

Lesson Plan: Managing Your Emotions

These activities aim to help you practice some simple strategies which you can use to help you manage your emotional health and well-being.

The pack contains multiple activities which can be used.

These activities will encourage you to begin to build your 'Toolkit' in relation to self-help strategies and approaches which can help you manage your emotional health.

During this difficult time looking after your emotional health is more important than ever.

REMEMBER – if you need help with your thoughts and feelings during this time please talk to someone you know and trust, you can also use organisations like ChildLine and can call them free on 0800 1111.

Introduction

Before you begin please read the following statement:

Today you are going to look at some activities which can help you manage your emotions.

Try and complete them all and then pick those you found most useful, they can really help us manage our emotions during this difficult time.

Activity 1 – BOX BREATHING

Step 1 – We are now going to think about a simple strategy you can use when you feel angry or upset. Read the scenario below:.

“Uh oh...your emotions are building! Your brain is telling your body that you are upset by something. Let’s do something to calm you down so you can think more clearly and be your best self!”

Step 2 - “Box breathing” is a strategy to help us calm down, reduce feelings of anger, relieve stress and take a mental break from difficult emotions or situations.

Please read the Box Breathing explainer on the next page.

There is also a video for this activity available which you can access by copy and pasting this link – <https://youtu.be/NmUpUHnRF-Y>

The video will provide the timing for you for the box breathing activity.

Step 3 – Read the following statement.

*The exercise we just completed is called “Box breathing”.
It can really help if we are angry, stressed or upset.*

The next time you feel like this try and remember this activity and use it to help you feel safe and relaxed again.

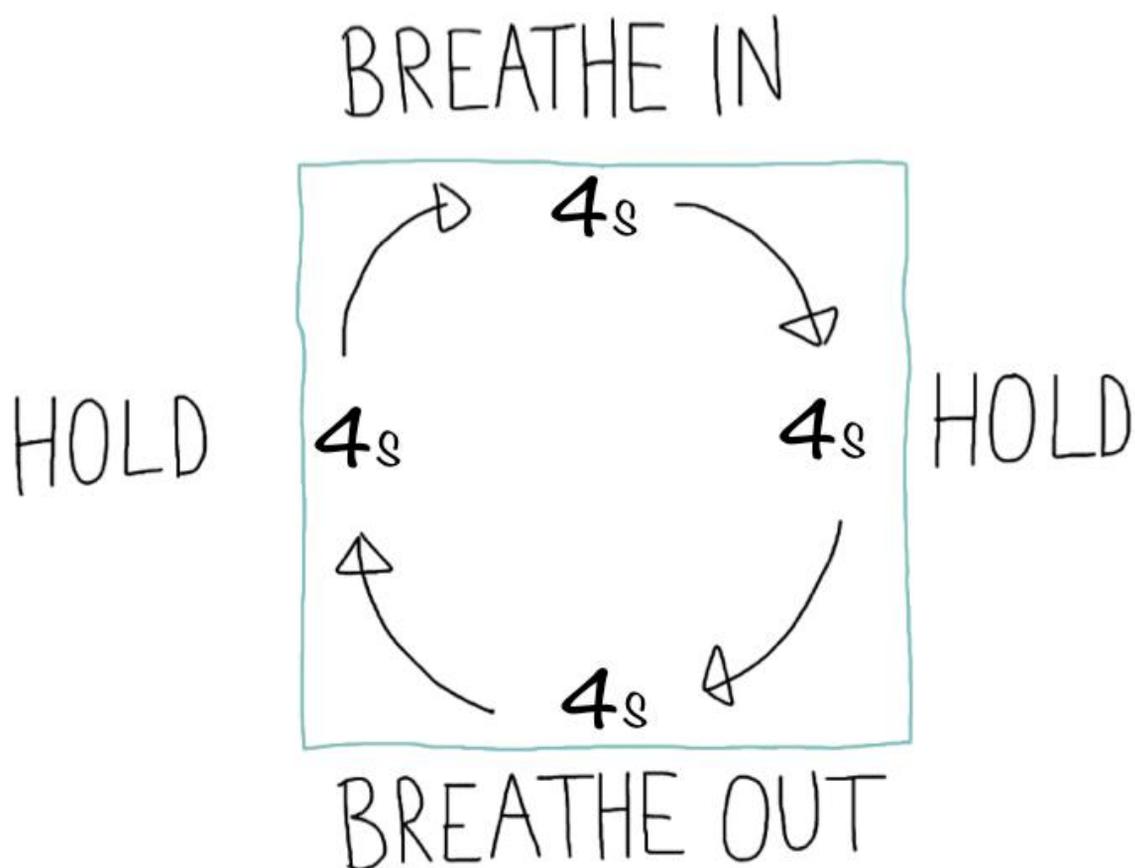
BOX BREATHING - Explainer

The Box Breathing activity is a simple exercise which aims to help us focus and calm down when we need to.

