

Emotional Wellbeing 3

Activities to
support the
teaching of the
updated Junior
Cycle SPHE
specification 2023



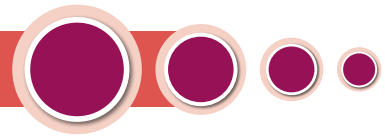
An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta
Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational
Psychological Service



This unit of learning was developed by the University of Limerick, HSE Health and Wellbeing, and the National Educational Psychological Service of the Department of Education and Youth and is supported by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Special thanks to the schools, teachers and students involved in piloting the activities.

Published: 2025.



Contents:

Introduction	2
Learning Outcomes	4
Learning Activities	5
Assessment tasks	6
Activity 1 – Understanding character strengths	8
Activity 2 – Identifying my strengths	16
Activity 3 – Appreciating myself	21
Activity 4 – Being kind to myself	28
Activity 5 – Understanding social connection for wellbeing	37
Activity 6 – Navigating challenges in healthy relationships	44
Activity 7 – Understanding my world and me	49
Activity 8 – Minding myself in challenging times	58

Introduction

The aim of SPHE as set out in the NCCA specification for Junior Cycle is to:

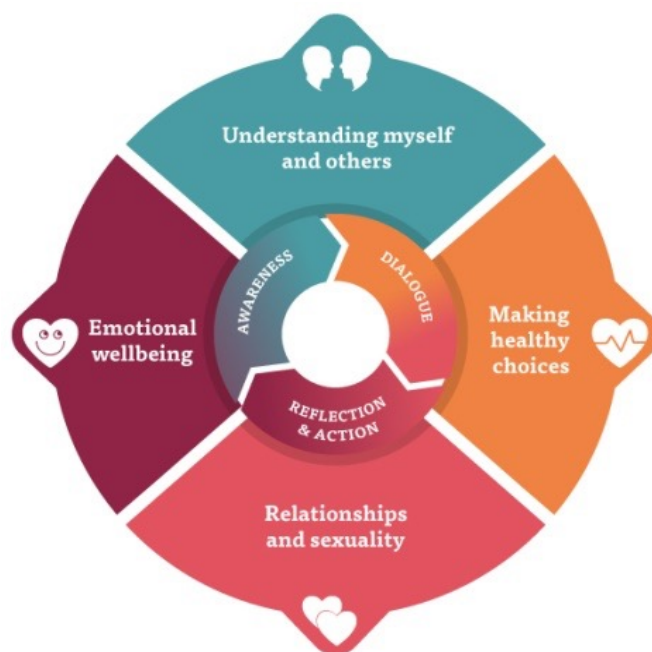
“Build students’ self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives; empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.”

This unit of learning continues to develop social and emotional skills and practices that can nurture wellbeing. These skills and practices typically comprise five key elements of social competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. This unit focuses on the core competencies of Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.

This unit of learning is linked to Strand 4: Emotional Wellbeing and focuses on nurturing emotional wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. The content in emotional wellbeing units is informed by cognitive behavioural theory (such as recognising the link between our thoughts, feelings and behaviour) and approaches in positive psychology (such as gratitude and mindfulness techniques). More information on CBT and positive psychology is available in the SPHE Toolkit on the NCCA website.

These activities are designed to be taught with reference to the [SPHE/RSE Toolkit](#) developed by the NCCA, which provides guidance on teaching SPHE in a safe and effective way. It includes an explanation of the experiential learning cycle that is recommended for use in SPHE and is the framework used in the activities in this resource.

All learning in SPHE is underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE: 1) awareness, 2) dialogue, 3) reflection and action. It is important that the teacher is consciously creating opportunities for the students to become more self-aware and aware of others; creating lots of opportunities for classroom dialogue; and prompting students to reflect on what they are learning and what it means for their lives now or in the future.



The activities presented here are guidelines only. Every classroom is different, and teachers are best placed to decide on what will be most effective in their classroom. Each of the activities includes exercises suitable for group work, with suggestions for active learning techniques, and these suggestions are not prescriptive. Guidance to support SPHE teaching practice (e.g. effective pedagogical approaches) is available from the [SPHE Toolkit](#).

Some of the activities presented include mindfulness, reflection, relaxation, and visualisation exercises. While many people find these exercises beneficial, some children and young people may have difficulty with them. For example, if a student is feeling stressed, anxious, emotionally raw or has experienced a trauma, a mindfulness activity may feel overwhelming as they sit with unpleasant emotions and another activity may therefore be more suitable. Examples include taking a movement break, using a sensory strategy (such as holding a grounding object), engaging in a low-level cognitive task (like colouring or simple puzzles), or listening to calming music.

Additionally, some children and young people may struggle to sit still and may need a movement activity to help relax their bodies. It is useful to try several mindfulness, reflection, relaxation and visualisation activities that give students an alternative option if they struggle with a particular activity at a given time. For more information, see the List of Relaxation Techniques, published by NEPS, available from the [SPHE Toolkit](#).

If a student becomes upset during an activity, it is important to offer support in the moment, for example by offering an alternative to the activity, such as stepping outside for a break, engaging in a calming task, or speaking with a trusted staff member. If you become concerned about a student, you can seek advice through the normal student support structures.

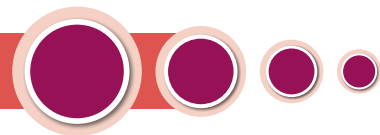
Throughout this unit, students are encouraged to keep a **Wellbeing Journal** to encourage reflection on their learning. Keeping a Wellbeing Journal is useful for students to help them to make connections between activities, become aware of their learning, and identify the strategies that work best for them in maintaining their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. *Wellbeing Journals are for students' reflection only and should not be used as a form of assessment.*

Videos: Throughout the activities, suggested video clips are listed. It is essential that these are previewed and used in accordance with the students' learning needs and school policies. Over time some of these external clips may become unavailable, but should be easy to replace with alternative, relevant online resources.

Learning outcomes

The following learning outcomes are addressed in this unit to support the teaching of the updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum 2023.

Strand	Learning outcomes (LOs) <i>Students should be able to:</i>
4. Emotional wellbeing	4.1 Discuss the fluid nature of emotional wellbeing and ways to nurture and protect it 4.4 Discuss ways to support themselves and others in challenging times and where/how/when to seek support, if needed 4.5 Explore how emotional wellbeing can be affected by factors within our control, such as sleep, diet, exercise, substance use and online exposure, and factors beyond our control
3. Relationships and sexuality	3.2 Examine benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships – friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships
1. Understanding myself and others	1.2 Reflect on their personal strengths and values and how they bring these into relationships 1.3 Explore the range of influences and life experiences that can impact on self-image and self-esteem and identify ways to nurture a positive sense of self-worth



Learning activities

Below is a description of each activity contained in SPHE Unit 3 Emotional Wellbeing:

- **Activity 1, Understanding character strengths** (LOs 1.2, 4.1) (pages 8–15) aims to help students understand and identify character strengths, and make the connection between character strengths and developing our authentic and best selves.
- **Activity 2, Identifying my strengths** (LOs 1.2, 1.3) (pages 16–20) aims to support students in reflecting on their range of character strengths, identify the strengths they use most often, and identify areas for strength development. This will help students to become aware of the character strengths they can leverage to support their wellbeing.
- **Activity 3, Appreciating myself** (LO 1.3) (pages 21–27) aims to support students in understanding the factors that influence self-esteem, and how self-esteem impacts emotional wellbeing. Using the acorn-to-oak tree analogy, students will explore how internal thoughts and external experiences can help or hinder self-esteem. Through discussion and reflection, students will identify ways to strengthen their own self-esteem and support others in building theirs.
- **Activity 4, Being kind to myself** (LO 1.3) (pages 28–36) aims to help students explore what being kind to yourself is, and how we can practice it. Being kind to yourself is a key element of self-compassion, which is strongly linked to better emotional wellbeing.
- **Activity 5, Understanding social connection for wellbeing** (LO 4.1) (pages 37–43) aims to help students explore the role of social connection in supporting wellbeing. Students will reflect on the difference between the number and the quality of connections, practice identifying ways of giving and receiving support in everyday scenarios, and work together to create a “safety net” diagram showing how family, friends, school, and community can strengthen their wellbeing.
- **Activity 6, Navigating challenges in healthy relationships** (LO 3.2) (pages 44–48) aims to support students in understanding that experiencing challenging moments is a normal and healthy experience across relationships (e.g. friends, family, romantic relationships, etc.). Through discussion and scenario-based reflection, students will consider ways to navigate these challenges respectfully and thoughtfully.
- **Activity 7, Understanding my world and me** (LOs 4.1, 4.5) (pages 49–57) aims to help students explore the social determinants of health. These are the external factors that affect mental and physical wellbeing. Using real-world data and visuals, students will look at trends in youth wellbeing and discuss how environment can shape wellbeing in both positive and negative ways.
- **Activity 8, Minding myself in challenging times** (LO 4.4, pages 58–64) aims to support students' awareness of the factors affecting their emotional wellbeing and the tools to manage them, including personal strengths, connection with others, self-care, kindness and helpful thoughts, as well as the external supports available to them. Students will draw on their understanding of wellbeing, developed throughout Junior Cycle SPHE, to develop a personal action plan to protect and nurture their wellbeing at all times, and particularly during challenging times.

Assessment tasks

The purpose of assessment in SPHE is to enable students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions they have gained through their engagement in learning. Students can provide evidence of their learning through multiple means of expression, including oral, written, visual, digital, and arts-based pieces. The following are suggestions and are not intended to be prescriptive.

Exploring how pop culture and media shape self-esteem

We are surrounded by messages about who we are and who we “should” be, from social media to music, TV, film, influencers, and more. These messages can shape how we feel about ourselves, often in ways we do not even notice.

Your task is to explore how popular culture and the media can influence self-esteem, in both positive and negative ways.

Choose one of the following formats to present your work:

- A visual poster or infographic
- A short opinion piece or blog post

Your work should include:

- At least one positive and one negative influence of media or pop culture on how we view ourselves.
- Positive and healthy examples that young people might relate to (e.g. beauty standards, representation, achievement, comparison, body image, or self-worth).
- A message or tip for promoting healthy self-esteem in a media-saturated world.

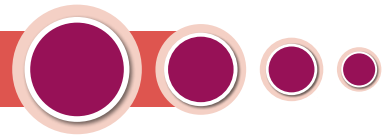
Consider sharing the final poster/infographic/opinion piece/blog on the school website or social media channels.

Navigating challenges in healthy relationships

Create a short-form media piece – “Navigating challenges in healthy relationships”.

Relationships are important for our wellbeing, but misunderstandings, conflict, or moments of tension can be a normal and common experience in healthy relationships. How we respond to those challenges can make a big difference to the health of our relationships.

Your task is to create a short piece of media content that helps young people your age navigate a challenging moment in a healthy relationship. This could be in a friendship, family, or other relationship.



Navigating challenges in healthy relationships continued

You can choose one of the following formats:

- A short video or podcast clip
- A blog or diary-style entry
- A mock social media post (e.g. video, infographic, etc.)

Your piece should include:

- A realistic challenge someone your age might face in a healthy relationship.
- A supportive and respectful way to respond.
- An understanding that all relationships take effort and may face ups and downs.

You do not need to share your content on social media; however, consider sharing the final piece on the school website or social media channels.

Mapping personal and environmental influences on our wellbeing

Wellbeing is influenced by many things, from our thoughts and actions to the people around us, and even the wider world we live in.

Your task is to work in a group to create a Wellbeing Map that shows the different factors that support (or sometimes challenge) our wellbeing.

Your map can include collage, drawings, symbols, keywords, colours and short phrases to show what you have learned.

1. Personal supports

What helps us take care of ourselves – like our strengths, being kind to ourselves, and helpful habits (Activities 1–4).

2. Relational supports

What helps us through connection with others — such as healthy friendships, trust, empathy, and support (Activities 5–6).

3. Wider influences

What supports or challenges our wellbeing in the world around us — such as school, community, society, or access to resources (Activities 7–8).

Display your map in a high-traffic area of your school (e.g. cafeteria, main hallway) and consider sharing what you have learned with a class of first-year students.

