

Appendix I: Template to support schools in planning shorter units of learning in Wellbeing

Title of unit: Developing coping mechanisms for the normal stresses of school life

Duration: 5 weeks (5 x 1 hour classes, can be adapted for shorter or longer periods)

Aim of the unit

To enable students to develop skills in self-care by identifying stressors in their lives, developing self-awareness, assessing coping mechanisms that can be effective and establishing mindfulness practice as a protective factor in their mental wellbeing.

Links

The following tables show how the learning within 'Developing coping Mechanisms for the normal stresses of school life' unit may be linked to central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle including key skills of managing myself and staying well.

Statement of learning	Example of related learning in the unit
<p>11. Takes action to safeguard and promote his/her wellbeing and that of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksheet on general and personal causes and symptoms of stress and coping mechanisms • Mindfulness practice • Reflective wellness journal • Group work on scenarios worksheet to explore negative self-talk and unhelpful thinking (Thoughts are not facts) • Ball Activity to focus on character strengths (Self-Compassion) • Reflective activity on positive actions • Ball Activity to focus on 'Gratitude' • Complete Personal Action Plan for stress management

Key skills. (The elements and the learning outcomes for the eight key skills in junior cycle are set out in detail in Key Skills for Junior Cycle. Select the four key skills that this unit is particularly significant in supporting.)

Key skill	Element	Student learning activity
Managing myself	Knowing Myself	What are the signs & symptoms of stress - recognising them. Reflecting on my thinking and how it impacts on my behaviour & emotions
	Being able to reflect on my own learning	Completing the wellness journal on a weekly basis to assess the journey of this learning unit.
Staying Well	Staying Positive about learning	Examining self-compassion through reflection or a scale Recognising what I am grateful for and sharing gratitude with others
	Being Responsible	Examining self-compassion through reflection or a scale Recognising what I am grateful for and sharing gratitude with others
Communicating	Listening and expressing	Participating in the Ball Activities identifying character strengths and expressing gratitude Giving and receiving anonymous positive feedback to and from another student through 'Three Good Things' Worksheet
Working with Others	Developing good relationships	Participating in Think, Pair, Share activities on signs and symptoms of stress activity and group work in Challenging unhelpful thoughts worksheet

The wellbeing indicators make explicit what is important learning in Wellbeing. (The Wellbeing Indicators are: Active, Aware, Connected, Resilient, Respected, Responsible)

Suggested Learning outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to...

Identify the stressors in their lives – **Aware**

Recognise their own wellbeing journey and that of others - **Connected**

Connect with their personal strengths – **Aware, Connected**

Distinguish helpful and unhelpful thoughts – **Aware, Resilient**

Determine coping strategies that they can use in times of stress - **Resilient**

Establish the practice of mindfulness for use in their daily lives – **Responsible**

Sample learning activities

See below

Assessment

Students will show evidence of their learning when they...

Reflect on what they have learned each week through use of different formative assessment strategies and the completing the Wellness Journal.

Recognise their progress through constructive teacher feedback

Conduct self-assessment exercise on Self-compassion & Gratitude

Participate in practice of Mindfulness

Engage in the different learning activities e.g. as they respond to brainstorming activities, answer questions, engage in discussions and participate in game activities

Useful resources, web links and community links

www.walkinmyshoes.ie

www.reachout.com

www.self-compassion.org

www.viacharacter.org

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

www.mindful.org

www.classroomguidance.ie

www.scoilnet.ie

www.spunout.ie

www.sess.ie

www.juniorycycle.ie

www.jct.ie

www.pdst.ie

www.ncge.ie - <https://vimeo.com/217256245> Paul King Webinar on Mindfulness in Guidance

Counselling

www.youtube.com – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znlsoaM_ALQ [Ted youth talk on stress

in young people]

www.igc.ie

Sample Learning Activities

Week 1 – What is Stress?

