



# Staying positive (resilience)

Age range: 11-19

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



# Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
45-60 mins	<p>By the end of the activity students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the importance of staying positive (resilience), including in relation to the workplace</li> <li>• Understand the importance of learning from experiences, even if they are negative</li> <li>• Explain different strategies they can use to build resilience and manage personal challenges and setbacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying positive (resilience) student worksheet</li> <li>• Staying positive (resilience) presentation slides</li> </ul>

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded [here](#).

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# Introduction to transferable skills

Economic, societal and technological forces are changing the world of work, and skills like staying positive (resilience), problem solving, creativity and leadership are becoming increasingly valuable to employers. Your students may already possess some of these core transferable skills but by improving them and developing others, they can be better prepared for the future workplace. By delivering each of the skill-based lessons in this suite you can encourage growth in all these areas or focus in on the ones your students need most.

- If this is the first LifeSkills lesson you have delivered with this group start by showing students **slide 2** which features each of the core transferable skills at the heart of the programme. Go through each skill and ask students if they can offer definitions (provided below), examples of these skills in action or explain how they might work together, for example being proactive to solve a problem
- If you have already introduced all these skills to the group and why they are all important, move on to the next step to explore the specific skill for this lesson in more detail. Use **slide 3** to focus in on the skill of Staying Positive and explain how the activities in this lesson help them work towards specific steps of the Skills Builder Framework

## Core transferable skills



**Problem solving** skills are about the ability to find a solution to a complex situation or challenge, often using analytical thinking to come up with a methodical approach or break a problem down into parts



**Creativity** is the use of imagination and the generation of new ideas, and building the confidence to improve these ideas on your own and by collaborating with others



**Listening and speaking (communication)** is about receiving and retaining information, persuading and influencing others, and using critical thinking skills to evaluate different perspectives



**Leadership** is about recognising your own strengths in order to best support, encourage and motivate others to achieve a shared goal



**Aiming high (being proactive)** is the ability to set clear goals and prioritise tasks to achieve them, as well identifying when to take the initiative instead of reacting to external event



**Staying positive (resilience)** is about the ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals



**Adaptability** is having the skills to cope and thrive in response to changes and challenges



**Teamwork** is an important skills used when working with another person, or people in a group

# Introduction to transferable skills

- The Skills Builder Framework, developed by the Skills Builder Partnership, provides a shared language and common expectations for eight essential skills: Listening; Speaking; Problem Solving; Creativity; Staying Positive; Aiming High; Leadership; Teamwork. LifeSkills content on transferable skills can be used to support a young person's progression through each of the essential skills, providing a relatable, real-world employability context and this relationship is indicated in brackets above
- LifeSkills lessons always include the opportunity for young people to work in groups and share ideas, as well as providing context for the importance of effective teamwork in the workplace. Look out for the teamwork icon in this lesson and throughout the core transferable skills content



## Optional

Optional: The Skills Builder Framework provides measurable steps for eight essential skills and can be used in combination with this lesson to support your students' progress.

Skills Builder also offer a student Self-Assessment Tool, which helps learners to reflect on their own skill strengths and areas for development. This and other resources can be accessed on the Skills Builder Hub ([skillsbuilder.org/hub](https://skillsbuilder.org/hub)).

# Activity one

## Exploring resilience (11-19)

### 1. Build and develop resilience

- Explain that this session is going to explore resilience, and ways to build it. To begin, ask everyone in the group to write on a post-it note a situation when a person might need to be resilient. Then create a graffiti wall by sticking their post-it note in a dedicated space or on a large piece of paper. Examples might include not getting the expected grades for a subject; poor team performance in a sports tournament; being rejected for a college course, sports team, drama part, being given constructive feedback, etc
- Share some of the examples given and ask what the situations all have in common (e.g. they are all setbacks; disappointments; times when things don't go according to plan etc.)

