



# L1. COPING SKILLS

Y/4.5.6



LAUGHOLGY  
HAPPY-CENTRED  
SCHOOL PROGRAMME

LAUGHOLGY

## LESSON 1 QUESTION:

What does it mean to cope?



### YOU WILL NEED:

Packs of cards and a blank face template.



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Write 'coping skills' on the board and ask the class what they think it means. Share some of the answers.
- > In pairs, ask children to share any coping skills that they already use. After a couple of minutes, feed some answers back to the rest of the class.
- > Explain to the children that a challenge is going to be set for them. Ask the children why they might need coping skills for a challenge. Encourage answers such as:, to help complete the challenge, because the challenge might be difficult so to get through it we need coping skills.
- > Explain to the children that the challenge is for them to make a house of cards which needs to be 30 cm high and stand alone for 5 seconds. Explain they have just two minutes to complete the exercise.
- > Explain to the children they are going to work in small groups.
- > Ask the children to think about how they might cope if the house falls down or if they don't complete the challenge. Ask children for examples of what supportive parents, teachers and people might say to help them cope. Encourage the children to say these things to each other and to themselves.
- > Set a timer and start the challenge.
- > As they are building the house, walk past and accidentally knock the table, knocking down their houses.
- > When the two minutes are up, ask the children how they felt when doing the challenge.
- > How did they cope when the card house was knocked over, or when it fell down? Ask if they think their houses were deliberately knocked down and why that happened? What lessons can be learnt by doing this?
- > Ask the whether they feel they will still be upset about not completing the challenge in one week's time, or even one month's time. Ask the children to explain why it will not matter.
- > In their groups, ask the children to write their top three coping skills and share these with the class.
- > Give the children a blank face and ask them to draw how they felt when they were doing the task and then write around their faces key words to describe those feelings.



### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > Talk about what the children learnt about coping in challenges, and how this might impact on how they do the task next time.
- > Discuss situations when the children might need coping skills; e.g. new school, moving home, loss of a pet, when a friend refuses to play, when doing SATs, etc.
- > Give out award leaves for children who are able to understand what it means to cope.



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

Coping, Strengths, Success, Co-operation, Friendships, Aid, Guide, Listen, Model, Together, Teamwork, Community, Compassion, Reassurance, Giving, Comfort, Thoughtfulness, Grit, Determination, Can-do, Attitude, Together, Standing tall, Breathing, Relaxation

#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

In their groups, ask children to design a poster that advertises their favourite coping skill from the day's lesson. The poster needs to explain how to use the coping skill.

For older children, set up a role play scenario where one child has a problem/ challenge they need help with. The other child or children have to practise positive language that might help the other person cope or see the problem differently. Try it first as a whole class with one volunteer, then split class into groups of three.

Once they've had a go, ask for volunteers to show the class how they did.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

#### > WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS:



# L2. COPING SKILLS

## LESSON 2 QUESTION:

What is the importance of having good coping skills?

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### YOU WILL NEED:

Picture of the 3 brains, award leaves, a device on which to show Youtube, My brain functions, worksheet clips and craft materials such as paper, sugar paper, etc.