Reflection (Brainstorm/Padlet): What causes stress, what are the symptoms and what are the coping mechanisms people use?

Video on good and bad side of stress (40 seconds):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYQghh03qQ4>

Video on Teenage Stress (1.5 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYuH3BqbSIE>

Video on symptoms & Coping (3.31 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faqvfSK4otQ>

Activity: Think, Pair, Share Activity on causes, symptoms and coping mechanisms.

Activity: Group work - Worksheet on placing symptoms into sections.

Reflection: What are my causes of stress, symptoms and what can help?

Activity: 3 mins of mindful breathing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk>

Reflection: Personal Action plan – What might work for me?

Teacher Resources

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/the-ups-and-downs-of-stress>

<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2018/03/18/yv/let%E2%80%99s-talk-about-it-stress-among-teenagers>

Week 2 – What is Mindfulness?

Introduce the idea of the need to manage stress

Video: Managing Stress – Brain Smart, BBC (2.23mins) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDoq>

Activity: Brainstorm/Padlet – What is Mindfulness?

Video: What is Mindfulness & Meditation? – Animated piece (3 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjtfyuTTQFY>

Review Brainstorm/Padlet and add in extra suggestions.

Video: Mindfulness basics, Celebrities who use mindfulness & meditation (3.35 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3MZuYkf-g>

Activity: Worksheet – What are the benefits for the celebrities featured on the clip? (think, pair and share).

Students give feedback

Activity: Dropping the Anchor Mindfulness (Ground yourself in the present moment 1.16 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDm2c5FDLNI>

Reflection: Wellness Journal

Week 3 – Being Aware of our Thoughts

Demonstrate the difference between fact and opinion (thoughts) – Handout:
<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/FACTorOPINION.pdf>

Video: Ditch the Monkey Unhelpful thoughts (1.31 mins)- <https://spunout.ie/video/play/be-aware-ditch-the-monkey>

Show Powerpoint Presentation on Being Aware of our Thoughts

Video: Challenging negative self-talk & thinking errors - <https://ie.reachout.com/getting-help-2/minding-your-mental-health/self-talk/> (Video: 7.08 mins)

Activity: Scenarios Work-sheet Group work
Peer Feedback

Activity: Stop breathe and think Mindful meditation (5.22 mins) -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmFUDkj1Aq0>

Reflection: Wellness Journal

Teacher Resources: <https://thiswayup.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Module-3-Thought-challenging.pdf>

Week 4 – Self-Compassion

Activity & Reflection: Students will complete the Self-Compassion Scale online or reflect on the statements in the shorter version on pdf format. Short version of Self-Compassion Scale – Kirstin Neff (<https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-scales-for-researchers/> or Online version of Self-Compassion Scale with scores calculated <https://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/>

Discussion on the importance of being kind to oneself, self-acceptance & self-compassion and encourage students to examine their character strengths.

Powerpoint: Show slide of 24 Character Strengths and give students some time to reflect on strengths they can identify in themselves.

Activity – *Soft Ball, One of my strengths is....*

Worksheet – Something I did well.....

Activity - Mindful Colouring sheet with relaxing music - <https://www.walkinmyshoes.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Bookmarks-Secondary.pdf>

Wellness Journal

Teacher resources for further Self-compassion guided meditations and exercises - <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations>

Week 5 - Gratitude

Activity: Students will take part in soft ball activity – “I am grateful for.... because....”

Video: ‘An Experiment in Happiness’ from Soul Pancake [7.13 mins] -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg&t=219s>

Activity – ‘Three Good Things’ Worksheet: Students will take an envelope with another students name and complete a sheet about that person. These can be taken up by the teacher and returned in another class/later date.

Mindfulness of the mountain (for teens) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9w7SjHaZmE>
or

Body scan for teenagers - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9A0S54yAgEg>

Reflection: Personal Action Plan for Stress Management – Refer back to worksheet done in Week 1