Activity 1 – Understanding character strengths (LOs 1.2, 4.1)

This activity aims to help students understand and identify character strengths, and make the connection between character strengths and developing our authentic and best selves.

Teacher's note

In this activity students will be introduced to strengths in the context of character strengths.

According to the *Values in Action (VIA) Institute on Character*, **character strengths** are positive traits reflected in thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that contribute to a person's overall wellbeing and moral character. They are considered core aspects of a person's identity, and they can be developed over time. Character strengths are different to talents, interests, and resources; they are positive traits that reflect who you are at your core at a given moment in time.

Understanding character strengths helps us recognise what makes us unique and how we naturally contribute to the world. Research also shows that recognising and actively applying character strengths regularly leads to greater life satisfaction, resilience, improved relationships, and better mental health.

Researchers in the field of **positive psychology** developed the VIA ("Values in Action") evidence-based framework of 24 character strengths. Although we may not always recognise or intentionally use them, research shows that everyone has all 24 character strengths to different degrees, regardless of background, culture, or experience. These strengths are not fixed. Character strengths can be developed over time, meaning a person's unique strengths profile may change as they learn, grow, and gain new experiences.

The **VIA Classification of Strengths** (see <https://viacharacter.org>) identifies **24 character strengths**:

- Creativity, Curiosity, Judgement, Love of Learning, Perspective
- Bravery, Perseverance, Honesty, Zest
- Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence
- Teamwork, Fairness, Leadership
- Forgiveness, Humility, Prudence, Self-Regulation
- Gratitude, Hope, Humour, Spirituality, Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence

Teacher's note

Note: These character strengths are grouped based on their commonalities and their influence on personal and societal wellbeing. The order of presentation does not reflect a hierarchy or importance.

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: Mindful moment (optional)

Step 2: What is a character strength?

Step 3: Learning about character strengths

Step 4: Reflecting on character strengths

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 1, Understanding character strengths



- Worksheet: Hero's Medal

Step 1: Mindful moment



Consider beginning this activity with a **mindful moment**.



Beech Acres
[Mindful Minute – Mindful Eyes](#)

As an alternative, students can reflect on and answer the following journalling prompts in their Wellbeing Journal:

- Describe/draw one thing you noticed today that you normally would not pay much attention to. It could be: The sound of your favourite song playing, the colour of the sky or a tree you passed, objects in the classroom around you.

Step 2: What is a character strength?

1. Ask students what they understand by the term “character strength,” and clarify with reference to the definition provided (see Teacher’s note).
2. Ask students to reflect on the type of character strengths they might have seen in themselves and others. Write students’ answers on the board (*do not worry if some of the answers do not fit within the definition of character strengths*).
3. Circle the answers that align with the definition of character strengths and explain to students that these are known character strengths and there are many more, e.g. bravery, empathy, teamwork, leadership, curiosity, capacity to love (*other student answers may reflect broader understandings of strengths; however, this activity is focusing on character strengths*).
4. Project the slide from the slide deck that shows the 24 character strengths that have been identified (*although there may be many more*). Students can spend some time looking at each of the character strengths.
5. Ask students if they were surprised at some of the strengths on the list, or did they feel that some character strengths were missing?
 - If so, what were they?

Discussion questions

- Was it easy or difficult to identify different character strengths?
- Is it useful (or not useful) to think about the character strengths we have? *For example, it can be useful to think about the character strengths we use more often rather than those we do not when it comes to solving problems; thinking about character strengths helps us to see we have value because we have unique strengths.*
- Do you agree that character strengths can be developed? *There is no clear answer here, but similar to a growth mindset scientists believe that many strengths may be worked on and developed.*

Step 3: Learning about character strengths

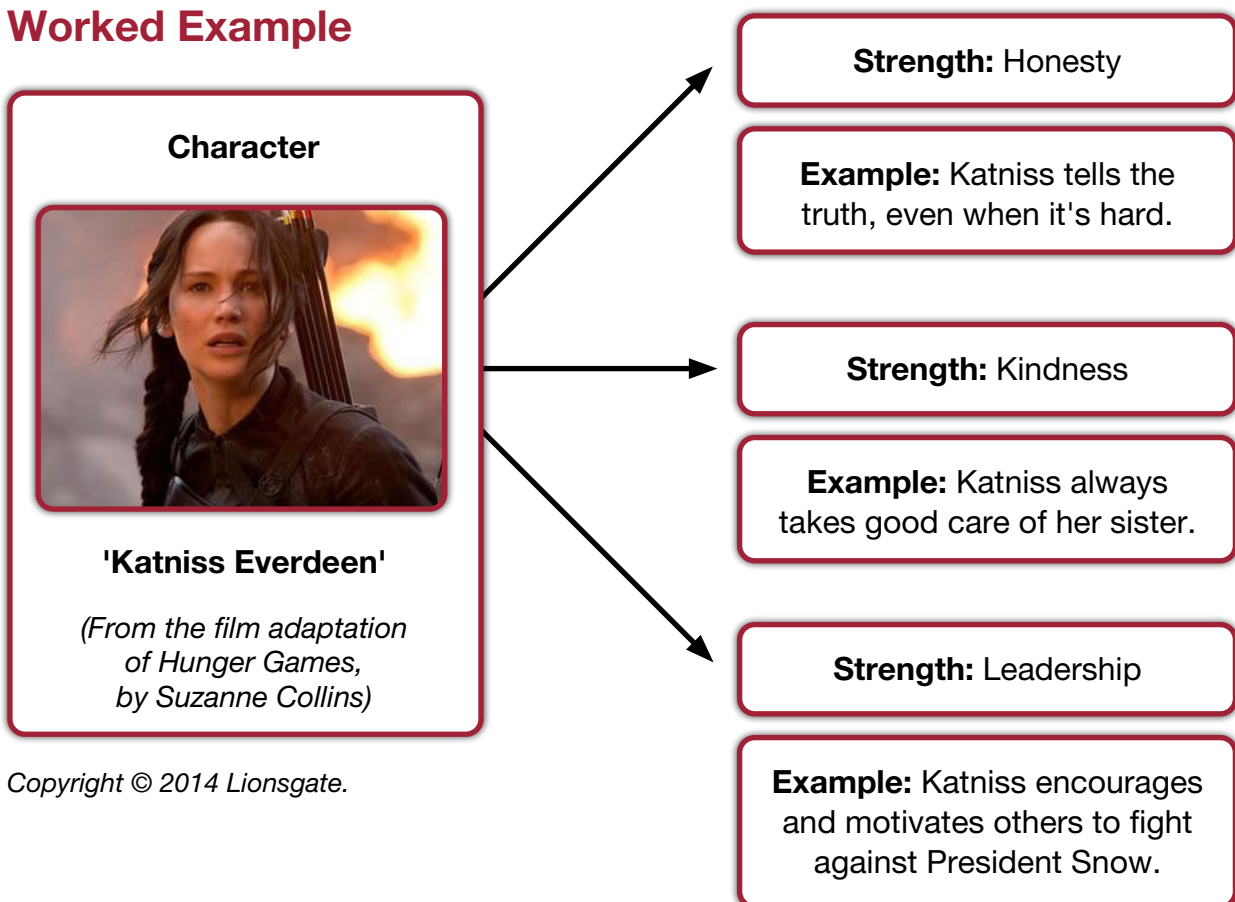
Strengths in fictional characters

Now that students understand the range of character strengths, they will practice attributing character strengths to behaviours they can see in others.

1. Ask students (aloud or in groups) to fill in the strengths for each fictional character based on the description of their character. A slide deck is available to support this activity.
Students should identify and name three character strengths demonstrated by each character and/or provide their own example of how the strength is shown.

Note that teachers can add other real or fictional characters students might relate to (e.g. figures from sports, film, music, politics).

Worked Example



Copyright © 2014 Lionsgate.

Character	Strengths and examples
"Katniss Everdeen" <i>(from the film adaptation of Hunger Games, authored by Suzanne Collins)</i>	Honesty: Katniss tells the truth, even when it is hard. Kindness: Katniss always takes good care of her sister. Leadership: Katniss encourages and motivates others to fight against President Snow.
"Yoda" <i>(from the Star Wars film series, created by George Lucas)</i>	Wisdom/judgement: Yoda gives thoughtful, philosophical advice to Jedis. Perspective: He helps others view situations calmly and with long-term vision. Self-regulation: He stays composed in moments of stress or temptation.
"Hermione Granger" <i>(from the Harry Potter series, authored by J.K. Rowling)</i>	Love of Learning: Hermione is constantly reading and researching to help herself and others. Perseverance: She studies hard and never gives up, even in the face of fear or danger. Fairness: She fights for equality, including her campaign for house-elf rights.
"Harry Potter" <i>(from the Harry Potter series, authored by J.K. Rowling)</i>	Bravery: Harry faces Voldemort and other threats even though he feels afraid. Love: He stands by his friends and protects them. Hope: He holds onto hope that Voldemort can be defeated and that good will triumph, which helps him stay focused and courageous throughout his journey.
"Shrek" <i>(From Shrek, produced by DreamWorks Animation)</i>	Honesty: Shrek stays true to who he is, even when others judge or misunderstand him. He does not pretend to be someone he is not to gain approval. Love: Despite his gruff attitude, Shrek shows deep care for others, especially Fiona and Donkey, and protects those he cares about. Bravery: Shrek steps outside his comfort zone to rescue Fiona, confronts his fears, and talks about his emotions, even when it is difficult.
"Dorothy" <i>(from The Wizard of Oz, authored by L. Frank Baum)</i>	Hope: Dorothy keeps believing she will get home. Gratitude: She appreciates the help of her friends. Curiosity: She is eager to explore and understand the world of Oz.

Step 4: Reflecting on character strengths

Finish this activity with either Option A (Character strengths in film) or Option B (the Hero's Medal exercise).

Option A: Character strengths in film

In a blank page in their Wellbeing Journal:

1. Choose and watch two film clips. Teachers can choose alternative clips appropriate for their class.

Character name	Link to film clip
"Harry Potter" <i>(from the film adaptation of the Harry Potter series, authored by J.K. Rowling)</i>	"Top 10 Most Searched For Harry Potter Scenes" (Harry Potter Official YouTube Channel). Copyright © Warner Bros. ("Wizard's Chess" scene, from <i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>: 07:19—9:37. Duration: 2 minutes, 18 seconds). Copyright © Warner Bros. Teachers can choose a suitable clip from the available videos.
"Daniel LaRusso" <i>(from The Karate Kid, directed by John G. Avildsen)</i>	"The Lessons Come Together" – <i>The Karate Kid</i> (Movieclips YouTube Channel) ("The Lessons Come Together" scene, from <i>The Karate Kid</i>. Duration: 2 minutes, 30 seconds). Copyright © 2010 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Inc.

2. Consider what character strengths are portrayed in each clip.

OR

Option B: the Hero's Medal exercise

1. Provide each student with a copy of the **Hero's Medal worksheet** or ask students to respond to complete the following exercise in their SPHE copy. Think of a personal hero, or a person that you admire. This can be anyone from a friend, sibling, or parent to a fictional character, or a famous person from any field, e.g. sports, film, music, politics, activist.

2. Consider the character strengths they possess and respond to the following questions:

- A person I admire is...

They use [insert strength 1] _____ to: ...

They use [insert strength 2] _____ to: ...

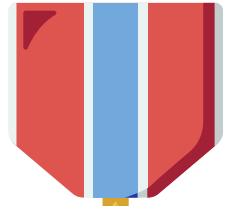
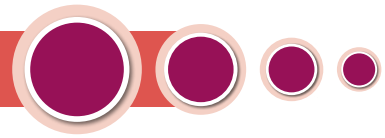
They use [insert strength 3] _____ to: ...

- What do you think/feel when you observe this character strength in action?

Discussion questions

- Which (For both Option A and B) character strengths do you admire the most and why?
- Are there times in everyday life when these character strengths are important? What are those?

For example, curiosity in school, leadership in project work, perseverance in achieving a goal, perspective-taking to resolve an argument.