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Begin the session by telling the children: "Today you are going to learn about the brain". Ask the children what they think they know about the brain. Collect all the answers and write them on the board as a brainstorm.
- > Ask the children how many brains they think they have. Have a bit of fun with the answers. The answer is three brains.
- > Share the picture of the Triune three brain model. Explain to the children we have THREE brains. The three brains have developed individually over many years as human beings evolved. As we needed to adapt and got smarter, our brain grew. The three brains represent the stages in which it grew.
- > Go through the details of each of the brains and their 'functions' (what they do) given below while pointing to the picture.
- > The reptilian brain has 3 survival functions.
- > Ask the children what they think they are.
- > Answers: Food / drink, Sleep, Reproduction.
- > Ask the children why they think it's called the **reptilian brain**.
- > Answer: It's the oldest brain we have. It was the first part of the brain that developed. This part of the brain is quite basic, but we still need it.
- > Next introduce the **emotional brain**.
- > Explain to the children that this part of the brain developed next. It is also called the limbic system. Explain that this part of the brain makes us feel happy, sad, nervous, excited, anxious, etc.
- > At this point ask the children to share special / memorable moments from their past, e.g. best holidays (from years ago - avoid recent experiences).
- > When they share the experiences ask them how they feel. If they are talking about positive memories, they should start to feel positive.
- > Explain that we link feelings to different experiences.
- > Explain that sometimes the emotional brain takes over when we have experiences. The emotional brain isn't always right and sometimes it can overreact and want all the attention. When it does this, it releases chemicals that can make us forget things.
- > Introduce the four effects of the emotional brain when overreacting and have fun physicalising these. When it overreacts it makes us want to:
  - > Fight (fists up)
  - > Flight (flapping arms)
  - > Flock (gathering friends)
  - > Freeze (statures)
- > Play the video clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hew3z2F1bME> Re-cap briefly with the children the two brains so far. Explain that knowing how the brain works helps us cope with our emotions.
- > Next is the **neocortex** (the big bit!)
- > Explain to the children that this part of the brain is the biggest and most powerful. It can talk to the reptilian brain and the emotional brain and tell it to stop overreacting, as shown in the video example.
- > Ask the children to suggest what this part of the brain could say to the emotional brain when it starts trying to take over. Look for answers like: I am in control; I am safe; I can do this; I am strong; I am confident. Explain that these are good coping skills. A person with good coping skills can tell when the naughty emotional brain is overreacting and tell it to calm down. Think of examples where this might happen.
- > Ask which brain tries to take over when they are going into their SATs. They should answer, the emotional brain, What does it do to us?
- > Explain whilst all three brains are important and they do important things to help us develop as human beings, sometimes different parts overreact. When they do this, even though they think they're helping us, they're not. With our big thinking brain, we can tell them to calm down and gain back control.
- > Now they know what different parts of the brain do, ask them how this might help them with coping skills.
- > Ask the children to write positive phrases they might say to the emotional brain to stop it taking over.
- > Let the children know they can control their brain, and learning about it can help with this.

### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > In groups, children should make a brain with the three parts. Can they write good, positive statements to help challenge the overreactive emotional brain when it gets worried, scared or stressed? Share these coping statements and brain models
- > Give out award leaves for coping skills.



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

Coping, Strengths, Success, Co-operation, Friendships, Aid, Guide, Listen, Model, Together, Teamwork, Community, Compassion, Reassurance, Giving, Comfort, Thoughtfulness, Grit, Determination, Can-do, Attitude, Together, Standing-tall, Breathing, Relaxation

#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

Practise saying the coping statements in a strong and meaningful voice. Get children to say these statements together and ask them how they feel afterwards.

Older children to research more about these parts of the brain on the Internet and put a presentation together for the rest of the class about how the brain effects how we behave and decisions we make.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

#### > WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS...





# L3. COPING SKILLS

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## LESSON 3 QUESTION:

What coping skills can I use in school?



### YOU WILL NEED:

'I feel calm' posters and 'I feel calm' cards; a devise to play the YouTube clip, 'Power posing' by Amy Cuddy



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Explain to the group that today you are going to look at physical exercises that help you to relax and feel calm and in control.
- > Split the class into small groups or pairs and ask them to draw an outline of a human body.
- > On the body draw a line down the middle. Explain that one side of the body is going to be calm and controlled, and the other side is going to be nervous and stressed.
- > Ask the children to think of scenarios in which they may experience these opposing feelings. For example, they may be calm and in control when at home or when doing something they enjoy, and nervous or stressed when they are being challenged to do something they find hard.
- > Ask the children to write on the relevant parts of their diagrams all the physical things they know the body does when these two opposite feelings are activated on the relevant parts of their body diagrams. For example, when they are nervous their shoulders hunched or the forehead may wrinkle into a frown. Or when calm and in control, a smile may appear and the shoulders may be relaxed.
- > Give the children a couple of minutes to complete the task.
- > Ask the children to share their drawings.
- > Now ask the children to stand up, and when you read out some of the physical manifestations of stress or nervousness ask them to demonstrate them. Ask them to hold the action for a few seconds.
- > Do this a few times and ask the children how they felt. They should answer that they felt slightly stressed or anxious. Explain that this is because the brain gets a message from the body to say it is reacting in a stressed way so it sends out signals that it is stressed.
- > Next, repeat the exercise but with all the positive feelings and movements. Ask the children again to hold these actions for a few seconds. Then ask how they felt. They should give answers such as: calm or happy.
- > Play the clip (Amy Cuddy)
- > When the clip has finished, ask the children to discuss in pairs what they learnt from it and from the exercises they have just done. Children should give answers such as: 'By standing in a certain way or moving in a certain way I can help myself feel in control and confident'. Also ensure the children recognise that standing or moving in a way that represents stress or nervousness actually makes them more nervous. The object is to learn to be aware of what your body is doing and to recognise how this can make you feel positive or negative. You can even encourage classmates to help each other by saying 'C'mon smile' or smiling at them, or 'Relax your shoulders', or 'Stand strong'.
- > Now practise power posing with the children. Ask them to think of other famous people, maybe athletes who have power poses, e.g. Mo Farrah and Usain Bolt.
- > Practise power posing with the children for a minute at a time. Whilst power posing also ask them to inhale deeply through the nose for 5 seconds and out through the mouth for 5 seconds. Explain that this will help them feel even more in control and slow down any racing hearts. It will also help relax the mind.



### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > Explain to the children that they are going to act as coaches to each other. (You might have to explain that a coach is a person who helps someone achieve things, feel better and cope with challenges). They are going to coach each other to power pose in a confident way and encourage each other with positive phrases and words. They are also going to coach each other to breathe in a calm way. Give the children time to practise this with each other, then invite pairs to show what they did to help their partner.
- > Put up the 'I can feel calm' posters.
- > Give out award leaves



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

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#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

In small groups children can draw a large body and write on it all the positive things they can do to help them feel in control and calm in any situation.

Show the children 'I feel calm cards'. Ask the children to make their own to prompt cards help other children.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS...



# L4. COPING SKILLS

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## LESSON 4 QUESTION:

What coping skills could I use outside school?



### YOU WILL NEED:

'Change your words, change your mind-set' and 'Developing a growth mind-set posters'; Success V Frustration example



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Recap on the last session. Ask the children what were the main learning points from the session.
- > Ask the children for examples when they used the techniques in the past week and felt better. Ask the children to explain what they did and how it made a difference.
- > Explain that this session is about positive words and language. Ask the children for examples of negative language, such as 'I can't', 'I don't want to', 'I don't like it' etc. Write some of these examples up on the board.
- > Now ask the children for some positive language, such as 'I will try my best', 'I can do it if I try', 'I will have a go' etc.
- > Ask children to work in pairs and give them each a sheet of paper. Ask them to fold the sheet in half and on one side write the word positive and on the other the word negative.
- > Ask the children in their pairs to list all the negative words and phrases they know on the negative side of their sheets. When they are finished share some of these. Ask them how they felt listing all these negative words.
- > Repeat the exercise but now with positive words and phrases on the positive side of the sheets. At the end ask them if they felt better talking and thinking about positive words.
- > Explain that using positive words actually helps you feel better and helps your brain work better. Refer to the session about the emotional brain and how it can be

calmed. Explain that using positive language not only helps it to feel calm, but also works in a more positive way so that eventually it will stop overreacting and help you learn better. Share the 'change your WORDS, change your MINDSET' mini poster. Read out some of the statements to the children and ask if they use any of the negative statements.

Share the next document - 'Developing a growth mind-set'. Explain to the children that by using positive language we can grow parts of our brain to be bigger and stronger. Encourage the children to start using the word 'yet' when they talk about not being good at something. Explain that from now on they can only say 'I am not good at \*\*\*\* yet'. As a class they have to work together to encourage each other to say the word 'yet'. Ask for other examples where this could be used. Ask the children why it's important to use the word 'yet'. Explain that it means that we can get good at something and helps us to feel better about a challenge.

- > Ask them to think of their own positive statements to use when thinking about future challenges such as SATs. Share the example of Growth vs Fixed Mind-set, and Success vs Frustration.
- > Explain that in pairs they are now going to make their own poster which shows success thinking vs frustration thinking.
- > Give the children some time to do this and share the posters.



### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > Ask each pair to share their favourite positive phrase then explain that they are going to turn it into a catchy mantra. Ask the children what they think a mantra is. Children may remember mantras from doing them in lower years. Explain that it is a short saying to be repeated over and over to yourself to help you feel calm, in control, happy and resilient.
- > Ask children to write their mantras on a piece of paper and put the mantras on the wall. You may want to practise power posing from the previous session and chant a few mantras at the same time.
- > Give out award leaves for children who show a great understanding of how to use these skills inside and outside school.



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

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#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

Ask the children to think of a challenge they have had to face. It may be learning a hard math sum or getting better at a sport. Take some examples. Now ask: 'As you are older and wiser with all the expertise of positive language, what words of encouragement might you have said to your younger self?' Ask children to write a letter to their younger selves that includes:

1. Congratulating themselves on how well they did on learning the new skill.
2. Noticing what strengths and qualities they showed in tackling the challenge and how resilient they were.
3. Explaining how they can use these qualities in future challenges.
4. Ending the letter with some words of advice for the future.
5. Letters can be read out or put on the wall.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

#### > WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS...



# L5. COPING SKILLS

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## LESSON 5 QUESTION: How can I help others to cope?



