny Smith apple
4 kiwi fruit	1 kiwi fruit
Fresh Orange juice	1 small cup of orange juice

Preparation: Wipe down the table. Work out how many pairs you have at the table (max 4 pairs) and work out how best to position the following utensils per pair. There should be one adult leader per group.

Divide the ingredients between pairs.

Cut the melon into slices and give 2 to each pair.

1 large bowl needed for food waste.

You will need (per pair)

1 chopping board, 1 sharp knife, 1 peeler, 2 mixing bowls, 1 tablespoon.

1 large bowl for food waste, Bowls to serve, spoons to eat with.

¹⁸ Adapted by Jane Roller Senior Educational Psychologist ©Bi-Borough EPCS with thanks to Localwelcome.org

Introductory script

Today we're going to learn how to make some salads in pairs at our tables, and at the same time we're going to answer some questions about ways you/we have been coping and staying strong. It's important that we remind ourselves of the courage we have shown and the skills and strengths we have learned this year. We're going to talk to each other about what we have done and what has helped us to do that while we make our salads.

Ask if there are any questions and don't forget to WASH HANDS before starting.

Steps:	Leader script and Questions for pairs:
1. Cut the top off the strawberries and cut in half. Add to bowl.	Optional script: We all find different ways of coping during difficult times. Q: Tell your partner/ the group one way that you have tried to 'stay strong'.
2. Cut the grapes in half. Add to bowl.	Optional script: We all have different challenges to overcome. Q: Tell your partner/ the group one of the challenges you have overcome and what has helped.
3. Peel and slice the banana into small pieces. Add to bowl.	Optional script: It's important to try to find times to relax and have fun even when scary or sad things have happened. Q: Tell your partner/ the group about a time when you were able to relax and have fun.
4. Cut the melon slices into small pieces. Add to bowl.	Optional script: Sometimes there are opportunities to learn new things during times of crisis. Q: What strengths or new skills have you developed?
5. Peel and core the apple and cut into small pieces.	Optional script: When scary or sad things happen, the smallest act of kindness can have enormous power. Q: What kindnesses have you noticed and appreciated?
6. Peel and slice the kiwi fruit.	Optional script: Connecting with other people can help us stay strong. Q: What have other people done to help you?
7. Combine the fruit. Pour over the orange juice and toss to coat. Enjoy!	Optional script: Learning new things makes us more confident as well as being fun. Q: What new things would you like to learn or try next year?

Appendix 5: THUNKS on Death

THUNKS ON DEATH

Introduction

Thunks™ are 'beguilingly simple-looking questions' that make your brain go ouch. They grew out of educator and writer Ian Gilbert's work on Philosophy for Children and have proved incredibly popular with teachers around the world as a quick and easy tool for getting children and young people's brains to hurt. This particular set, a collaboration between Winston's Wish and Independent Thinking, is specifically designed to open up thinking and discussion around the topics of death, grief and bereavement.

Instructions

The only Golden Rule when it comes to Thunks is that there are no 'right' answers. Their purpose is to encourage thought, debate, argument and philosophical reflection as well as practising speaking and listening skills. From working on a single Thunk as an entire class to having one each, one between two or working in smaller 'communities of enquiry', from using them as lessons starters to building whole lessons around a single Thunk, teachers have used them in many, many ways with children of all ages and academic backgrounds. Good luck!



Winston's Wish is a Registered Charity (England and Wales) 1061359, (Scotland) SC041140 | 0308

Is being alive a choice?



If every time you laughed, it knocked a minute off your life, would you stop laughing?



Is it better to die suddenly than be given a month to live?



Is it ever cruel to save a life?



Can you choose not to be sad?



Do you love a family member less after they've died?



**Can you love someone you
can't see?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is it really better to have
loved and lost than not have
loved at all?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Do you still own the things
you've lost forever?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Can you choose to be happy?

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is quantity more important
than quality when it comes to
your life?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Are funerals always sad?

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Are you a different person
once both your parents die?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Is it an act of love to let
someone you love die
before you?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**If you put the brain of someone
who has died into a robot, have you
brought that person back to life?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Is a funeral a party?

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**Should your online profile be
deleted as soon as you die?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

**If someone is being kept
alive, are they living?**

independent
thinking

WINSTON'S
WISH WWW

Should we be made to live longer if we can?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Can you love someone who's not around?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Do all your family members have to be alive to be part of your family?