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### 2. Discuss the situations in more detail

- Divide students into small groups and ask them to pick one or two of the situations to discuss (they can take the relevant post-it notes off the wall for their group). They should consider:
  - The emotions a person might feel in this situation
  - How stressful this situation could be on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest)
  - Different ways of reacting in this situation, negative and positive
  - How different types of reaction might help or not help the person in this situation
- Take feedback from the groups, then as a class, vote on the reaction response which they think demonstrates the most resilience/ability to stay positive

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### 3. Reflect on these questions

To help them think about how they can stay positive and build resilience, ask students the following questions:

**What characteristics or skills are needed to overcome setbacks?**

**What can be the risk of sharing the positive side of a difficult situation?**

**How can involving others with identifying the positive side be helpful?**

**What tactics can someone use to demonstrate and build resilience? E.g. stay positive, ask for help, talk to a friend**

- Tell students they will be considering these skills and tactics in the activities that follow
- This activity aligns with step 8 of the Skills Builder framework for staying positive

# Activity two

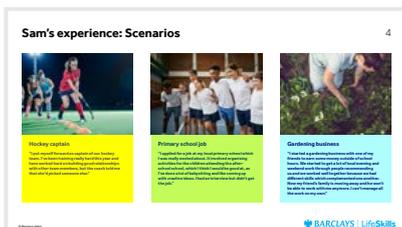
## Demonstrating resilience (11-16)

### 1. Think of examples of resilience



- Ask students for examples of setbacks which they have experienced themselves. These could be examples of those discussed above, or others. What did they do to move on from that setback, and do they think they were successful? (Only ask students who are willing to share experiences to feed back)
- What do students think they learnt from the setbacks they experienced (again, they do not have to share this)?
- Display **slide 3** and share the LifeSkills definition of staying positive (resilience): the ability to use tactics to overcome setbacks and achieve goals
- Explain to students that being resilient is transferable across all aspects of life including school, college and work

### 2. Explore some setback scenarios



- Look at the three scenarios on the **Sam's experience worksheet** and **slide 4** which are all examples of setbacks for Sam. For each scenario discuss and record responses to the following:

**How might the scenarios have made Sam feel?**

**What resilience strategies could Sam use to overcome their feelings after each setback?**

**What could Sam do to learn from the situations?**

**What could Sam do differently if a similar situation arises again?**

### 3. Reflect on resilience

Discuss ways in which resilience can affect our mental wellbeing and the sorts of challenges students might face in future that will require them to be resilient

- Using the personal setback(s) they identified in the activity above, ask students to reflect on how they could have handled their own situation more successfully. If they think they handled their situation positively, ask them to identify what it is they think they did which helped them

**What do they need to think about if they are going to adapt their plan in response to a difficult situation?**

**How can they find opportunities in difficult situations?**

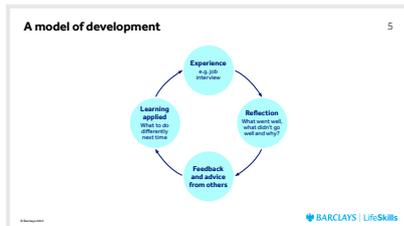
**How can we turn analysis into new plans?**

- This activity aligns with step 9 of the Skills Builder Framework for staying positive

# Activity three

## Learning from experience (16-19)

### 1. Discuss students' own abilities to be positive



- Using the definition of resilience on **slide 3** and on the **How resilient am I? student worksheet**, ask students to reflect on their own abilities to be positive and resilient
- Now ask students to use the **Getting through a setback student worksheet** to consider a specific experience of a setback in more depth, and whether or not they demonstrated resilience to overcome it. If they need prompts or inspiration, use the examples on the **Sam's experience student worksheet** and **slide 4**
- When they have completed their sheets, ask any students who are willing to share ways they handled their experience and the associated feelings and emotions. How do they think they learnt from the experience and their reaction to it? How does overcoming disappointment and setbacks help us grow and develop? Show the cycle model of development on **slide 5** to help them visualise how setbacks can lead to growth

### 2. Explore students' own resilience

**Ask students to reflect on the potential effects of being resilient in workplace situations and how someone's reactions to a situation can affect their own work and that of their colleagues. How can being resilient, both individually and together as a team, enable teams to work more successfully?**

**Can students think of ways we can use our understanding of ourselves and the situation to adapt our plans? Ask students to consider whether some people do well by chance, or whether persistence and putting in repeated effort over time achieve better outcomes. What are the benefits of identifying risks and gains when facing a challenge?**

- You could extend the discussion and encourage students to research it further by dividing them into 'for' and 'against' teams to debate the statement 'Positive outcomes are more down to luck than resilience'
- This activity aligns with step 11 of the Skills Builder Framework for staying positive

# Activity four

## Next steps (11-19)

### 1. Explore personal goals

**Ask students to consider their future personal goals in life and work. How could building resilience help them towards achieving those goals?**

