



# YEAR 6 ACTIVITIES

I find time for the things that interest me

I can solve a problem

I am helped to understand how other people might be feeling

I can live

I get enough sleep

I have enough money to live

I can live

# Things to consider before starting

## 1. These are sensitive issues

When delivering lessons on the topics of mental health, resilience and emotional wellbeing you might trigger feelings in children that they find difficult to cope with. They may struggle to engage with activities or they may describe negative coping mechanisms. Different children may respond very differently to the same content. It's really important that every activity is well planned and you have carefully considered how any child may be affected and how these individuals might be best supported.

Regardless of how well we plan, it is not always possible to prevent children from becoming upset in the session. Ensure that there is an adult that the child can talk to if they are finding the session too difficult. This might be you or it might be a different adult in the room. Identify a space away from the group where the child can talk and ensure that some time is spent exploring how the child is feeling. As ever, explain the confines of confidentiality and follow up any safeguarding concerns and make sure that the child knows who you are going to talk to and what will happen next.

Sessions such as this can be difficult for all children. During the plenary, check how everyone is and tell them where they can go if they want to talk a bit more.

## 2. Setting up groundrules for sessions

For children to engage it is important to feel safe, contained and validated throughout the session.

You can foster this environment by getting the children to decide and agree upon a set of rules for the group. These should include listening to one another, keeping things confidential within the space, not sharing more than they want to, respecting what everyone says, not judging each other, being allowed to sit things out and reminding them that the safe space (somewhere else) can be used.

For the facilitator, this is about knowing the group of children and preparing them for having these discussions. Different groups may come up with different groundrules.

## 3. Safeguarding

After setting up the groundrules with a group or class, it is really important to adhere to the normal safeguarding procedures of the school you are working in. Your school will have a Designated Safeguarding Lead and clear procedures to follow if you are worried about the safety of a child in your care. If you are in any doubt as to whether a child is safe, you should seek advice from appropriate members of staff.

## 4. Staff considerations

Sessions such as this can also trigger feelings in staff. Ensure that staff are confident in running the session and that they also know where they can go to access support.

## Activity 1:

# Change tunnel

### Learning Outcome:

To be aware of how they feel about changes happening during transition to secondary school

### Context:

Transition to secondary school is a significant change for children and many will feel nervous and/or excited about it. Feeling isolated can heighten anxiety. Therefore, sharing their worries and anticipation can help to make children feel reassured.

### Activity:

Start the session with groundrules, to ensure that children feel safe to speak and only share what they don't mind others knowing.

- This activity can be done as a whole class. Explain to the class that they are going to discuss going to secondary school and how this thought makes them feel. Remind them of the groundrules and what they need to make the space safe.
- In pairs or small groups, ask the children to think about what they are worried or excited about when they think of going to secondary school. Ask them to write each idea on a post it.
- When they have written all their ideas down, ask them to put all their post its in the hat/bowl.
- Put up the signs 'Nervous', 'Excited', 'Not Sure' in different areas of the classroom/hall
- Read out each statement from the hat/bowl and ask children to go to the sign that best describes how they feel about it. Ask a few children to explain why they feel that way and acknowledge this reaction.
- Repeat with other statements until most of the common themes have been covered.
- Ask the children how they feel about other people having similar worries to them. Does it make a difference?
- Look at quotes from Yr 7 pupils 'Advice from my Yr 6 self' – slide Activity 1. Explain that these come from young people from all over the UK.
- Introduce the concept of resilience: *'Resilience is having the skills and resources to deal with difficult situations in life. There are different ways to build resilience in people and in these sessions we are going to have some fun and learn some new ways to cope.'*
- Ask pupils to think about who they can talk to about these worries.

### Time:

40 mins



### Resources:

- Post its
- Pens
- Hat/bowl
- Signs:
  - 'Nervous'
  - 'Excited'
  - 'Not Sure'

### Thing to consider:

Children may feel very differently about issues, but all their feelings are valid and should be respected. Asking children to put their hands up if they agree with another child's feelings helps the less vocal children to feel listened to.

### Extension activity:

Set up a worry box for other concerns that children may have about transition. These should be discussed in future sessions.

**Nervous**

**Excited**

**Not sure**

## Activity 2:

# Star Qualities

### Learning Outcome:

To identify positive qualities about myself.

### Context:

Sometimes pupils find it hard to believe positive things about themselves and for many it is easier to believe the negative things. Taking notice of your pupils' successes, strengths, talents and interests will build their resilience, self-esteem and confidence. Encourage them to use what they have achieved as a way of helping them cope with stress and adversity.

### Activity:

Start the session with groundrules, to ensure that children feel safe to speak and only share what they don't mind others knowing.

- Ask pupils to sit in a circle
- Encourage the children to have a moment of reflection and think of some of the strengths and qualities that they like in themselves and others.
- Use the ball to roll or throw round the circle so that everyone can say a word or phrase to describe these qualities, e.g. kind, caring, funny, full of energy, a good friend.
- Give out the star outlines and explain that they are going to write their own name in the middle of the star and ask other people in the class to write positive qualities about them in each of the points (five words or phrases in all).
- Organise the children into groups (perhaps their home tables) so that they can carry out the activity.
- Invite children to share some of the qualities with the class if they want to.
- Explain that it is really important to be aware of all the positive qualities they all have and what makes them unique.