It is outlined in the diagram below, put simply we inhale for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds and hold for 4 seconds. We then repeat the cycle for as many rounds as required.

It's called Box Breathing as we are effectively making a 'box' during the activity with our breathing. You may also want to suggest to your pupils they draw the box with their finger as they complete the exercise.

The video which is provided on the session page includes the timings for the activity. We recommend you show this to your pupils to support this activity.



Activity 2 – HELPING HAND

This exercise aims to provide you with the opportunity to discuss and identify the people, places and things in their life that can offer support to you.

Step 1 – Read the following introductory statement:

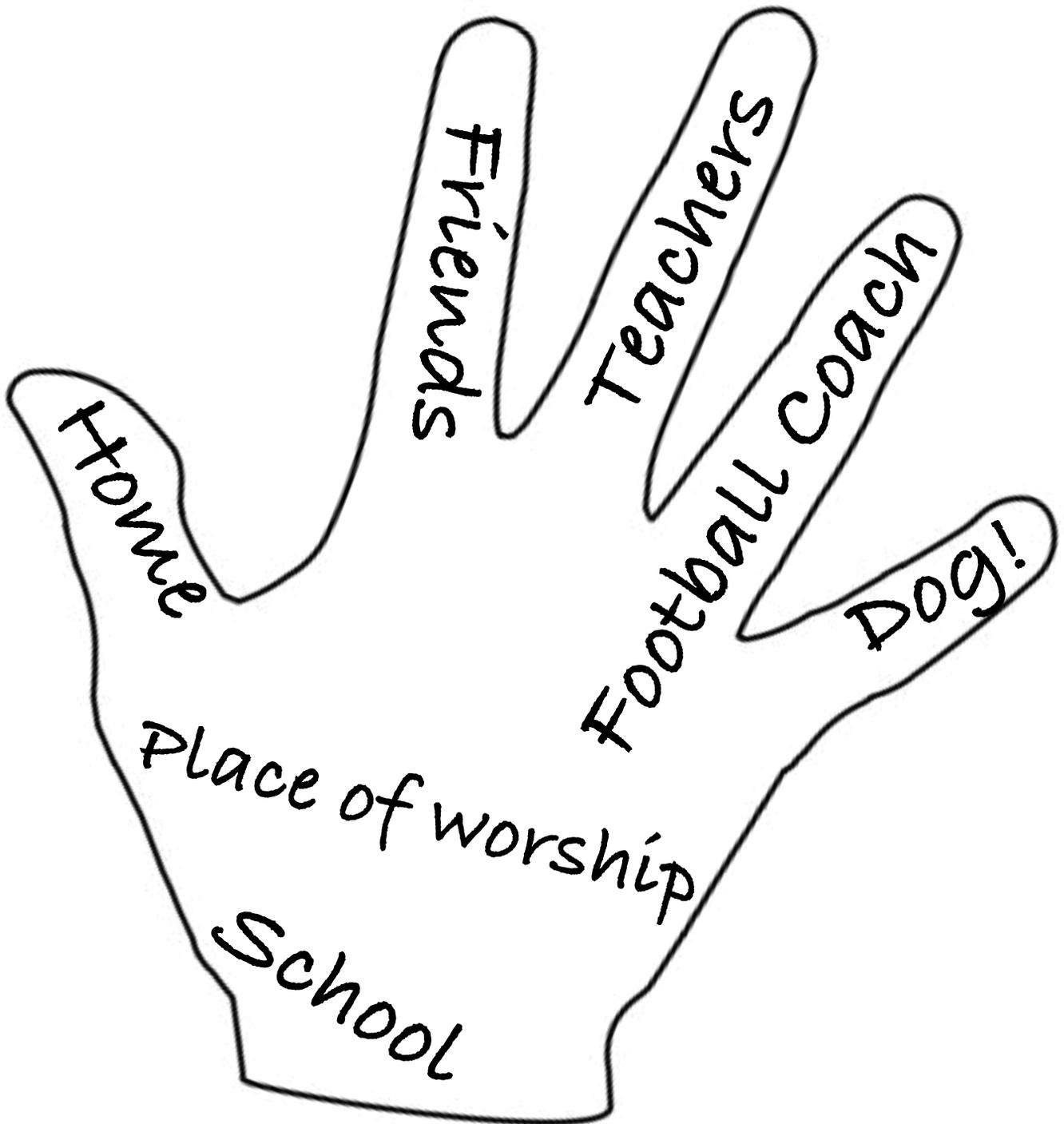
We are now going to think about other people, places and things that can help us as well. We are going to complete an activity which will help you think about what these are for you.