Worksheet – Activity 1 – Understanding strengths

Worksheet: *Hero's Medal*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Hero's Medal

Instructions: Think of a personal hero, or a person that you admire. This can be anyone from a friend, sibling, or parent to a fictional character, or a famous person from any field, e.g. sports, film, music, politics, activism. Think of 1–3 examples of character strengths that this person uses. Respond to prompts 1–4 on the worksheet.

Write/draw in the boxes below:

1. A person I admire is [name]: _____

2. They use [insert strength 1] _____ to:

3. They use [insert strength 2] _____ to:

4. They use [insert strength 3] _____ to:

What do you think/feel when you observe this character strength in action? Write/draw:

Activity 2 – Identifying my strengths (LOs 1.2, 1.3)

This activity aims to support students in understanding on their range of character strengths, identify the strengths they use most often, and identify areas for strength development. This will help students to become aware of the character strengths they can leverage to support their wellbeing.

Teacher's note

In Activity 1 (“Understanding strengths”), students learned about character strengths. This activity builds on this by encouraging students to identify and reflect on their range of character strengths and encouraging them to reflect on strengths they wish to deepen.

Monitor the class carefully during the character strengths discussion. Students’ responses to the questions should refer to a personal quality or behaviour, rather than physical appearance or personal possessions. Check in with groups throughout this activity, providing support as needed and ensuring that the conversations stay positive and respectful.

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: Mindful moment

Step 2: Spotting our character strengths

Step 3: Reflecting on my strengths

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



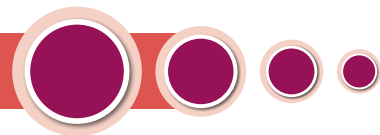
- Slide deck: Activity 2, Identifying my strengths



- Worksheet: Inner diamond – Strengths reflection



- Resource: Dice



Step 1: Mindful moment



Consider beginning this activity with a **mindful moment**.



Headspace
[2-Minute Quick Focus Reset Meditation](#)

As an alternative, students can reflect on and answer the following journalling prompts in their Wellbeing Journal:

1. What is one thing I am grateful for today?
2. What is one thing I want to focus on today?

Step 2: Spotting our character strengths

Remind students that we all have character strengths, but we can find it quite hard to identify them. Often, the people around us might find it easier to spot these unique character strengths. They will engage in a dice game designed to help them to spot their strengths.

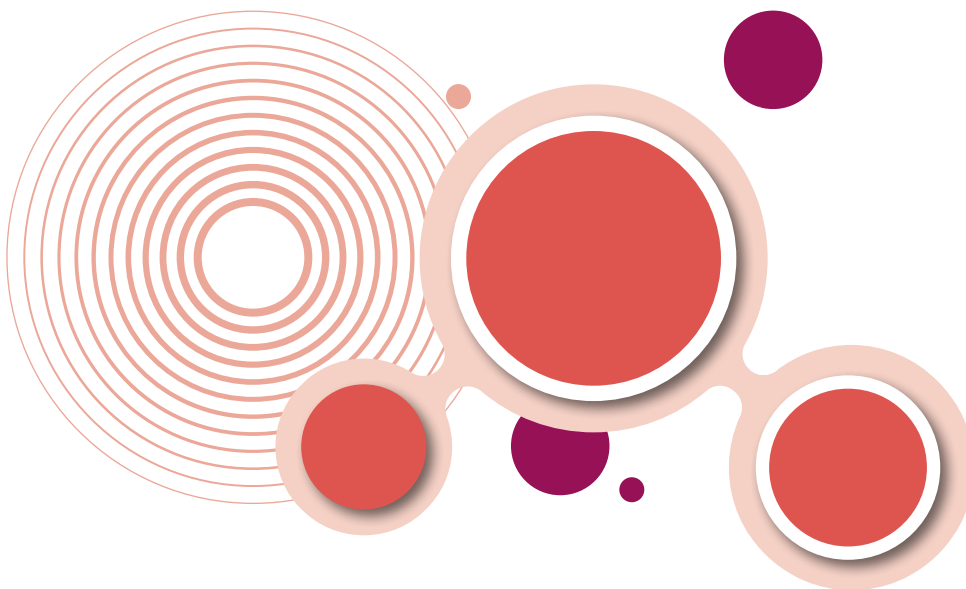
1. Organise students into groups of three or four. Project the visual of character strengths on the board using the slide deck provided. If helpful, briefly revisit the character strengths introduced in Activity 1 (Understanding character strengths). Encourage students to refer to these as they complete Step 2.
2. Ask students to keep a note of the different character strengths as they come up (each student should have identified at least three different character strengths by game completion).
3. Provide each group with a dice and a list of six questions (see sample questions below).
4. Explain that there are two/three “rounds” in this activity.
5. In each round, everyone has a turn to throw the dice and then answer the question that corresponds to the number thrown. If, on the second/third round, someone throws the same number as they did on the first round, they throw the dice again until they get a different number and thus a different question.

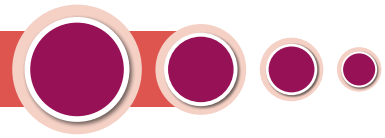
Dice game questions

1. What do you think are your top three character strengths?
 2. What is one character strength you enjoy using? Why do you like using it?
 3. Which character strengths seem to come naturally to you? Explain why.
 4. Give an example of a time when you have used a character strength.
 5. What character strength could help you to reach a goal or goals? Explain why.
 6. Ask others in the group to suggest a character strength they see in you.
6. Ask the class for feedback on the range of character strengths that have been mentioned and create a word cloud capturing the class's strengths.

Discuss:

- What class strengths emerge from the word cloud?





Step 3: Reflecting on my strengths

1. Explain to students that by uncovering our character strengths, we are revealing our inner diamond. Ask students to complete the inner diamond worksheet using the following prompts:

Inner diamond strengths reflection prompts

- What three strengths did you identify? *For example, the three strengths you use the most.*
 - How do your strengths enable you to manage better at school/in your life? *For example, perspective (i.e. considering different viewpoints) can help us to approach problems with a bird's eye view and make well-informed decisions. For example, empathy can help us to build and maintain healthy relationships, by recognising, understanding, and sharing how others are feeling.*
 - Are there any situations where your strengths might hold you back, present challenges, or may not serve you well? *For example, empathy can help us to recognise, understand, and share the thoughts and feelings of another person. Empathy helps us to build strong relationships, to take perspective, and provide support for others. While this is a valuable and important strength, if someone is frequently sought out by their peers for support, they might continuously absorb others' emotions without establishing boundaries. This may become overwhelming and impact their own wellbeing.*
 - Make a note of a character strength(s) you would like to pay more attention to and practice in the future, and why.
2. Conclude this activity by explaining that taking the time to recognise and appreciate character strengths in ourselves and others can help us understand ourselves better, increase our confidence and wellbeing, and encourage us to use these character strengths more consciously in our daily lives. Encourage students to make a habit of recognising and acknowledging others' character strengths.

Worksheet – Activity 2 – Identifying my strengths

Worksheet: Inner diamond – Strengths reflection

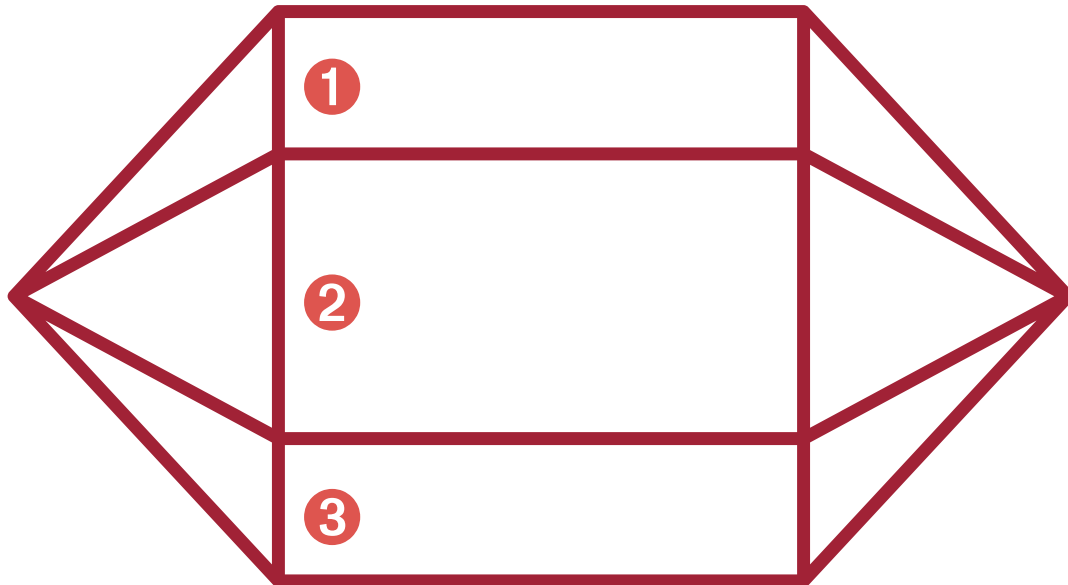
Name: _____ Date: _____

Inner diamond – strengths reflection

Instructions: By uncovering our character strengths, we are revealing our inner diamond. Reflect on the following prompts and make a note on the worksheet to bring your inner diamond to life.

1. What 3 character strengths did you identify? *(The three strengths you use the most).*

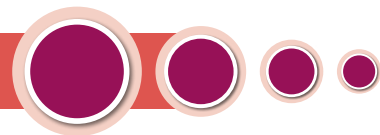
My inner diamond



2. How do your strengths enable you to manage better at school/in your life? **Write/draw:**

3. Are there any situations where your strengths might hold you back, present challenges, or may not serve you well? **Write/draw:**

4. Make a note of a character strength(s) you would like to pay more attention to and practice in the future, and why. **Write/draw:**



Activity 3 – Appreciating myself (LO 1.3)

This activity aims to support students in understanding the factors that influence self-esteem, and how self-esteem impacts emotional wellbeing. Using the acorn-to-oak tree analogy, students will explore how internal thoughts and external experiences can help or hinder self-esteem. Through discussion and reflection, students will identify ways to strengthen their own self-esteem and support others in building theirs.

Teacher's note

Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of their worth; their belief and confidence in their own ability and value. Self-esteem is also a state that varies day to day and even hour to hour depending on what is going on in a person's life. Having positive self-esteem is considered a good thing but must be tempered with a healthy realism and sensitivity to others.

Global self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their worth.

When we have a healthy level of self-esteem, we tend to:

- Feel positive about who we are, most of the time.
- Have belief in ourselves, the things we can do and our ability to try new things.
- Believe that we deserve to be treated well by others and to take care of ourselves.
- Believe we matter and deserve to feel good about ourselves.
- Believe we can cope or know where to find help and support.

It is essential to reinforce the message that everyone has inherent worth, and self-esteem is about how we recognise and affirm that worth within ourselves. While it can be difficult to shift how we think and feel about ourselves, we can strengthen our self-esteem over time by actively appreciating our strengths, practicing self-compassion, and engaging in positive self-reflection. Small acts of appreciation can have a big impact on our relationships and self-esteem. Taking time to acknowledge the positive qualities in others helps build a supportive and encouraging environment.

Teacher's note continued

Our self-esteem is shaped by many things, including internal factors, like our thoughts and self-beliefs, and external influences, such as our relationships (e.g. praise or criticism from important people in our lives) and experiences (e.g. comparing ourselves to others). Supportive feedback, encouragement, and appreciation from others can boost self-esteem. Recognising these factors is helpful because it allows us to understand what supports or challenges our sense of self-esteem. **It is important to help students be mindful of becoming over-reliant on positive feedback from others, as this can lead to behaviours that may not be healthy for them or beneficial for society.**

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: Mindful moment

Step 2: What is self-esteem?

Step 3: What shapes self-esteem?

Step 4: Appreciating others

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 3, Appreciating myself



- Worksheet: What is self-esteem?



- Worksheet: What shapes self-esteem?

Step 1: Mindful moment



Consider beginning this activity with a **mindful moment**.

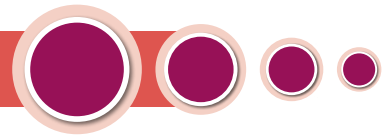


Headspace

[Mindfulness Through the Sunrise: Using Sunrise Photography to Appreciate Nature](#)
(3 minutes, 21 seconds)

As an alternative, students can reflect on and write/draw in response to this journalling prompt in their Wellbeing Journal:

- Think back on today (or this week). What was one small moment that felt beautiful, peaceful, or meaningful, even if no one else noticed it?