- To help them with this, ask them to:
  1. Identify a long-term personal goal
  2. Identify one or two things which might be a setback to achieving the goal
  3. Using **slide 6** to introduce the 4 A's Approach – Avoid, Alter, Adapt and Accept. Thinking about the challenges to achieving that goal, can they come up with a plan that uses their resilience skills to alleviate the challenge and feel prepared for setbacks
  4. 16-19 Extension: Encourage students to reflect on which of the 4 A's they are better at using in the face of challenges, and whether they could practice other strategies more in order to be more resilient, using **slide 6**

## Try next

The activities in the [Wellbeing toolkit](#) also help young people understand how positive mental wellbeing can impact on their future success and career prospects. Share them with students and support them in building skills such as resilience, communication, self-confidence, time management and proactivity. It also includes coping strategies to help manage everyday pressures

The [Problem solving skills](#) lesson follows this session well, as being able to efficiently find solutions to complex problems can help with staying positive and being resilient when facing difficulty.

You could also consider the [Putting enterprise skills into action](#) lesson, which helps students identify which skills are enterprising (including positivity and resilience), and how they can develop these further, or the [Growth mindset toolkit](#).

# Staying positive (resilience)

## Sam's experience: Scenario 1

Below is a scenario where Sam experienced a setback in an aspect of her life. For the scenario, consider Sam's feelings, the strategies they could have used to overcome these, and how Sam could learn from the situation to do things differently next time they experience a setback.

### Scenario 1

"I put myself forward as captain of our hockey team. I've been training really hard this year and have worked hard on building good relationships with other team members, but the coach told me that she'd picked someone else."

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**Which emotions might Sam be feeling in this situation?**

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**Which resilience strategies could Sam use to overcome these emotions and move forward?**

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**How could Sam learn from this situation?**

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**What could Sam do differently next time in a similar situation?**

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# Staying positive (resilience)

## Sam's experience: Scenario 2

Below is a scenario where Sam experienced a setback in an aspect of her life. For the scenario, consider Sam's feelings, the strategies they could have used to overcome these, and how Sam could learn from the situation to do things differently next time they experience a setback.

### Scenario 2

"I applied for a job at my local primary school which I was really excited about. It involved organising activities for the children attending the after-school school, which I think I would be good at, as I've done a lot of babysitting and like coming up with creative ideas. I had an interview but didn't get the job."

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**Which emotions might Sam be feeling in this situation?**

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**Which resilience strategies could Sam use to overcome these emotions and move forward?**

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**How could Sam learn from this situation?**

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**What could Sam do differently next time in a similar situation?**

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# Staying positive (resilience)

## Sam's experience: Scenario 3

Below is a scenario where Sam experienced a setback in an aspect of her life. For the scenario, consider Sam's feelings, the strategies they could have used to overcome these, and how Sam could learn from the situation to do things differently next time they experience a setback.

### Scenario 3

"I started a gardening business with one of my friends to earn some money outside of school hours. We started to get a lot of local evening and weekend work through people recommending us and we worked well together because we had different skills which complemented one another. Now my friend's family is moving away and he won't be able to work with me anymore. I can't manage all the work on my own."

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**Which emotions might Sam be feeling in this situation?**

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**Which resilience strategies could Sam use to overcome these emotions and move forward?**

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**How could Sam learn from this situation?**

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**What could Sam do differently next time in a similar situation?**

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# Staying positive (resilience)

## How resilient am I?

Resilience: the ability to use tactics to overcome setbacks and achieve goals

Using the definition above, how resilient am I? Rate yourself on the scale where 0 is low (least resilient) and 10 is high (most resilient):

