

Dealing with challenging times

Year Learning Activity



Description

Students investigate a range of health information from a variety of sources and decide on which would be most appropriate in dealing with challenging situations.

Learning focus

Students apply health literacy skills to identify and access a range of health information to address their own and others' problems during challenging times.

Key understandings

- There is a range of coping strategies that we can use to cope with challenging times.
- Different coping strategies work in different circumstances.
- Everyone experiences challenging times from time to time.
- Sometimes we can use coping strategies we know and have used before, at other times we need to ask for help.
- There is a range of sexual health services in our community that can help us in challenging times.

Materials

1. Internet access
2. Student Activity Sheet: *Coping strategies* [two cards per student]
3. Helpful, harmful and useless signs

Teaching and Learning Activities

Before you get started

- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique and what, why, when and how it is needed and used before facilitating this activity.

Whole Class

Students watch a video about someone with depression and then assess the effectiveness of different coping strategies in a range of challenging scenarios.

1. Introduce the Tangled video clip (https://youtu.be/_F5j81o2R4Q) [2:53min] which briefly tells the true story of Naomi who has learnt coping skills and built resilience through her life. Watch the video clip.

Ask:

- *What are the key messages from the clip?*
- *What helped Naomi to begin to untangle?*

Dealing with challenging times

Year Learning Activity

- *Is it important to know what has happened to someone to offer them support?*
- *What do you think about the coping strategies Naomi talks about?*
- *Which do you think was most helpful and why?*
- *Naomi talks about finding her voice and that this was the beginning of the journey to being able to cope with difficult feelings. What do you think she means by this?*

2. Stress the importance of seeking help early: Explain that it can be difficult to know when a problem is serious enough to speak to someone. You might be concerned about the person you are talking to judging you, or trying to intervene when you'd prefer to sort things out for yourself. However, the more distressed we become, the less likely we are to seek help. Talking about our problems becomes harder because we start to believe that no one can help us overcome the problem we are facing.

3. Hand out two coping cards from Student Activity Sheet: *Coping strategies* to each student.

Label areas in the room:

- helpful
- harmful
- useless

4. Read out each of the following situations (or situations the students suggest) and have students move according to which category their coping strategies would fit into in that situation:

- You have been feeling sad and down for about three months
- You have been having anxiety attacks over the last 6 weeks
- Your boyfriend has asked you to send a sexually explicit text to him
- You are worried that a friend might be pregnant
- You are stressed about some tests coming up at the end of the term
- You are worried about your parents fighting all the time
- You are feeling really sad because everyone but you in your group has a girlfriend/boyfriend.

Discuss each response and compare ideas and thoughts.

5. Ask:

Dealing with challenging times

Year Learning Activity

- *Would you need more than one coping strategy?*
- *What makes something harmful or useless?*
- *What do we need to consider when thinking about how we are coping?*
- *Does anything ever get in the way of us doing what we know will be helpful?*
- *Is the helpful thing the same as the easy thing?*
- *Can it be difficult to do what we know will be helpful?*

Independent or Small Group

1. Explain that sometimes we use coping strategies we know and have used before when we face challenging times, and at other times we need to ask for help. [Brainstorm](#) some reasons that might stop or make it hard for young people to seek or get help.
 - Wanting to solve problems on your own.
 - Feeling embarrassed, uncomfortable, scared or stupid about the idea of seeking help.
 - Concerns about confidentiality or your parents finding out.
 - Hoping the problem will resolve on its own.
 - Not knowing much about the health issue, or whether the problem is serious enough.
 - Not knowing how to access health services.
 - Negative experiences when you tried to get help in the past.
 - Not being able to get help for practical reasons (e.g. not enough money, waiting times, or living in a rural area).
2. Have students access the '[Getting Help](#)' section of the ReachOut website.
 - Students formulate 5 questions they would like to have answered about seeking help for themselves or others relating to challenging times. Use the sections 'Professional help' and 'Helping myself and others' to see if they can answer their questions. They then share their findings in small groups.
3. Have students think about something they find difficult to cope with or perhaps may find difficult in the future and then plan 5 things they can do to help themselves cope with this. Their list must include personal coping strategies and also people who they could ask for help.

Dealing with challenging times

Year Learning Activity

Reflection

Students access the following websites and describe three challenging situations that could be helped by contacting each of these health information sites or services. They must justify their answers.

- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Freedom Centre](#)
- [Safe Schools Coalition](#)

Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

Teaching Note

[Protective interrupting](#)

Teaching Resources

[Coping strategies](#)

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