Step 2: What is self-esteem?

In this activity students will explore their own understanding of self-esteem. Students will collaboratively work to answer the question: What is self-esteem?

1. Divide students into small groups (3–4 people) and provide each group with a large sheet of paper with a box labelled "What is self-esteem?" in the centre.
 - Read the question "What is self-esteem?" aloud. Students first reflect and write their own thoughts individually in their assigned section of the page.
 - Students share their responses with their group and agree on key ideas. They summarise these in the centre box.
2. After the focusing exercise, invite each group to share its agreed understanding of self-esteem and then discuss the following:
 - Listening to the feedback, what did you notice about the different understandings of self-esteem? Were there some things in common?

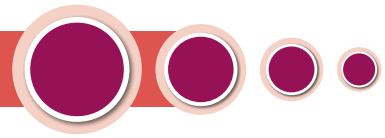
Step 3: What shapes self-esteem?

1. Introduce the concept:
 - Draw a simple acorn and an oak tree on the board. Explain that self-esteem, like a tree, takes time to grow. In this step, students will explore positive and negative influences on self-esteem.
 - Some things help it grow strong (e.g. encouragement, self-belief, support), while other things hinder its growth (e.g. negative self-talk, comparison, criticism).
 - Our own thoughts, actions, and experiences play a role, but so do other people and external influences (e.g. social media, friendships, school environment).
2. Divide students into small groups (3–5 people) and provide each group with the worksheet for this activity, or a sheet of flipchart paper. The page should have:
 - An acorn at the bottom (representing a young person their age).
 - A large oak tree at the top (representing strong, healthy self-esteem).

3. Ask students to write or draw their responses to the following prompts:
 - What can positively influence our self-esteem? *For example, feedback from a trusted person, supportive relationships, setting personal goals, being kind to yourself, celebrating effort, progress, achievements, appreciation, self-care habits.*
 - What can negatively influence our self-esteem? *For example, negative social comparison, criticism, bullying, feeling excluded, unrealistic expectations from social media or peers.*
4. When students have discussed and mapped examples of the prompts, discuss the following questions with the whole class:

Discussion questions

- What can we do to grow our own self-esteem?
For example, practicing positive self-talk, and challenging unhelpful thoughts. Engaging in activities that make us feel capable and confident (e.g. sports, music, art).
 - What can we do to help grow others' self-esteem?
For example, recognising others' strengths and offering encouragement, being kind with how we speak to/think about others, showing appreciation for others, including others in activities.
 - How can we protect our self-esteem from negative influences?
For example, limiting time on social media, paying attention to our thoughts and challenging unhealthy comparisons. Reminding ourselves that mistakes are part of learning, not a reflection of our worth. Setting boundaries with people who make us feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or insecure. Focusing on our own progress rather than comparing ourselves to others.
5. Conclude this step by noting that our self-esteem is influenced by a combination of internal factors (how we think and feel about ourselves) and external factors (how others treat us and the environment we are in). By identifying and nurturing the factors that support our self-esteem, we can strengthen it. Every acorn can grow into an oak tree.



Step 4: Appreciating others

Notes of appreciation

1. Provide each student with a sticky note or piece of paper (students can also swap SPHE copybooks). In pairs, ask students to write a short note of appreciation to each other. Encourage students to focus on specific qualities, strengths, or positive actions of their peer.

Prompts

- One thing I really admire about you is...
 - Something you do well that I have noticed is...
 - You are great at...
 - I appreciate you because...
 - Thank you for...
2. Once everyone has written their note, students will exchange their notes with the person beside them. Give students a moment to read their note silently.
 3. Ask students to reflect:
 - How did it feel to receive a note of appreciation?
 - How did it feel to give appreciation to someone else?
 - Have you ever taken a moment to appreciate yourself?
 4. Remind students that small acts of appreciation can have a big impact on our relationships and self-esteem. Taking time to acknowledge the positive qualities in others helps build a supportive and encouraging environment.
 5. Encourage students to consider how they can extend this practice beyond the classroom, whether by expressing appreciation to family, friends, or even themselves. Reinforce that it is important to take time to recognise and appreciate their own positive qualities/actions, no matter how small. Recognising and appreciating our own strengths plays a key role in developing self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

Note that this exercise can be adapted by asking students to write a note of appreciation to someone important in their lives. Prompts and reflection questions could be changed to reflect this. For example, "how did it feel to write a note of appreciation?"



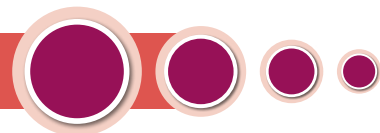
Worksheet – Activity 3 – Appreciating myself

Worksheet: What is self-esteem?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for writing.A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for writing.

What is self-esteem?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for writing.A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for writing.A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for writing.



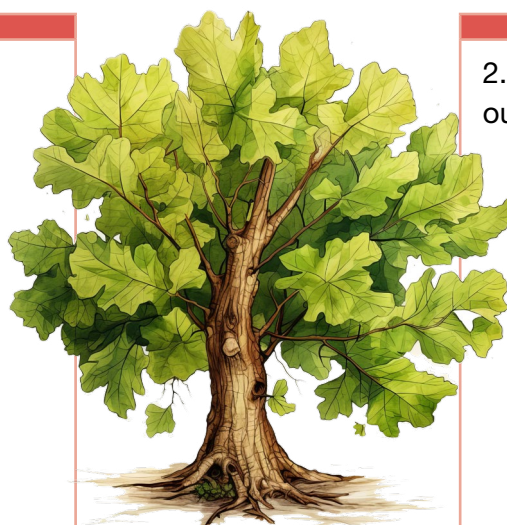
Worksheet – Activity 3 – Appreciating myself

Worksheet: What shapes self-esteem?

Instructions:

Work together in groups to read and discuss each prompt question (1, 2, 3). Think about the different things that influence self-esteem (positively and negatively). **Write or draw in response to each prompt.**

3. What can negatively influence our self-esteem?



2. What can positively influence our self-esteem?



1. What influences our self-esteem?

Think about thoughts, people, experiences, and external factors such as cultural and societal expectations (e.g. social media).



Activity 4 – Being kind to myself (LO 1.3)

This activity aims to help students explore what being kind to yourself is, and how we can practice it. Being kind to yourself is a key element of self-compassion, which is strongly linked to better emotional wellbeing.

Teacher's note

Being kind to yourself involves:

1. **Positive self-talk:** Replacing negative self-talk with supportive and encouraging thoughts that acknowledge our efforts and progress.
2. **Recognising our worth:** Understanding that we are deserving of kindness and care, no matter our flaws or mistakes.
3. **Acknowledging our needs:** Taking the time to notice when we need rest, support, or care, and allowing ourselves to meet these needs.

In step 1, students explore what being kind to yourself looks like. This offers an opportunity to explore strategies for showing ourselves kindness. It's important to understand that being kind to yourself also includes acknowledging when things are not pleasant but responding to things in a way that shows self-care helps protect your wellbeing.

Practicing being kind to yourself means actively choosing to treat ourselves with care and kindness through our thoughts and actions in our daily lives. For example:

- Setting healthy boundaries reflects a belief in our worth and helps protect our wellbeing.
- Practicing self-care helps us respond to our needs (once we have acknowledged them). For example, making time for fun and rest, taking a break when you feel tired, doing something you enjoy. Sometimes being kind to yourself can mean doing something hard but helpful, like starting a task that you have been avoiding, or saying “no” to something that doesn't feel right.
- Appreciating personal effort and achievements, no matter how small.

Step 2 focuses on positive self-talk as a practical and accessible strategy you can use anytime, in any moment. Self-talk is the inner voice we use to make sense of our experiences. It includes the thoughts and words we say to ourselves, whether out loud or in our minds.

Teacher's note

When we engage in positive self-talk, we encourage ourselves with kindness, affirmation, and understanding. This might sound like: "It's okay to make mistakes, I'm doing my best", or "I am enough, just as I am." Positive self-talk helps us maintain perspective and manage difficult or challenging moments. In contrast, negative self-talk often involves harsh, critical, or unrealistic thoughts such as "I'm not good enough", or "I can't do anything right." This kind of internal dialogue can diminish our self-esteem and make us feel less capable.

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: What does it mean to be kind to yourself?

Step 2: Connecting with my kind self through positive self-talk

Step 3: Practicing positive self-talk, or mindful moment

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 4, Being kind to myself



- Worksheet: What does it mean to be kind to yourself?



- Worksheet: Connecting with my kind self through positive self-talk

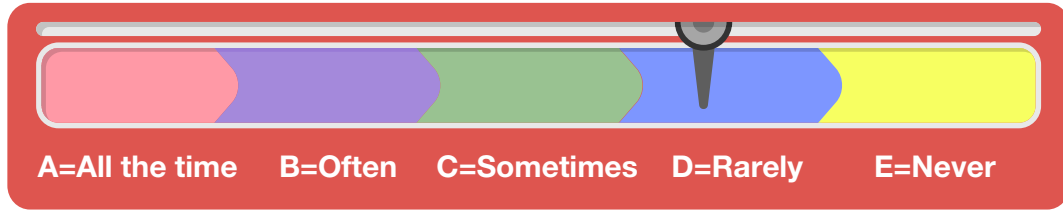


- Worksheet: Practicing positive self-talk

Step 1: What does it mean to be kind to yourself?

1. Provide each student with a copy of the quiz worksheet. Teachers may make this more interactive by using a digital tool for this quiz.
2. Before introducing the topic of the activity, begin this activity with a short quiz. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Students will reflect on the quiz items and what they have in common. This quiz reflects some behaviours consistent with being kind to yourself.

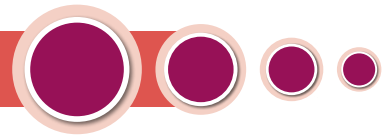
Display the following questions on the board, along with the response options:



A=All the time B=Often C=Sometimes D=Rarely E=Never

1.	When I make a mistake, I remind myself that mistakes are part of learning, and I speak to myself with kindness instead of being overly critical.
2.	If I am having a tough day, I allow myself to take a break or do something that helps me feel better.
3.	I acknowledge things that I do well, and I remind myself of my strengths.
4.	When I am going through a tough time, I reach out for support instead of keeping my feelings to myself.
5.	I set boundaries and say “no” when something does not feel right for me.
6.	I treat myself with the same kindness and encouragement I would give a friend.

3. Explain that all these behaviours are examples of what it means to be kind to yourself. In a 'think-pair-share' ask students to think of ways that we can practice being kind to ourselves.
4. Then, explain that being kind to yourself means treating yourself with warmth and understanding. It is important to recognise that each person may have different understandings of being kind to themselves, and some may not relate to these ideas.
5. Conclude this step by emphasising that an important part of being kind to yourself is noticing how you are thinking and speaking about yourself. Pay attention to the words and thoughts you use and ask yourself if you would say the same things to a friend.



Step 2: Connecting with my kind self through positive self-talk

Positive self-talk is one strategy for practicing self-kindness. It helps to boost self-esteem and enhance resilience. Sometimes it is difficult to put positive self-talk into practice. This is particularly helpful during a challenging or difficult moment. One way to encourage students to engage with positive self-talk is by asking them to imagine what they would say to a friend to offer kindness. Ensure to observe the groups during this activity and offer support where needed. Guide students to think of phrases that are affirming and understanding, not solution-oriented. Examples are provided.

1. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.
2. Assign a challenging scenario to each group of students.
3. Using their SPHE copy or the provided worksheet, ask students to:
 - Read and discuss their assigned scenario.
 - Brainstorm as many examples of positive self-talk as possible.
4. Offer students some guidance to understand positive self-talk (see teacher's note). Walk students through a worked example using one of the provided scenarios to demonstrate positive self-talk.



