

COPING STRATEGIES: EXAM STRESS



20 minutes

Create a safe and positive learning environment by agreeing ground rules for the lesson.

In this lesson we will learn:

- that everyone has different ways of coping with exam stress
- that some coping strategies are more helpful than others.

Resources

- 🕒 coping planner
- 🕒 scenario slide
- 🕒 five areas of wellbeing slide.

This session can be used as a starter for another lesson.

Activity

1. Scenario: Read out 'Two students are studying for an exam and both fear failure. Student **A** copes by working harder, asking for help and letting off steam by playing tennis with friends. Student **B** copes by avoiding work, denying that they are worried and letting off steam by drinking with friends'.
2. Ask the students to consider what the outcomes of these different coping strategies might be. Discuss in pairs or groups for five minutes.
Feedback: Which method is likely to have the more positive outcome? Everyone experiences some kind of stress over exams. Stress can be good for us as it heightens our performance level, but too much is not good for our health, so it's important to look at how to manage stress.
3. Ask the students to think of how they are coping with the pressures of school work/exams. Complete coping planner. They can do this individually. Sometimes things we try don't work and that's ok, we need to find another way to achieve what we want and be able to cope with what is happening. Encourage students to share ideas and think about what to do if one way of managing exam stress does not work.
4. Look at the five areas of wellbeing and remind the students that the important thing to remember is balance, not just spending all of their time revising but doing a variety of different things. Ask them to consider if they are doing something in each of these areas to keep a balance in life. (You could set homework to ask them to do something in each area over the next week and to report back what they did and how it felt.)



DEAL

Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening



SAMARITANS



Key message

We are all different and find some events harder to cope with than others, but we can choose ways of dealing with things that can help us feel more positive about the events we are facing.

Reflection

When might I choose coping strategies that are not helpful? What other choices could I make?

Links to: [Ups and downs of the day](#) | [My support network](#) | [Building resilience](#)

Make sure young people know what support is available and how to access this support.