**YOU WILL NEED:**  
Feeling-o-meter, mindfulness script sheet, space for children to relax, pens and paper



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Show the children the feeling-o-meter. Explain that the different colours and numbers mean you are either really relaxed or really tense. Can they guess which means what? (1/blue = relaxed and calm, 5/red = stressed and upset).
- > Ask the children to talk to each other about where they are on the meter and why they are there today. Encourage them to ask questions of each other like 'What would help you get closer to blue?' if they are nearer red. Or 'What is helping you feeling like blue?'
- > Explain to the children that today you are going to take them through a mindfulness exercise. Ask the children if anyone knows what the word 'mindfulness' means. You may need to share an answer: (write the statement below on the board):  
**A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, whilst calmly acknowledging and accepting feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations.**
- > Break up the sentence about mindfulness and ask the children to discuss what different chunks of it mean.
- > Once you have done this, get the children ready to relax. Explain that you are going to read out a mindfulness script. All they need to do is listen to your voice and think about every word.
- > Read out the script.
- > At the end, give the children time to come round.
- > Ask them how they feel now?
- > In pairs ask them to rate themselves on the feeling-o-meter now. Have they changed from before the relaxation exercise? What helped them change?
- > Ask the children to talk in pairs and suggest how they might use this exercise to help others. Encourage them to think about the language used and what impact that has on how they feel.
- > Share ideas with the rest of the class



### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > Ask them how it made them feel - what did they notice about their bodies?
- > Ask the children how they could use this technique when they are stressed.
- > Ask the children how this technique might help them to be more resilient and tough.
- > Ask the children to think of some positive sentences to say to others who need to cope and relax, based on the mindfulness sheet.
- > Give out award leaves for children who understand how to help others cope and relax.



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

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#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

Ask children to write their own relaxation scripts for themselves and for others. Mindfulness sheets can be given out to help with this.

Ask children to design their own feeling identifying meter to share with others to help them identify feelings.

Ask them to present their scripts and meters to the rest of the class and explain how they are best used.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

#### > WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS...



# L6. COPING SKILLS

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## LESSON 6 QUESTION: Can I create a coping plan for the future?



### YOU WILL NEED:

A quiet place for children to sit and be able to visualise and imagine, pens and paper



### DIRECT TEACHING INPUT:

- > Explain to the children that in this session you want them to use their imagination. Ask the children to think back to a time when they achieved something great. It might have been winning a race or doing well at a school subject and being congratulated for it. Make sure all the children have something and collect some examples from the class.
- > Ask the children to think about how they felt at the time of this achievement. How did it make them feel inside and outside? What thoughts did they have? Encourage the children to visualise the event and re-live the moment in their minds. Allow them to keep this focus for at least 30 seconds. Then ask the children to think about something else completely different, maybe eating sprouts.
- > Then ask the children to bring the positive experience back into their minds again and hold it for 30 seconds.
- > Repeat this exercise a few more times.
- > Ask the children how they felt when visualising the positive experience.
- > Explain to the children that this exercise is called 'positive visualisation' and doing this will help them feel better in times of challenge. They can also visualise places and people that help them feel positive. Ask for examples of what, or who, these might be.
- > Explain to the children that they're coming to the end of the coping skills lessons and you would like them to think about everything that has been covered. In pairs they can list all the things they can remember.
- > Share some of the answers.
- > In their pairs ask them to recall a real scenario; something that might have happened to them in the past that made them upset or anxious and when they needed coping skills.
- > In pairs can they write a coping plan with their new knowledge from the coping skills sessions on how they might have dealt with this scenario differently with the benefit of their new skills.
- > Share some answers.



### REFLECTION/BRINGING THE SESSION TOGETHER:

- > Ask the children to make a positive visualisation list. The list should consist of all the positive places, people and things that make them feel better. Next to each thing/person on the list can they put the feeling that comes from thinking about it? For example, being in bed, being read a story = relaxed and safe.
- > When they've done this let them share their lists with others.
- > Children can draw their favourite visualisation
- > Over the next week encourage the children to use their visualisation to help them feel better.
- > Explain they might use different visualisations for different things. Ask what different situations would match different situations



### TEACHER NOTES:

#### > POSSIBLE RELATED VOCABULARY TO TEACH:

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#### > POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (TO SUPPORT AIM):

Ask the children to write letters to the children in the year group below to help them cope with challenges they might face, sharing some coping skills and explaining when they might need them. Invite other classes in or children going into classes below and read out their letter to younger children.

Ask the children to design coping skills cards of their own, that they can use or share with friends.

#### > TEACHER'S ANNOTATIONS:

#### > WHAT WENT WELL?

#### > WHAT MAY BE EVEN BETTER NEXT TIME?

#### > OTHER IDEAS...