	Theme	Challenging scenario	Positive self-talk examples
1.	FOMO <i>Fear of Missing Out</i>	I could not go to a party and now I feel worried that my friends are having fun without me and that I will be left out of other events.	<i>"Not going to the party doesn't mean I'm not valued – my true friends appreciate me even if I am not there this time."</i> <i>"One event does not define my friendships. I am still important to the people who care about me."</i>
2.	Under Pressure	I feel overwhelmed with balancing school, after-school activities, and home life, and now it feels like I am failing, unable to keep up with everything.	<i>"I am doing my best, and that's all I can ask of myself."</i> <i>"Taking a break doesn't mean I'm failing – it helps me recharge so I can do my best."</i>
3.	Sporting Stress	I did not perform as well as I expected in a recent match and now, I feel like I have let my teammates down. I am doubting my abilities, and I am afraid that I will disappoint them again.	<i>"One match doesn't define me – I have so many chances to improve."</i> <i>"My team values me for more than just my performance."</i>
4.	Social Comparison	I feel very self-conscious recently. I spend hours scrolling through social media looking at people who seem to have the "perfect" life.	<i>"What I see online isn't the full picture – everyone has struggles."</i> <i>"I have unique qualities and strengths that make me who I am."</i>
5.	Public Speaking	I froze during my history presentation, and now I feel so embarrassed.	<i>"One tough moment doesn't erase all my effort and preparation."</i> <i>"People forget mistakes quickly – I can move forward and try again."</i>
6.	Break-Up	I am heartbroken after a break-up, and I feel lonely and upset.	<i>"I am feeling sad and this feeling is okay – this feeling will pass."</i> <i>"I have loving friends and family that can help me through this tough time."</i>
7.	New School	I have started at a new school. I feel nervous and unsure of myself at school, I am struggling to make friends.	<i>"It's normal to feel nervous, but I will find my place here."</i> <i>"This is an opportunity to meet more people and make new friends."</i>
8.	Exam Stress	I am feeling overwhelmed about an exam, and I think I am going to fail. I am going to skip exercising and socialising because I don't deserve a break or fun until I have fully prepared for the exam.	<i>"Taking care of myself will help me do my best – I deserve to mind myself."</i> <i>"One test does not define me. I am more than a grade."</i>

5. Ask students to share the self-talk examples that they have produced, either in small groups or with the whole class. Encourage students to note any phrases that particularly resonate with them. Remind students that positive self-talk is an effective way to show kindness towards yourself.

Step 3: Practicing positive self-talk, or mindful moment

To conclude the activity, students will practice positive self-talk.

1. In their SPHE copy or on the worksheet (entitled "Mirror exercise"), ask students to draw a rectangle to represent a mirror.
2. In this "mirror," ask students to write examples of positive self-talk that would be helpful for them if they were experiencing a challenging time. Students can draw from phrases that were developed in Step 2.
3. Allow students a moment to silently repeat these phrases to themselves if they feel comfortable doing so.

OR



Consider concluding this activity with a **mindful moment**:



Headspace mini-meditation

[Celebrate Yourself Today, and Every Day: A Meditation to Honor Your Worth](#)

4. Remind students that it is best to practice being kind to yourself so that you can access this more easily in challenging times.



Worksheet – Activity 4 – Being kind to myself

Worksheet: What does it mean to be kind to yourself?

Name: _____ Date: _____

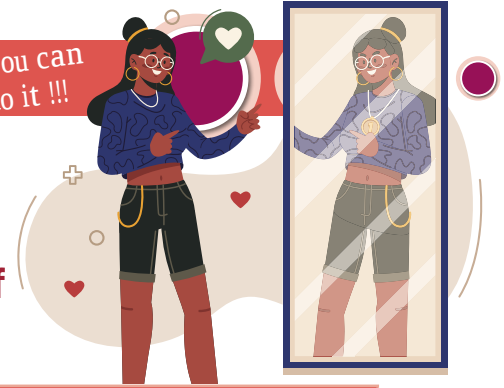
Instructions: Take a moment to reflect on the quiz questions below and consider how often you do each of these actions. Think about what these actions have in common. You do not have to write your response, this is optional. Do not worry if you “rarely” do any of these actions – this is very common. **There are no right or wrong answers to this quiz.**

1. Quiz questions

Quiz item <i>Think about how often you do the following actions:</i>	Response (optional)  A=All the time  B=Often  C=Sometimes  D=Rarely  E=Never
1. When I make a mistake, I remind myself that mistakes are part of learning, and I speak to myself with kindness instead of being overly critical.	
2. If I am having a tough day, I allow myself to take a break or do something that helps me feel better.	
3. I acknowledge things that I do well, and I remind myself of my strengths.	
4. When I am going through a tough time, I reach out for support instead of keeping my feelings to myself. What can negatively influence our self-esteem?	
5. I set boundaries and say “no” when something does not feel right for me.	
6. I treat myself with the same kindness and encouragement I would give a friend.	

2. What are some ways that you can practice being kind to yourself?

You can
do it !!!



Worksheet – Activity 4 – Being kind to myself

Worksheet: Connecting with my kind self through positive self-talk

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Take Your teacher will assign a challenging scenario for you to discuss in a group:

- Read and discuss your assigned scenario.
- Brainstorm as many examples of positive self-talk as possible.

Helpful Hints

Positive self-talk means encouraging ourselves with kindness, affirmation, and understanding. Positive self-talk helps us maintain perspective and manage difficult or challenging moments.

For example:

- "It's okay to make mistakes, I'm doing my best", or
- "I am enough, just as I am".

1. What scenario are you discussing?

The challenging scenario we are discussing is... e.g. number/description of the scenario
(write/draw in this space):

2. Brainstorm as many examples of positive self-talk that would be helpful in this challenging situation as you can (1–3 examples):



Worksheet – Activity 4 – Being kind to myself

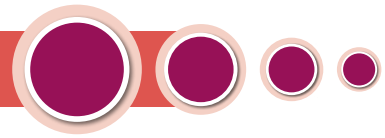
Worksheet: Practicing positive self-talk

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mirror exercise

Instructions: Read one of the challenge scenarios and think about some examples of positive self-talk that you would find helpful if you were in this scenario, or experiencing a challenging time. Decorate the mirror below with positive self-talk and display this worksheet somewhere that you will see it often. **Remember that positive self-talk is a great way to practice being kind to yourself.** Take a moment to repeat these phrases to yourself now (in your mind, or aloud) if you are comfortable doing so.





Activity 5 – Understanding social connection for wellbeing (LO 4.1)

This activity aims to help students to understand the role of social connection for wellbeing, to consider how social connections can provide different types of social support, and to explore ways of strengthening social connections across family, friends, school, and community to enhance their wellbeing.

Teacher's note

Humans are social beings with a fundamental need to connect with others. Social connection is the state of feeling emotionally close to another person or other people, feeling cared for and caring about others. We experience social connection when we feel close to someone. Feeling close to someone means that you feel safe with them, you can be yourself around them, you feel like they understand you, that they care about how you're feeling, and they are there for you when you need support. Social connection may also be referred to as social connectedness.

Quantity and Quality of social connections

Both the quantity and quality of our social connections are important for wellbeing. While the quantity of social connections may feel reassuring, it is the quality of these connections that has the most positive impact on our wellbeing. The right balance of quantity and quality looks different for each person. Social connection is also a two-way street. Making an effort to maintain our connections with others and to form new ones is important. Simple actions such as checking in with a friend, sending a quick message to a family member, spending time together, joining a club, or talking to someone new all help keep relationships strong and create new ones.

Social connections and social support

When we are socially connected, we have support from others, which is important for our wellbeing. Giving social support to others can also strengthen our social connections. Feeling that we have support from others when needed helps us feel capable of handling a challenge and makes it easier to ask for support when needed.

Types of social support

The support we receive from family, friends, school or community, impacts on our wellbeing and ability to cope with adversity and challenges. Having supportive connections provides us with social support, which in turn benefits our wellbeing in several ways:

Teacher's note

Types of social support

- **Emotional support:** For example, listening when you're upset, giving you a hug, showing empathy, checking in with you when you're down to care for you.
- **Esteem support:** For example, they remind you of your strengths, skills, and self-worth, especially when you're facing a challenge or feeling unsure. It can be something they say or do that helps you feel capable and valued.
- **Practical support:** For example, helping with homework, lending you something you need, helping you carry something heavy, to make your life easier.
- **Informational support:** When someone shares advice, tips, or knowledge to help you understand or handle something. For example, explaining how to study for a test, giving relationship advice, sharing what helped them in a similar situation to help you understand or handle something.

Overview of "steps" for this activity

Step 1: Quantity and Quality of social connections

Step 2: Supporting wellbeing through social connection – The support carousel

Step 3: Strengthening connections

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 5, Understanding social connection for wellbeing



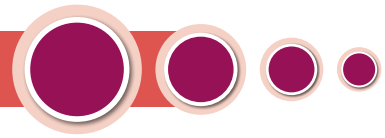
- Resource: Supporting wellbeing through social connection – the support carousel



- Resource: Social connection safety net

Step 1: Quantity and Quality of social connections

1. Ask students to take a moment to think about their use of social media. They might have hundreds, or even thousands, of followers or friends online. If students do not use social media, ask them to think about the number of people they 'know' or recognise in school, their community, or activities. Then, ask students to compare that with the number of people they actually talk to, spend time with, or share personal things with every day.
2. Next, ask students to jot down a few quick thoughts in response to the question:
 - What is most important for young people – the number of connections or the quality of connections, or both? Why?



3. Students will then turn to a partner and share their ideas and reflections about quality versus quantity.
4. Discuss the following as a class:
 - What makes a connection feel “quality” to you?
 - How do we know when we have the right balance of quantity and quality in our social connections?

Complete this step by highlighting that quality connections, rather than the number of connections that we have, are most important for our wellbeing. Explain that today’s activity will explore how we can build strong and supportive connections, in our families, with friends, at school, and in our communities both offline and online.

Step 2: Supporting wellbeing through social connection – the support carousel

1. Begin this step by briefly explaining that having supportive connections provides us with different types of social support which enhances our wellbeing. Teachers can use the slide deck to support this step. Use 1–2 simple examples for each type. Students don’t need to know the formal names, just what each looks like in everyday life:

Support can show up in lots of different ways. Sometimes it is about caring and comforting, for example listening when someone is upset or checking in on a friend to see how they are doing. Other times it is about encouraging confidence, like reminding someone of their strengths or cheering them on. Support can also be practical, such as helping out with tasks like carrying something heavy, sharing your notes, or giving a hand with homework. Finally, it can mean sharing advice or tips, such as suggesting how to study for a test or explaining how you solved a problem. Being supported strengthens our social connection with others and enhances our wellbeing.

2. Place the “support scenario” cards around the classroom. These can be printed and posted on the walls or displayed on desks. If preferred, they may also be projected or written on the board. Each card represents a “station” in the support carousel that students will visit during this step.
3. Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair group with eight sticky notes and a pen.
4. **Explain the carousel rules:**
 - Students rotate around the classroom in pairs, moving from one scenario card to the next. At each station, they discuss a practical way they could provide support to the person in the scenario and write their idea on a sticky note. They then place the note beside the scenario card before moving on to the next station. Rotate until all pairs have visited all scenarios.

5. After the carousel, review each scenario as a class and read the suggestions aloud.

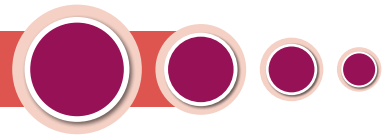
Discuss:

- Did you notice that some scenarios could be supported in more than one way? Which examples stood out to you?
- Why might it sometimes feel difficult to ask for support, and how could we make it easier?