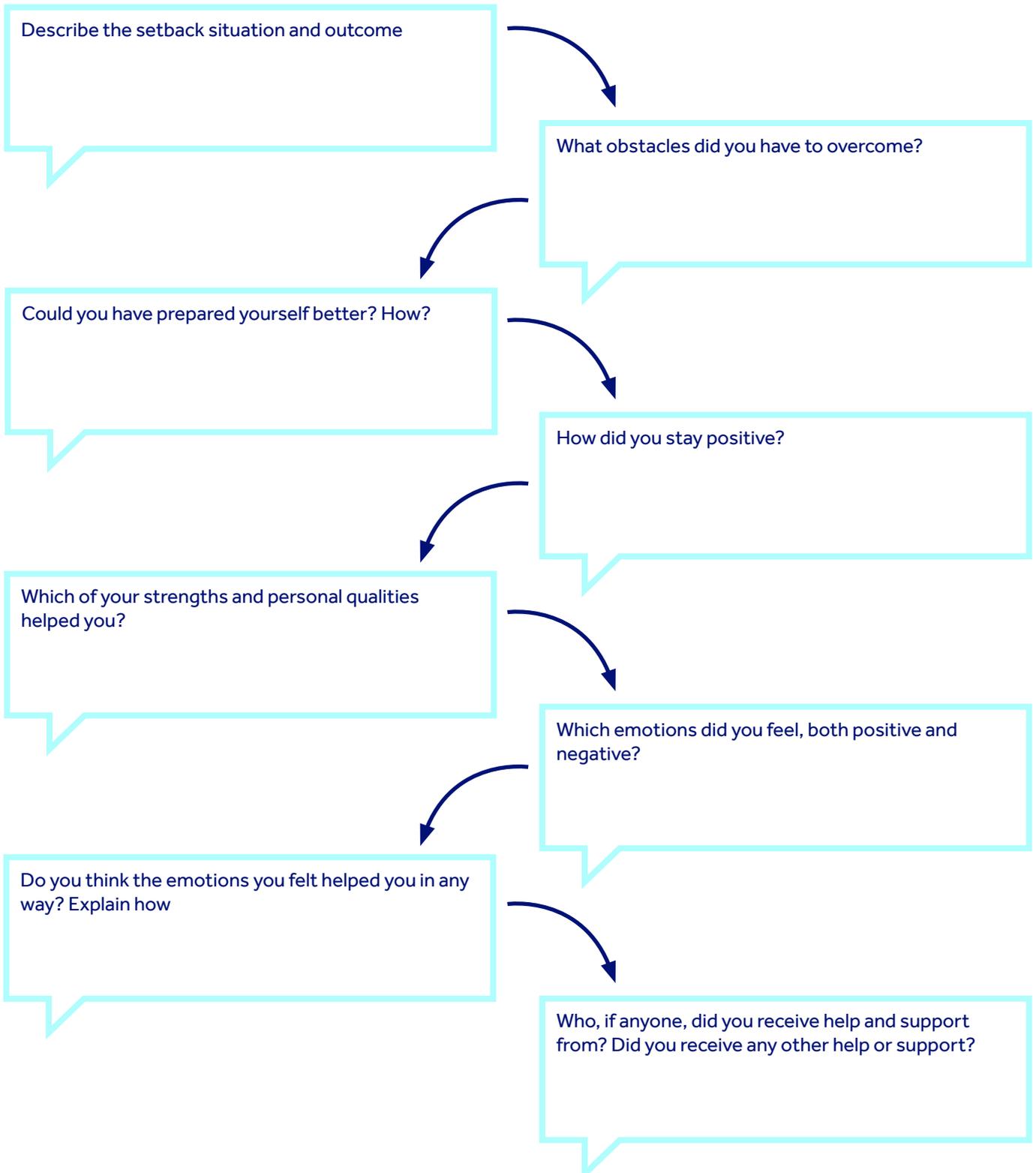
I plan ahead in case things don't go the way I want them to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I accept myself for who I really am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I feel confident that I can cope when things don't go to plan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I communicate well with others when I find things stressful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I am able to face challenging problems in life and solve them successfully	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When something doesn't go to plan I can manage my emotions well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I am good at staying calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I don't get highly stressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I have networks of support that I can use if I need to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I am good at using my networks of support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Have a look at your ratings. Which aspects need the most work? What could you do to get all the ratings closer to 10?

# Staying positive (resilience)

## Getting through a setback: My setback

Consider a time when you experienced a setback – this could be in life, at school or in a work situation. Complete the sheet below to show how you managed and overcame it, and the eventual outcome.



Describe the setback situation and outcome

What obstacles did you have to overcome?

Could you have prepared yourself better? How?

How did you stay positive?

Which of your strengths and personal qualities helped you?

Which emotions did you feel, both positive and negative?