### Time:

15 mins



### Resources:

- Small ball
- Star outline for each pupil

### Thing to consider:

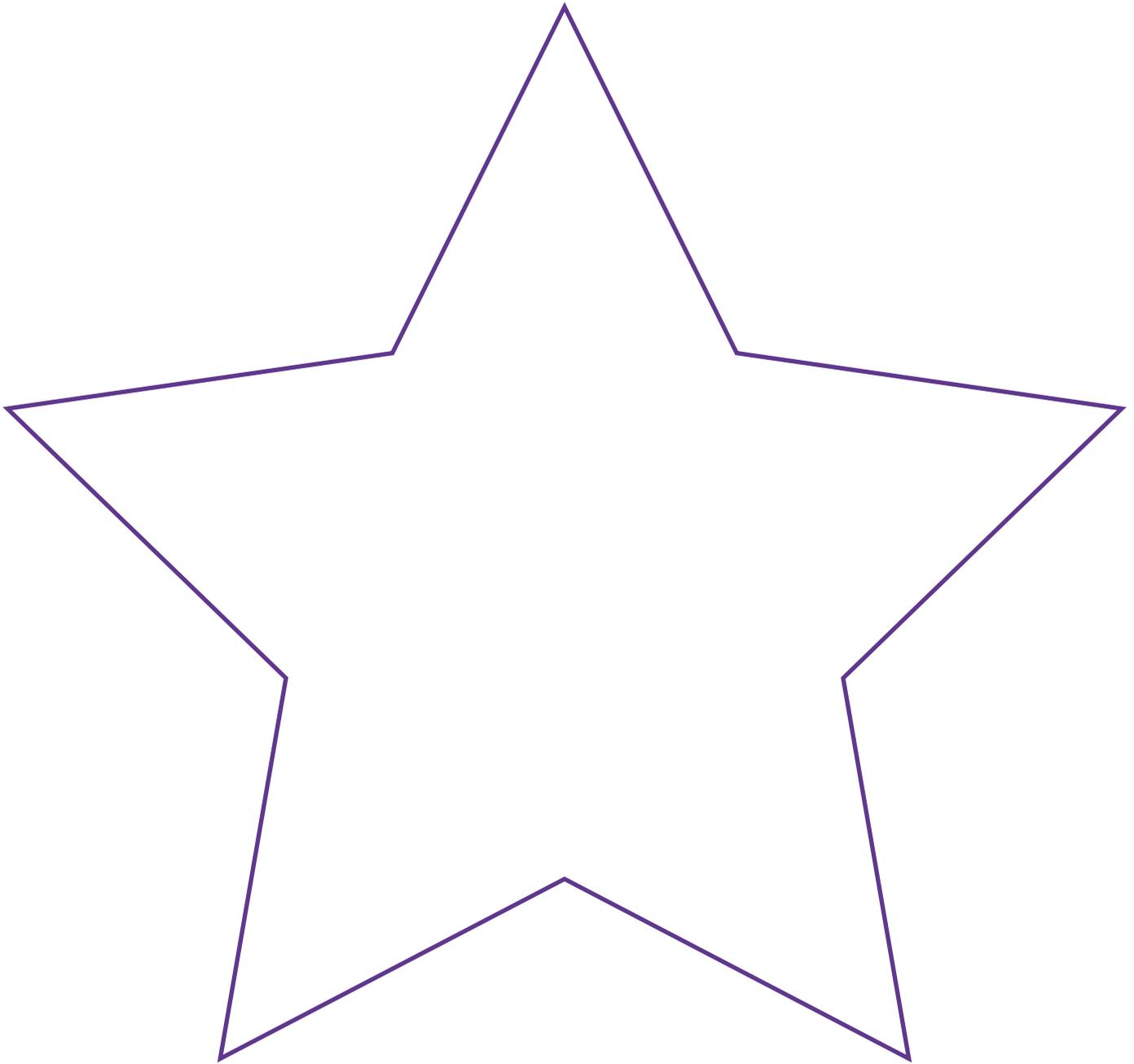
This activity may be uncomfortable for the more vulnerable members of the class. Model how to think of positive qualities that reflect the range of children in the class. Try to steer the pupils away from qualities about appearance, as this can put pressure on them and others to look a certain way. Reinforce rules and that this is a safe space for everyone to share opinions.

### Extension activity:

Discuss how it feels when someone says something positive about you.

Describe how these positives stay with them (like in a piggy bank)

Think about characters in class texts who have positive qualities. Do they use these to make them feel more resilient?



# Other resources

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### Courses available include:

- Teens, Turmoil and Transition: Adolescent Mental Health
- Self-harming behaviours, improving responses and minimising harm
- Resilience, ordinary magic & learnable skills
- Technology, Teens & Mental Health
- Looked After Young People & Mental Health
- Early Years and mental health
- Eating disorders
- Mental Health & Inequalities