Step 2 – Now draw around your hand on the piece of paper, this represents their network. Now write down all of the people, places and things that support them. It's useful to make it clear that we are especially trying to identify what supports you to be healthy and happy.

On the next page you will find a completed example of this exercise.

Activity 2 - HELPING HAND

Below is the example of a completed network drawing.



Activity 2 – HELPING HAND

Step 3 – It's a good idea to think about the following:

- Why did you select who you selected?
- Do you think they may change?
- Would it depend on the situation? Would you be more likely to select friends rather than family if the situation was different?
- Are there people (or things) in their lives that can always help?
- Is it different in the current situation to what it might have been before? Are we now relying on different people?
- Is how we are supporting others and being supported changed?

Activity 3 – VIRTUAL TWIN

This activity can be a really useful way to helping young people to remove negative thoughts and barriers in their own thinking.

In this activity we are going to think about being happy specifically but you can use it for other problems and scenarios so please feel free to use it in other situations.

Step 1 – Imagine that you have an identical twin. Your twin is your best friend, is always looking out for you and always wants what is best for you.

Step 2 – Now imagine that you are this twin, you should give this twin a name and an identity. You are now playing the role of your own twin.

Step 3 – You are now going to give themselves some advice as your twin. The advice we want you to give to yourself is advice and guidance related to being happy.

Be as frank and honest in your advice and guidance as possible.

Some prompts if needed include:

- What would you tell yourself to stop worrying about?
- What would you tell yourself to start doing?
- What would you tell yourself to stop doing?
- What would you tell yourself that you are good at?

Activity 3 – VIRTUAL TWIN

Step 4 – What did you think of the advice you gave. Remember that it was you who provided this advice so in many ways you know the answers already, you now just need to focus on them.

You can use this technique at any time when you are faced with problems, difficulties or are just feeling down.

Using a once removed approach from ourselves can be really helpful and allow us useful distance in relation to the issues we are facing.

Activity 4 – THREE SENSES

This is a simple activity which can be helpful when young people are experiencing a stressful situation or feel overwhelmed. It's very quick to complete and can be done anywhere. It is an example of a 'Grounding' technique.

The activity simply asks you to notice what you are experiencing right now through three senses – sound, touch, sight.

It is useful as by practicing really focusing on each of these senses in a methodical manner you have no choice but to clear your mind and be present.

Step 1 – Take a few slow breaths, it is also helpful if you close your eyes to help you focus on the first and second senses.

Step 2 – Now ask yourself the following questions:

- *What are three things I can hear? (e.g. clock on the wall, car going by, music in the next room, my breath)*
- *What are three things I can feel? (e.g. the chair under me, the floor under my feet, my phone in my pocket)*

Step 3 – Now open your eyes and ask this final question:

- *What are three things I can see? (e.g. this table, that sign, that person walking by)*

Activity 4 – THREE SENSES

Step 4 – How did they find it? Did it clear your mind? Did you think about anything else while you did it?

Remember you can use this activity to manage your stress and emotions at any time.

Activity 5 - DISTRACTION

If we are feeling negative emotions and our thoughts and worries are going around and around in our heads, we can distract ourselves so that our brains stop focusing on the negative thoughts.

Answer the following questions in your heads as a way of practicing distraction – you can look around the room .