Step 3: Strengthening connections

1. Explain that our relationships can be thought of as a safety net. Just as a net holds us when we fall, the connections we have with family, friends, school, and community provide us with the support we need if we are facing a challenge. We can take steps to strengthen these connections, so our safety net is even stronger.
2. Draw or project a large safety net diagram on the board, divided into four sections: Family, Friends, School, and Community. Explain to students that each section represents part of their lives, and together they will generate ideas for ways to strengthen the connections in the net that supports them.
3. Explain to students that they will reflect on each part of the net by thinking of simple ways to build or strengthen connections:

Connection prompts	Examples
How can we stay connected with our family?	• Share meals/sit down together • Send a quick message to check in • Spend time on an activity together, like watching a show • Help with small tasks at home • Share appreciation or thanks
How can we strengthen our friendships?	• Invite a friend to join your group at lunch • Check in if a friend seems quiet or upset • Play a sport or game together • Share music, playlists, or interests • Send a supportive message (e.g. before a test/match)
How can we build positive connections with classmates, teachers, or staff?	• Say thanks to a teacher or staff member • Include someone in group work • Say “hi” in the hallway • Join or start a study group • Offer help with homework
How can we connect with new people who have different backgrounds, interests, or experiences?	• Join a club, sport, or activity where you’ll meet new people • Talk to someone new in class or at lunch • Volunteer in a community group or project • Take part in a cultural or school event • Join a safe online group for a hobby or interest



4. Ask each group to come up with a couple of practical examples for each category. Students write their ideas on sticky notes (or directly into the diagram) and place them in the relevant sections. Using the prompts, they jot responses on the dotted lines to build the class safety net. Encourage students to brainstorm practical ideas such as checking in with a sibling, inviting a friend to join in, thanking a teacher, joining a team, or volunteering locally.
5. Talk through the safety net once completed. Ask students to take a quiet moment to reflect and jot down one simple thing they will do today to strengthen their connection with someone in their family, with a friend, at school, or in the community.
6. To conclude the activity, remind students of the idea that building connections is about quality rather than quantity, and that giving and receiving support makes the safety net stronger for everyone. Highlight that strong connections take small but consistent effort to keep relationships positive and supportive.



Resource: Supporting wellbeing through social connection – the support carousel

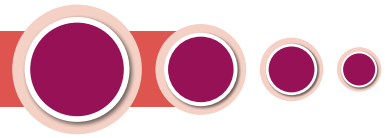
Choose the most appropriate/relevant scenarios or modify as needed for your class.

Scenarios – the support carousel	
1.	Sophie has just found out she didn't make the school soccer team, even though she trained for months. She feels devastated and embarrassed.
2.	Aidan has been given a big group project, but two of his team members aren't contributing. The deadline is in two days, and he feels overwhelmed.
3.	Oisín wants to apply to a competitive summer internship, but he has no idea what they are looking for in applications or how to stand out.
4.	Ibrahim has written a poem for a national competition, but he's unsure if it's strong enough. He's anxious about sharing it and wants honest feedback before submitting.
5.	Liam's close friend just moved away, and he feels lonely and left out at school. He's starting to skip lunchtime because he doesn't feel like talking to anyone.
6.	Maria has just started a part-time job after school in addition to homework and sports. She's struggling to manage her schedule and feels exhausted.
7.	Emma is being bullied online and doesn't know how to respond safely. She's scared it might affect her friends and school life.
8.	Zara is preparing for an important debate. She keeps practicing, but she can't tell if her arguments are strong or if her delivery is convincing.



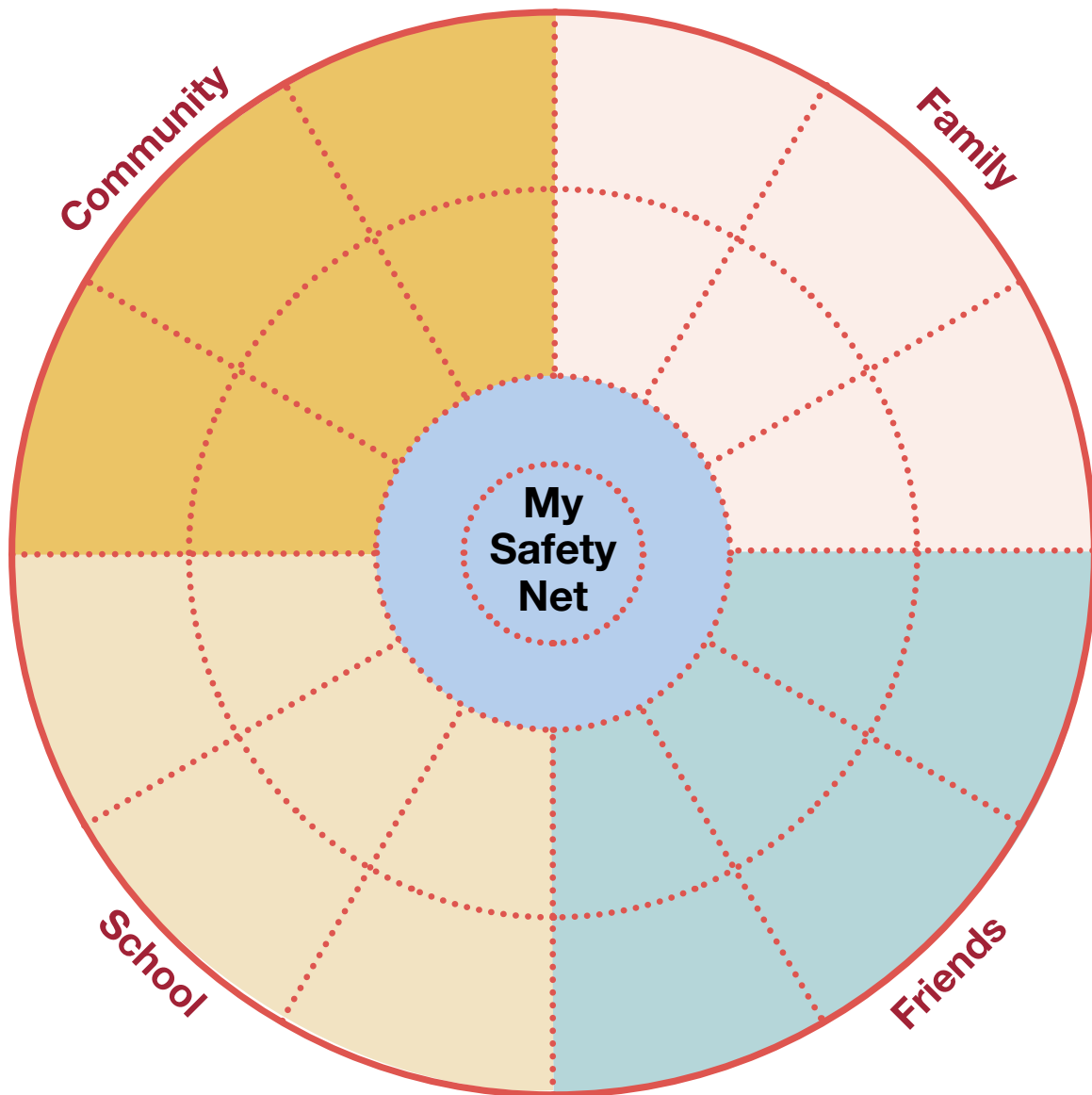
Bank of support examples

Listening, checking in, sitting beside someone, inviting them to join in, cheering before a game, reminding someone of their strengths, saying “you’ve got this”, celebrating success, helping with homework, sharing notes, carrying a bag, lending a pen, tidying up together, showing how to solve a problem, giving study tips, explaining homework, offering advice, suggesting a resource, writing a kind note, giving a compliment, holding the door, asking about their day, thanking someone, encouraging to keep trying, staying with someone so they’re not alone.



Resource: Social connection safety net

Safety Net Diagram



Activity 6 – Navigating challenges in healthy relationships (LO 3.2)

This activity aims to support students in understanding that experiencing challenging moments is a normal and healthy experience across relationships (e.g. friends, family, romantic relationships, etc.). Through discussion and scenario-based reflection, students will consider ways to navigate these challenges respectfully and thoughtfully.

Teacher's note

Healthy relationships

Relationships play an important role in emotional wellbeing, shaping how we feel about ourselves and how we navigate the world around us. Healthy relationships involve respectful interactions where each person feels safe, supported, heard, and valued. They are marked by trust, honesty, open communication, and mutual support. Boundaries can be freely expressed and are respected. In healthy relationships, individuals are allowed to express themselves, manage conflict constructively, and maintain independence while staying connected. Understanding the factors that contribute to healthy relationships (e.g., trust, communication, and mutual respect) can help students recognise the impact of their relationships on their emotional wellbeing and develop skills to manage their relationships in a healthy way.

In healthy relationships (with friends, family, or others) challenging moments can happen. People might act in ways that feel unfair, frustrating, or confusing, even when they care about each other. Learning to notice and respond to these challenges is an important part of looking after ourselves and our relationships. Taking time to reflect on a challenging moment or situation can help us choose a response that is respectful to ourselves and others. Navigating challenges or difficult moments is a normal part of healthy relationships. With communication and trust many difficulties can be resolved. While challenges do not make a relationship bad, they can cause tension or upset or contribute to an unhealthy relationship especially if they happen often or aren't talked about.

Note that a relationship may become unhealthy when one person consistently feels unsafe, disrespected, or unable to be themselves. This can happen when communication breaks down, or one person has more control over the other. While all relationships can have difficult moments, ongoing patterns of hurtful, unbalanced, or controlling behaviour are signs that the relationship may no longer be supportive or safe. Draw students' attention to relevant supports at school (e.g., trusted adult, guidance counsellor), their personal support network (e.g., parents/guardians), and suitable online supports.

Teacher's note

Bank of solutions for challenges in healthy relationships.

Examples of challenges in healthy relationships	Potential solutions
Boundaries may be unclear, not spoken about, or not always respected. One person may feel uncomfortable or unheard.	Talk openly about what feels comfortable and what does not, agree on boundaries together, and check in regularly to make sure both people feel respected.
It is difficult to talk honestly. Conversations may be avoided, one-sided or lead to misunderstanding.	Practice active listening, take turns speaking, and choose a calm moment to talk. Use "I" statements (e.g. "I feel...") and ask questions to avoid assumptions.
There is a lack of trust. One person may feel the need to explain themselves excessively or prove they are being honest, or someone is breaking the other person's trust.	Be reliable and follow through on what you say, avoid secrecy or dishonesty, and if trust is broken, acknowledge it and work on rebuilding slowly with honesty and consistency.
One person may feel left out, guilty for spending time away, or feel unsure if spending time apart is okay.	Talk openly about needing time with other friends or alone, reassure each other that the relationship is still valued, and make plans together to balance closeness and independence.
Support is not always noticed or shown. One person may feel unseen, unsure how to offer support, or let down when things matter to them.	Ask directly what the other person needs, notice small efforts, show appreciation, and make time to be there during important moments (big or small).

Overview of "steps" for this activity

Step 1: Exploring relationships

Step 2: Navigating challenges in healthy relationships

Step 3: Relationship reflection

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 6, Navigating challenges in healthy relationships



- Resource: Challenging scenarios in healthy relationships (scenario exercise)



- Worksheet: The relationship path

Step 1: Exploring relationships

1. Begin by explaining that relationships – whether with family, friends, or romantic partners – are an important part of life that affect us all. These relationships have both benefits (support, trust, growth) and challenges (misunderstandings, jealousy, differing goals).
2. Start this activity with a brief discussion:
 - In what ways can a good, healthy relationship still include moments of challenge, frustration or hurt?

Step 2: Navigating challenges in healthy relationships

1. Divide students into groups of 3–4. Provide each group with a copy of the Relationship Path worksheet to record the group discussion. Each group will discuss one scenario (relationship challenge). Teachers can select the scenarios that are most appropriate for their class.
2. On their Relationship Path worksheet, ask students to discuss and respond to the scenario using each of the following prompts (write/draw):
 - **The starting point:** What is happening in the scenario that is making the situation difficult?
 - **A helpful outcome:** What could a helpful outcome look like (*e.g. more understanding, clearer boundaries, more space*)?
 - *The step/steps in between:* What could each person do or try? What might help things move in a healthier direction?

Explain to students that the aim of this exercise is to map out a pathway through the challenge – not to fix it perfectly, but to think through how someone might respond in a helpful way or move forward.

3. Discuss scenarios, steps, and helpful outcomes with the class.
4. Remind students that navigating challenges or difficult moments is a normal part of healthy relationships. With communication and trust, many difficulties can be navigated. Encourage students to keep practicing what they learned and apply it in their relationships.

Resource: Challenging scenarios in healthy relationships (scenario exercise)

Choose the most appropriate/relevant scenarios or modify as needed for your class.