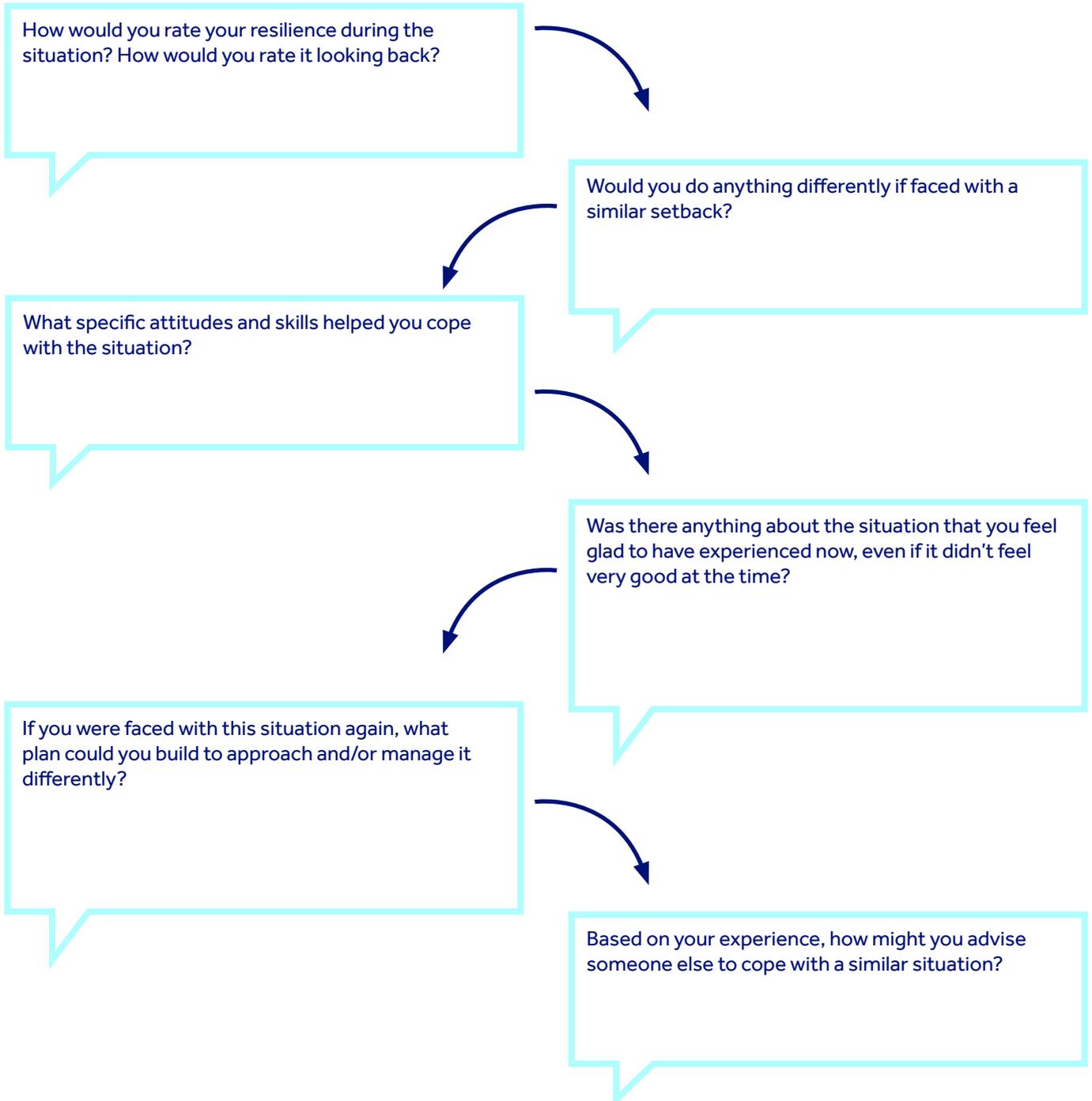
Do you think the emotions you felt helped you in any way? Explain how

Who, if anyone, did you receive help and support from? Did you receive any other help or support?

# Staying positive (resilience)

## Getting through a setback: Reflection

Consider a time when you experienced a setback – this could be in life, at school or in a work situation. Complete the sheet below to show how you managed and overcame it, and the eventual outcome.



How would you rate your resilience during the situation? How would you rate it looking back?

Would you do anything differently if faced with a similar setback?

What specific attitudes and skills helped you cope with the situation?

Was there anything about the situation that you feel glad to have experienced now, even if it didn't feel very good at the time?

If you were faced with this situation again, what plan could you build to approach and/or manage it differently?

Based on your experience, how might you advise someone else to cope with a similar situation?