- Think of 3 things that are round.
- Think of 2 things that rhyme with 'door'.
- Find 3 things beginning with 'D'.
- Find 2 things that are orange.
- Think of 3 words that end in 'Y'.
- Remember what you had for dinner yesterday.
- Think of what hot chocolate smells like.
- Think of 9 things that are hot.
- Think of a song that you like – do you know all the words?
- Think of 5 things you might find on a beach.
- Find 4 things that are red.
- Think about a TV show that you like – how many characters can you name?
- Think of 15 things you would find in your bedroom.

You can come up with your own questions whenever you want to.

It is a game you can play in your head to take your mind off things when you need a break or to spend some time looking after yourself.

Activity 6 – POSITIVE SELF TALK – 3,2,1

If we are feeling negatively about ourselves interrupting these thoughts can be really helpful. These negative thoughts are almost always 'Beliefs' rather than facts.

By talking positively to ourselves we can interrupt these negative thoughts and start to feel better, you can think about it as an old fashioned 'Pep Talk' something everyone has used at some point.

Answer the following questions in their heads as a way of practicing positive self talk.

3 - Positive things about me.

2 - Positive things other people would say about me.

1 - Positive thing I've done today.

Remember that the 3,2,1 approach is something we can use whenever we are feeling down and negative about ourselves.

It is a game you can play in your head to take your mind off things when you need a break or to spend some time looking after yourself.

Activity 7 – PRIORTISING

Sometimes when we are faced with difficult feelings or situations we can become 'stuck' because we are worrying about the whole issue which may include things we can't necessarily change right now or maybe we can't change them at all.

This strategy uses a simple three step structure to help us change the way we are thinking about the issue we are facing, the three steps to practice and keep in our heads are:

- 1. What can I do immediately about the issue or feeling?** *(often this is about changing how we think about the issue or feeling or we may be able to use another skill we have learnt to help manage it)*
- 2. What can wait?** *(are there things that I don't need to worry about right now? Am I wasting energy on things I don't have to deal with right now?)*
- 3. What can't I change?** *(are we worrying about things that we realistically can't change or have little ability to change, you may want to refer back to the 'Helpful and Unhelpful Worries' activity)*

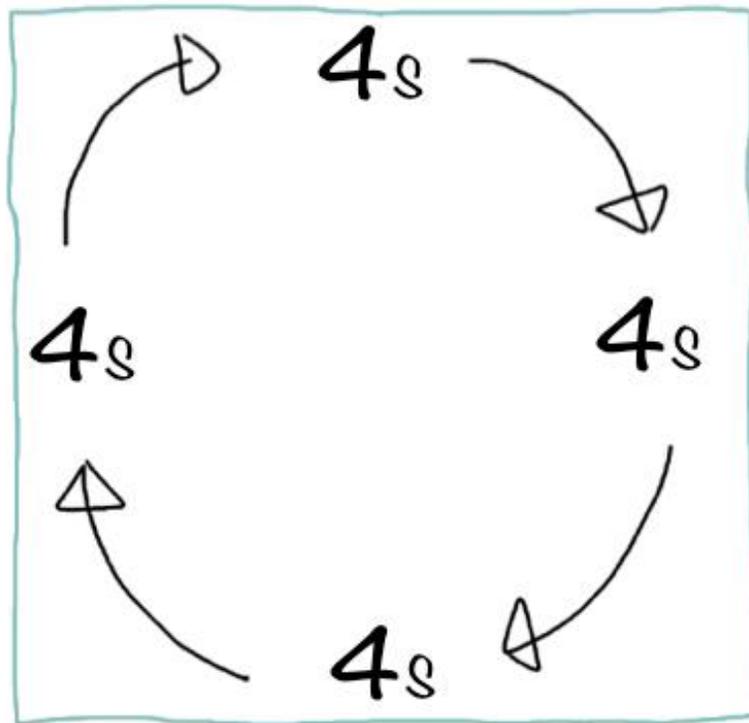
WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX

Skills I Have Learnt	How I Like to Manage Things	What else do I think would help me
<p>e.g. traffic light, box breathing, who I can talk to, who I can ask for help</p>	<p>e.g. talking about my feelings, taking my mind of things through sports or hobbies</p>	<p>e.g. record anything else you would like in your toolkit</p>

BOX BREATHING PRINTOUT

BREATHE IN

HOLD



HOLD

BREATHE OUT

HELPING HAND PRINTOUT