	Relationship scenarios
1.	You and your friend usually talk every day online, but recently they have been slow to reply or leaving messages unread. You are not sure if they are upset with you or just busy, and you are overthinking what you might have done wrong.
2.	Your friend jokes around a lot, and usually you find it funny, but recently they have started making comments in front of others that feel more personal or embarrassing. You are not sure if they realise it is bothering you.
3.	Your friends made a group plan over the weekend and posted about it online, but you were not included. You are not sure if it was accidental or intentional. They are still friendly in school, but you are unsure as to why you were left out and unsure how to bring it up.
4.	You are allowed to go to an event your friends have been to before. When you ask them to add you to the group chat about it, no one adds you. You have asked twice, and you are embarrassed to ask again. You are not sure why you have not been added.
5.	A family member promises to help with something important but cancels last minute, leaving you to deal with it alone. This is the first time this has happened.
6.	Your sibling goes on your Snapchat account and makes posts that have embarrassed and upset you.
7.	You recently confided in your mother about something important, asking her to keep it private. However, the next day your aunt calls, expressing concern and offering advice you did not expect or ask for. You realise your mother has shared your private information without your consent and you feel betrayed and angry.
8.	Your brother keeps taking your things without asking. A few days ago, he used your headphones without permission, and you could not find them for hours. Then, today, you noticed your jacket was gone, and he did not even tell you. You have asked him to stop before, but it keeps happening and you feel hurt and disrespected.

Step 3: Relationship reflection

To conclude this activity, ask students to reflect on the following, and write/draw a response in their Wellbeing Journal:

- What am I taking away from today, and what does this mean for me?

Worksheet – Activity 6 – Navigating challenges in healthy relationships

Worksheet: The relationship path



Instructions: In this step, you will work in a small group to explore a scenario involving a challenge in a healthy relationship. These are situations where people care about each other, but something has caused confusion, tension, or discomfort.

Your task is to talk through the scenario together and think about how someone might respond in a way that supports themselves and the relationship. There may be more than one way to handle the situation. Your goal is to explore steps, not find a perfect answer.

Record your ideas on the relationship path worksheet:

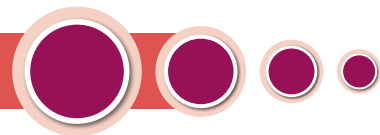
Describe the scenario

The steps in between

What could each person do or try? What might help things move in a healthier direction? *include as few or as many steps as you think make sense.

1 What is making the situation challenging/difficult? Write / draw your responses in each box

2 What does a helpful outcome look like? Write / draw your response. (e.g. more understanding, clear boundaries, more space)?



Activity 7 – Understanding my world and me (LOs 4.1, 4.5)

This activity aims to help students explore the social determinants of health. These are the external factors that affect mental and physical wellbeing. Using real-world data and visuals, students will look at trends in youth wellbeing and discuss how environment can shape wellbeing in both positive and negative ways.

Teacher's note

Social determinants of health

Health and wellbeing are influenced by many different factors, some of which we can control and some that are shaped by the world around us. The term "social determinants of health" refers to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, and work. These determinants can support or undermine mental and physical health, and they help explain why wellbeing can vary between individuals, communities, and countries.

This activity encourages students to explore how their physical and mental wellbeing is connected to wider influences in the world around them (e.g. family, education, friendships, environment, and culture), as well as factors within a more personal realm. Some determinants of health are within our personal realms and may be easier to control, while other determinants are influenced by global conditions and are harder for individuals alone to influence.

Research, including the UNICEF World Happiness Report, highlights that children and young people's wellbeing is largely shaped by their environment. This includes access to education, healthcare, green spaces, financial stability, and social support networks. In societies where young people have greater access to these resources, their overall wellbeing tends to be higher. At the same time, not everyone has equal access to these resources. It is important to acknowledge that not all students have control over meeting their essential needs, such as safety or stability, which are often tied to their environment. Recognising this can help reduce feelings of guilt or pressure for students while fostering empathy and understanding. It is important to remind students that these larger systems can also be shaped by people, especially when working together. Although some determinants of wellbeing may feel beyond individual control, personal choices and collective actions can have real impact. Through this activity, encourage students to think about their role in shaping a fairer and healthier society.

When teaching this activity, be mindful that some students might not have their essential needs met or might be in difficult situations affecting their mental and physical wellbeing. Approach the topic with care, ensuring class discussions are sensitive.

Teacher's note

A note on happiness and wellbeing

While many people equate wellbeing with happiness, it is important for students to understand that wellbeing encompasses a broader range of experiences. Wellbeing includes feeling fulfilled, resilient, and connected. Rather than perceiving happiness (an emotional experience that can be fleeting) as the ultimate outcome, it is important to reframe this perception and build the skills and habits that contribute to a contented, balanced, meaningful life. Encourage students to recognise that experiencing a variety of emotions is a natural and important part of healthy wellbeing.

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: What shapes wellbeing in our world?

Step 2: The wellbeing auction – what counts for wellbeing?

Step 3: Reflecting on my world and me

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 7, Understanding my world and me



- Resource: A league table of child well-being



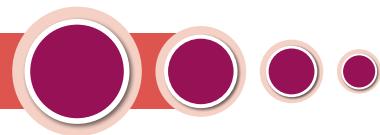
- Worksheet: What shapes wellbeing in our world?



- Worksheet: The wellbeing auction – what counts for wellbeing?



- Worksheet: Reflecting on my world and me



Step 1: What shapes wellbeing in our world?

The aim of this step is to introduce the idea that wellbeing is shaped by a mix of personal and external factors, and that these can look different across cultures and countries.

1. Present students with this wellbeing league table from the UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 19 (2025), showing global youth wellbeing trends. **Note that it was not possible to include certain countries due to missing data. These are OECD countries.**

The table shows how children's wellbeing is ranked across different countries, based on **mental wellbeing** (how young people feel emotionally). First place is highest, 38th place is lowest.

Interpreting the wellbeing league scores

- Rankings are based on averages, not on individuals. This means it does not reflect the experience of every child in that country.
- Cultural differences, income inequality, education systems, and healthcare access can all affect these scores.
- This table is a starting point to explore what influences wellbeing (not a measure of which country is "better").

2. In small groups, invite students to review the data and respond to the following questions:
 - Looking at the countries that ranked highest and lowest for wellbeing, can you offer any suggestions as to why this might be? Do any surprise you? Why/why not?
 - Why do you think there are differences in wellbeing in different countries?



Teachers can use the linked article to support students in interpreting the wellbeing league table, or for more in-depth information.

<https://www.unicef.ie/2020/09/03/teens-ireland-among-least-satisfied-life-oecd-eu/>

3. Facilitate a short class discussion to introduce the idea of social determinants — things like education, healthcare, family life, housing, and safety that affect how people feel and live.

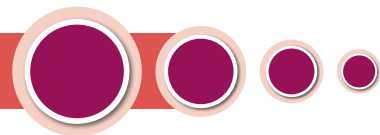
Teachers might write on the board: "What shapes wellbeing?" and capture students' ideas on a mind map.

Resource – A league table of child well-being

Source: UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 19 (Published 2025)



Mental well-being ranking	Country
1	Netherlands
2	Portugal
3	Denmark
4	Spain
5	Romania
6	Hungary
7	Greece
8	Italy
9	Croatia
10	Bulgaria
11	France
12	Slovakia
13	Switzerland
14	Sweden
15	Malta
16	Austria
17	Costa Rica
18	Germany
19	Mexico
20	Lithuania
21	Finland
22	Latvia
23	Canada
24	Ireland
25	Czechia
26	Iceland
27	United Kingdom
28	Slovenia
29	Colombia
30	Poland
31	Chile
32	Japan
33	Estonia
34	Republic of Korea
35	Türkiye
36	New Zealand



Step 2: The wellbeing auction – what counts for wellbeing?

This step is designed to help students understand the different factors that influence wellbeing — and how unequal access to resources can affect quality of life.

1. Download and print the game and bidding cards (or students can draw).
2. Divide the group into 4/5 bidding tables. Each table is given a bidding card (worth 500 tokens). Ask groups to spend 5–10 minutes determining what their priorities are and what they are willing or can afford to spend. For example, what will be their highest/lowest bid?
3. Display an “auction” list of 10–12 wellbeing resources, such as:

Auction items

Individual Level Factors

Self-esteem, confidence – *feel positive about yourself*

Ability to problem solve – *can manage stress and challenges*

Good communication skills – *can ask for your needs to be met*

Good fitness level – *physically fit and able for daily living*



Social Level Factors

Supportive family and friends – *good peer group and have a trusted adult*

Safe neighbourhood – *absence of bullying and violence*

Financial security – *do not have to worry about money*

Digital safety – *free from online bullying and negative interactions*

Quality education – *has access to supportive teachers and can get a qualification*

Environmental Level Factors

Housing – *access to secure and good quality housing*

Nutritious food – *has access to food that nourishes the body*

Safe country – *absence of war and threat to safety*

Health services – *can access support for physical and mental health care*

Equal society – *people are treated equally and everyone feels respected*

Note that the list of auction items can be added to or generated by the class.

4. Conduct the auction. Students bid on each item – the highest bid wins.
5. After the auction is complete, discuss with students:
 - What did you bid for and why?
6. Remind students that wellbeing is not just shaped by the choices we make. It is also influenced by the world around us. Things like where we live, the support we have, and the opportunities we are given can all affect how safe, supported, and healthy we feel. By thinking about these influences together, we can become more thoughtful, fair, and supportive in our communities, friendships, and relationships. Some people may face more challenges because of circumstances outside their control. Understanding this can help us be more compassionate towards ourselves and others, and more aware of what helps support our own wellbeing to overcome imbalances.

Discuss:

- **How can Ireland do better to support young people's wellbeing?**

Step 3: Reflecting on my world and me

1. Prompt students to complete the following reflection questions in writing or as a class discussion:
 - **One thing I learned about wellbeing is...**
 - **Something that surprised me was...**
 - **I now understand that wellbeing is shaped by...**

Encourage students to notice both the shared and different experiences of wellbeing around the world, and to reflect on what supports them personally (and what might support others).

2. To conclude this activity, it is important to leave students with a sense of agency and hope. Explain to students that while some things that affect our wellbeing are outside of our individual control (e.g. economy, climate change, government decisions), people/groups can make a big difference by working together in pursuit of change.

Optionally, to explore this point teachers may conclude the activity by discussing:

- What can we do to influence social and global determinants of wellbeing? *What can be done to improve the local environment or school by working together?*

Teachers may take a final opportunity to remind students of existing support available to them in school and in the wider community, and encourage students to seek support or information.



Worksheet – Activity 7 – Understanding my world and me

Worksheet: What shapes wellbeing in our world?

Instructions: Look at the table showing wellbeing data from different countries. In your group, discuss and write brief answers to the following questions:

1. Looking at the countries that ranked highest and lowest for wellbeing, can you offer any suggestions as to why this might be? Do any surprise you? Why/why not? **Write/draw:**

2. Why do you think there are differences in wellbeing in different countries? **Write/draw:**

Tips for reading the table:

The table shows how different countries rank in terms of child or youth wellbeing.

- Each country has a ranking number in mental wellbeing – the lower the number, the higher the ranking (e.g. 1st is best).

Remember, this data shows general trends, not individual experiences.



Worksheet – Activity 7 – Understanding my world and me

Worksheet: The wellbeing auction – what counts for wellbeing?

© UNICEF Ireland. “Advantages Auction.” Available from <https://www.unicef.ie>.

Group name: _____

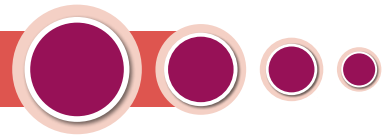
As a class, agree on how many tokens each wellbeing resource should cost. Your group has 500 tokens. Choose which resources you will “buy” to support the wellbeing of a fictional young person, family, or community.

Budget spend: _____

Item	High Bid	Low bid	Bid Won
Total cost			

1. Why did you choose these resources? **Write/draw:**

2. Was there anything you wanted to include but could not? **Write/draw:**



Worksheet – Activity 7 – Understanding my world and me

Worksheet: Reflecting on my world and me

Reflecting on the 'My world and me' activity, think about the reflection prompts below and write/draw a response to each one.

