

Wellbeing coping strategies

Worksheet 1: Understanding wellbeing

This activity is all about exploring your existing understanding of wellbeing. Have a think about the below questions; you can type answers into the boxes

What words come to mind when people use the term 'wellbeing'?

What kinds of things make people feel good – physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually?

What can people do to maintain a positive sense of wellbeing, both physical and mental?

What kinds of things can affect a positive sense of wellbeing, or throw it off balance?

Is wellbeing something that people need to 'tune into' only at certain times, or is it something we can help develop and nurture over a period of time?

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Worksheet 2: Luke's story

Read through Luke's story and think about the signs that he's under pressure.



"I had always done well at school, but the pressure I felt in the lead-up to my GCSEs was like nothing I experienced before. I made a revision schedule for my mock exams and spent as many hours as I could going through what I had learnt throughout the year. I got up early to fit in some revision before lessons started. As soon as I got home, I would eat quickly, then go to my room to continue revision, usually at least until midnight. I had no social life and spent all my weekends revising.

I found it hard to sleep at night and isolated myself from my friends and family. I kept having thoughts that I would fail my exams and worried about what people would think of me and how this would impact my ability to secure an apprenticeship. I also didn't want to let my teachers or family down.

The day of my first mock exam I felt so anxious that I almost didn't make it into school – I hardly slept the night before and found my heart racing leading up to the exam. As soon as it was over, I went to see my best mate. He knew something was wrong and when he asked if I was okay, I explained how bad the exam stress was making me feel."

With Luke's story in mind, write down answers to the following questions:

What are the signs that Luke is feeling under pressure?

What are some other signs you might see that someone is feeling under pressure leading up to exams and during the exam period?

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Worksheet 2: Luke's story (cont'd)

What is the impact of the pressure on his thoughts, feelings and behaviour?

Did Luke have any ways of coping with the pressure he was feeling?

Why do you think people often imagine the worst-case scenario when they're in high-pressure situations?

Are there ways in which being under pressure and feeling stressed could be useful or positive?

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Worksheet 3: How Luke decided to resolve this

Now you've reflected on examples of feeling under pressure, make a mind map of all the coping strategies that someone like Luke could use to maintain his wellbeing when under pressure. You can use the following prompts to provide ideas for what to include:

- Practical strategies to help Luke manage his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. For example:
 - Speaking to other people who can offer support and guidance
 - Researching websites and forums with helpful advice
 - Taking regular breaks and short walks
 - Making time for an activity he enjoys
 - Planning his day, allowing time for revision as well as breaks and down time
 - Ways to turn negative thoughts and behaviours into positive ones
 - Writing successes and positive moments down in a journal

Next, create an action plan for Luke. This could include:

- Organisation of the coping strategies:
 - When will they happen? E.g. every day, all the time, for a short time each day, once only
 - Where will they happen? E.g. outside/in the fresh air where it's easier to feel calm
 - Do they require any additional resources? E.g. a flash-card with steps/top tips written down as prompts
 - Who else could be involved or help? E.g. a friend, colleague, family member that you trust, who can help you carry out the exercise
- Alternative ideas (a plan B) in case this strategy isn't effective
- Measurable outcomes i.e. how will Luke know that the strategy is working?

You can use the below template to help you create your action plan:

Organisation

When will they happen?	Where will they happen?	What resources are needed?	Who else could be involved?

Alternative ideas

Plan B – option 1	Plan B – option 2	Plan B – option 3	Plan B – option 4

Measuring outcomes

What does success look like? Outline your ideal scenario	How will you measure it?	How will you make it achievable?	When will you achieve it by?

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Worksheet 3: How Luke decided to resolve this (cont'd)

Now read the second part of Luke's case study, which demonstrates how he dealt with his challenges, and compare your action plan to what he did. Particularly discuss anything Luke did that you didn't include in your version of the action plan.



"I went to see my best mate. He knew something was wrong and when he asked if I was OK, I explained how bad the exam stress was making me feel.

Initially, I felt embarrassed telling him everything, but he was so supportive and didn't judge me. He took me to see our tutor who was helpful and understanding and helped me feel more normal for being so stressed about exams. She said I should start doing things to keep the stress at bay, like taking more breaks and being active, even if that just meant going for a short walk each day. She also encouraged me to speak to my parents to show them how worried I was about letting them down.

I took my tutor's advice and found ways to manage my stress – there were loads of helpful websites and forums out there. I found the courage to speak to my parents and they were really reassuring, which helped take off some of the pressure.

For the rest of the exam period I felt stressed at times, but not as much as when I sat that first mock. I realised that regularly talking to my friend, tutor and family, even if it's difficult to start with, was really good for my overall wellbeing."

Further support

Looking for more ways to get advice and support with your wellbeing? Check the following organisations:

Time to Change: aims to change the way people think and act about mental health problems.

Mind: provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Rethink Mental Illness: a charity that improves the lives of people severely affected by mental illness through local groups and services, expert information and training and successful campaigning.

YoungMinds: provides mental health support, guidance and information for young people and professionals.

Mental Health Foundation: provides information, guidance and resources on all aspects of managing mental health at home, at school and in the workplace.

Action for Happiness: focuses particularly on wellbeing and how to lead a happier life.

Place2Be: provide mental health support in schools through one-to-one counselling.

Ripple Suicide Prevention Charity: Ripple is a free browser extension that triggers when a student searches for harmful online content relating to self-harm or suicide. The tool signposts to mental health support services accompanied with messages of hope and encouragement to keep safe.

Samaritans: If you're going through a tough time, you can talk to Samaritans free – day or night, 365 days a year.