Is anything worth dying for?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Does grief hurt?

If you dream of someone who has died, are you dreaming of their ghost?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Does a child know what death is?

If you could live forever, would you want to?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Can death ever be happy?

Is losing a loved one harder the older they are?

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

independent thinking 

WINSTON'S WISH WWW

Do you die when the last person who remembers you dies?

Appendix 6: An Introduction to MAPs

Making Action Plans or Mapping Alternative Pathways



“There are times when life’s changes call for new responses and it is good to re-tell and focus people’s stories in order to affirm their gifts, clarify what is necessary for those gifts to be well received, and make action agreements that will lead to better opportunities.”¹⁹

MAPs is a person centred, creative, futures planning tool that can be used to facilitate an organisation in thinking around a challenge or issue.²⁰ MAPs uses both process and graphic facilitation to create a shared vision of a positive future and to make a start on working out what they need to do together to move towards that vision. The MAPs session will be led by two trained facilitators – a process facilitator who guides people through the stages and ensures that the focus person is at the centre throughout, and a graphic facilitator who creates a large graphic record of each of the steps in the MAP.

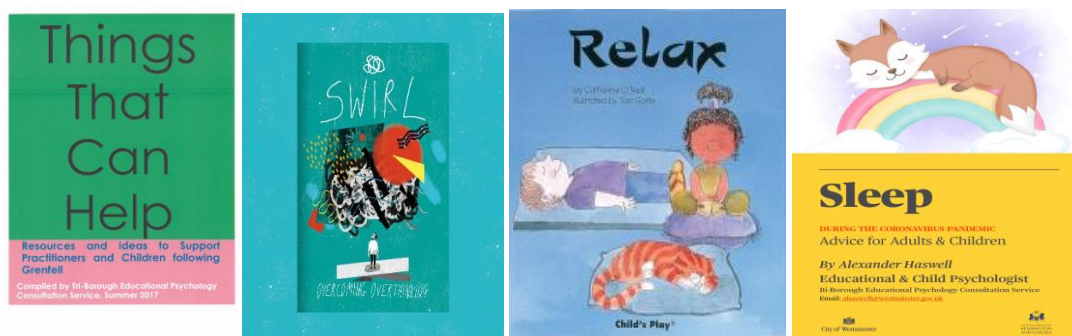
Please contact Monmouthshire Educational Psychology Service or your School link EP if you wish to find out more about anything detailed here, or for any additional support or advice.

¹⁹ O’Brien, Pearpoint and Kahn, 2010

²⁰ Developed by Forest, Pearpoint and O’Brien in 1980s

Appendix 7: Additional Resources

1. Coronavirus related resources to support children and young people
<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/aln-covid-19>
2. Gwent Five Ways to Wellbeing - <https://www.monfis.org.uk/support-services/gwent-five-ways-wellbeing-network>
3. THINGS THAT CAN HELP. Resources and ideas to support practitioners following Grenfell. Early Years, primary and secondary editions.
4. SLEEP during the Coronavirus pandemic. Alex Haswell
5. SWIRL ZINE An uncomplicated, empowering guide for young people to help manage worry and rumination. Andy Walton. The Swirl project.
6. RELAX. Catherine O'Neill. Child's Play.



7. WINSTON'S WISH Coronavirus related Bereavement materials for schools: How schools can support children and young people; How to tell a child or young person that someone has died from coronavirus; How to say goodbye when a funeral isn't possible
<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-schools-support-children-young-people/>

Winston's Wish are currently running FREE online training for school staff on 'Childhood Bereavement : an introduction' & 'What you can do to help'.

8. GRIEF ENCOUNTER - Support for bereaved children and their families:
<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/> and CRUSE: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>
9. TEEN BREATHE – monthly magazine available from newsagents and supermarkets.
10. WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. Marge Heegaard Woodland Press. For younger children up to 11 years.
11. WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS. 'One Education' Education Psychology Team. For older children and young people.
12. *The EPS has a Bereavement Pack – contact your school EP for further information.*
13. *The Nurture Group has published a document to support talking about death, grief and bereavement.*

14. Web address for BPS document regarding Teacher Resilience during Coronavirus:
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Member%20Networks/Divisions/DECP/Teacher%20resilience%20during%20coronavirus%20school%20closures.pdf>