- One thing I learned about wellbeing is... **Write/draw:**

- Something that surprised me was... **Write/draw:**

- I now understand that wellbeing is shaped by... **Write/draw:**

Activity 8 – Minding myself in challenging times (LO 4.4)

This activity aims to support students' awareness of the factors affecting their emotional wellbeing and the tools to manage them, including personal strengths, connection with others, self-care, kindness and helpful thoughts, as well as the external supports available to them. Students will draw on their understanding of wellbeing, developed throughout Junior Cycle SPHE, to develop a personal action plan to protect and nurture their wellbeing at all times, and particularly during challenging times.

Teacher's note

Challenges are obstacles or difficulties that people encounter in life. These can range from **short-term issues** (e.g. feeling unprepared for an event, disagreements with others) to **long-term situations** (e.g. ongoing stress or sickness, dealing with change or loss). Both types of challenges are a natural part of life, but they can significantly impact emotional wellbeing, especially when they build up or remain unresolved, and if the young person has few supports. Developing awareness of how we experience challenges and identifying the tools and supports we can use to address them is an important step in helping to manage challenges, which fosters resilience. Some challenges are manageable with the resources we already have, but others may require additional support or coping strategies.

A helpful way to explain this is the resistance training metaphor. Small weights (challenges) can help build strength when handled one at a time. However, when weights are too heavy, or too many accumulate without rest or support, they can lead to strain or injury.

Examples of common challenges

Students face challenges across various areas of life, including academic pressure (e.g. exams, meeting deadlines), social relationships (e.g. friendship conflicts, peer pressure, family dynamics) and external influences (e.g. social media comparison, societal expectations). It is important to note that some students may have personal experiences with significant challenges or ongoing difficulties and may require external support.

Overview of “steps” for this activity

Step 1: Recognising a challenging time

Step 2: Exploring strategies for action during challenging times

Step 3: Creating my action plan for challenging times

Step 4: Reflection

Teacher's note continued

Resources/materials

The following resources will be needed for this activity (optional where indicated):



- Slide deck: Activity 8, Minding myself in challenging times



- Worksheet: Exploring strategies for action during challenging times



- Worksheet: Creating my action plan for challenging times



- Resource: Recognising a challenging time – challenging time scenarios

Step 1: Recognising a challenging time

This step helps students identify common challenges faced by young people and reflect on how these experiences can affect wellbeing.

1. Begin by asking students to think about:
 - **What are some examples of common challenges experienced by people your age?**
2. In pairs or small groups, ask students to share and document as many examples as they can think of. Encourage them to consider different types of challenges (*e.g. social, academic, personal, or emotional*).
3. Discuss the examples as a class and note some of the most common themes or experiences on the board. To conclude this step, briefly discuss the following discussion question as a class:

Discussion question

- **How can we recognise when a challenge is starting to affect our wellbeing?**
Prompt students to think about changes in symptoms in our body, thinking patterns, and feelings.
4. Explain to students that when we recognise we are going through a challenging moment, we are better able to use the support available to us before the challenge becomes overwhelming, or if it feels too big to handle on our own.

Step 2: Exploring strategies for action during challenging times

In this step, students will work together in rotating discussion groups to brainstorm strategies for managing challenging times, in response to one challenge scenario. Groups will rotate the discussion stations, applying each prompt to their assigned scenario. Each of the discussion categories reflects their learning across different activities in Unit 3. Strategies represent the ways we support emotional wellbeing, while the action plan outlines how to put these strategies into practice and in what order.

1. Set up five discussion stations. At each station, place a large sheet of A3 chart paper on the table. Clearly label the top of the sheet with the station's category so students can record their ideas under the correct heading. Display the discussion question or prompt for that station in a visible way (e.g., on a card, poster, or printed sheet). Provide writing and drawing materials such as markers, pens, or crayons so students can write or sketch their responses directly onto the chart paper.

Wellbeing Category	Discussion Station Prompts
Personal strengths	What personal strengths are helpful in challenging times?
Connection	What people, places, and things help us to feel more connected during a challenging time?
Self-Care and Kindness	What self-care activities help recharge and restore energy?
Helpful Thoughts	What thoughts are helpful in a challenging time?
Supports Available to Me	What resources, supports or services are helpful during a challenging time?

2. Divide the class into groups of 3–4 and assign one of the “challenge scenarios” to each group.
3. Reflecting on their learning across all activities in this unit, students will work collaboratively at each station to brainstorm ideas for their group's scenario. They will draw/write down any ideas they have at the station. For example, the “Personal Strengths” station asks students to consider personal strengths that are helpful in challenging times, applied to their assigned challenge scenario.
4. Once each group has finished working, display the completed A3 charts around the classroom walls. Make sure they are visible and accessible so that all students can walk around and read the ideas during Step 3.
5. Select one or two challenge scenarios to review at class level.

Discuss:

- How might having a plan make challenging situations more manageable?

Resource - Recognising a challenging time – challenging time scenarios

1	Upcoming exams are starting to feel overwhelming You've got multiple exams coming up and you are finding it hard to balance revision, homework, and downtime. The pressure is building, and it is affecting your mood and sleep.
2	Falling out with a family member You've had a disagreement or miscommunication with a family member. Things feel tense, and you are upset about it.
3	Comparing yourself on social media Seeing social media posts about events, holidays, or achievements is making you feel like others are doing better or having more fun. You have started comparing yourself and feeling badly.
4	Conflict in a close friendship You and a friend had a falling out over something small, but now you are not talking. It is hard to focus, and you are not sure how to make things right.
5	Struggling to manage your emotions You've been feeling irritated or upset more often, but you are not sure why — and sometimes it leads to arguments or leads to arguments or withdrawal from others.
6	Feeling stuck or unmotivated You're finding it hard to care about things that usually interest you (e.g. school, hobbies, or even seeing friends). You are not sure how to get back on track.



Step 3: Creating my action plan for challenging times

In this step, students create their own step-by-step action plan for times of challenge. Students will self-select strategies from the five wellbeing categories and decide how they would use them in response to a challenging situation (personal strengths, connection, self-care and kindness, helpful thoughts, supports). Students will map the five action plan categories and everyday wellbeing practices.

1. Provide each student with a copy of the worksheet “My action plan for challenging times.”
2. In addition to the strategies generated in the previous step, ask students to reflect on what they have written in their Wellbeing Journal.
3. Ask students to complete their personalised action plan for challenging times (write/draw). As part of this plan, students will also note the things they can do to take care of their wellbeing every day.
4. Encourage students to keep their personalised action plan and continue to add to it, as a reminder of what they can do when they face a challenge. Emphasise the importance of using their action plan early before challenges become overwhelming.

Step 4: Reflection



Consider concluding this activity with a **mindful moment**:



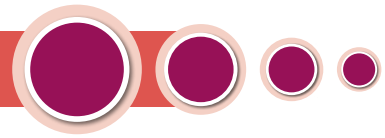
Headspace mini-meditation
[Unwind](#) (1 minute)

Alternatively, ask students to take a moment to reflect:

Take a moment to think about:

1. **One thing you can see**
2. **One thing you can hear**
3. **One thing you're looking forward to (today or this week)**

You can say them quietly to yourself or write them down. This quick check-in can help you feel more grounded and present.



Worksheet – Activity 8 – Minding myself in challenging times

Worksheet: Creating my action plan for challenging times

My action plan for challenging times

A step-by-step plan to help me use what I know about wellbeing when I'm facing a challenge.

1

Personal strengths - *What strength can I use right away?*

In this moment, I will use my strength of...

2

Connection - *Who can I connect with? How would this support me?*

I can reach out to...

This will support me by...

3

Self-care and kindness - *How will I look after myself kindly?*

I will take care of myself by...

4

Helpful thoughts - *What thought will guide or ground me?*

A helpful thought I'll remember is...

5

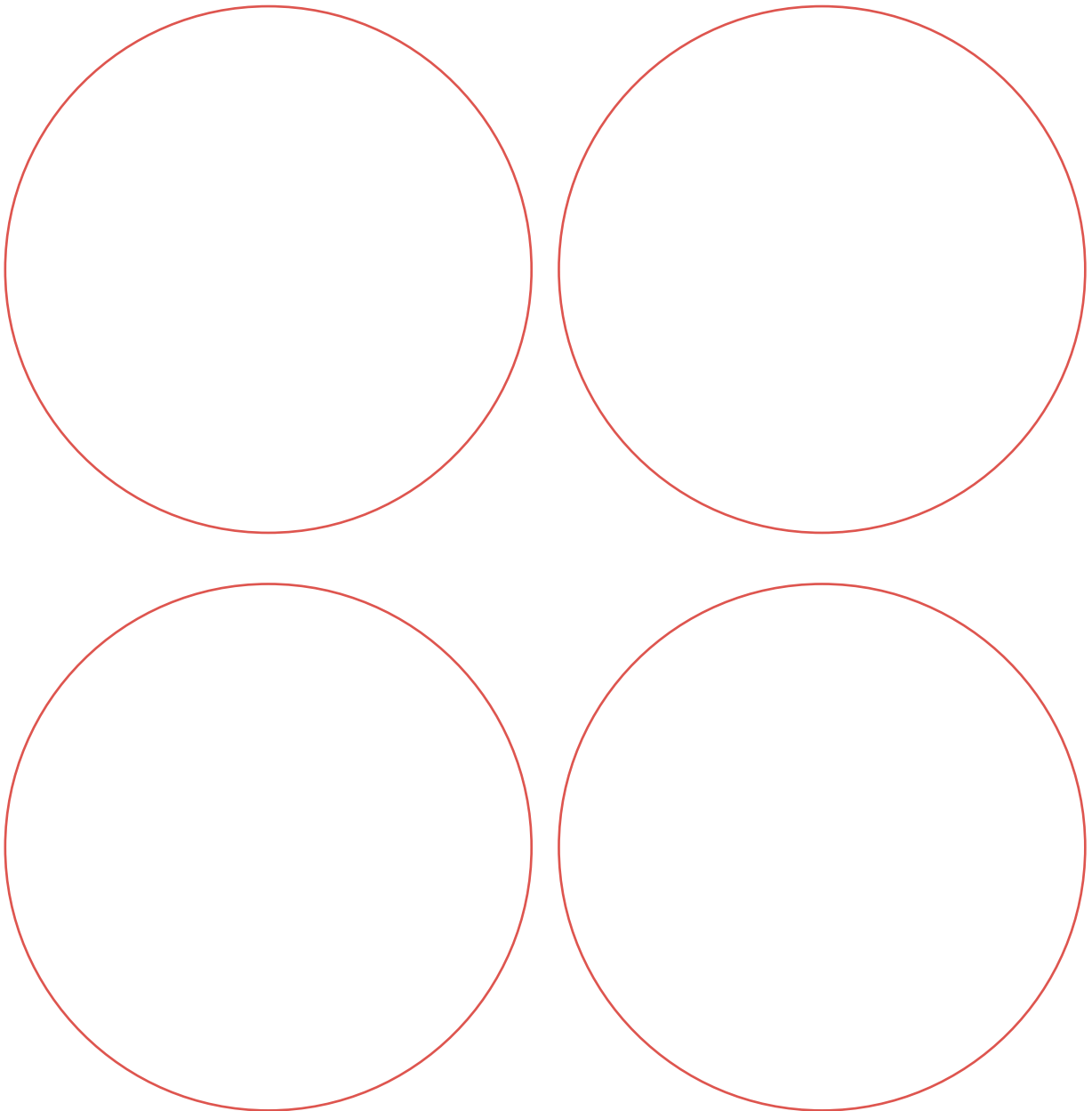
Supports Available to Me - *Where or who can I go to if I need more help?*

If I need extra support, I will...

Worksheet – Activity 8 – Minding myself in challenging times

Worksheet: Creating my action plan for challenging times - Continued

What can I do each day to take care of my well-being? - When we do small things to maintain our well-being each day, they become part of our toolkit that we can use anytime, and particularly if we are facing a challenging time.

Four large, empty circles arranged in a 2x2 grid, intended for writing daily actions to maintain well-being.

