

Student workbook



Age 17–18



For young people's mental health

WELCOME TO BLOOM!

Bloom is a UK-wide programme which supports young people's mental health resilience.

Delivered in schools and colleges, we equip young people with the tools and knowledge to maintain their mental health through life's transitions, both now and in the future.

Bloom is brought to you by Mental Health UK.

What is this?

This workbook supports you and your resilience with tips and hints that can help you with everyday situations. It is part of the workshops that are being delivered in your school or college, and your teacher will guide you through the exercises and activities it contains. The workbook will support you when you are going through the workshops and is something you can use afterwards as a toolkit. We designed it together with young people like yourselves and we hope it will be a great resource for you to use.

Who has it been created by?

This workbook and Bloom has been created by Mental Health UK. The programme is delivered by our four founding charities: Hafal in Wales, Rethink Mental Illness in England, MindWise in Northern Ireland and Support in Mind Scotland in Scotland. www.mentalhealth-uk.org.

Why has it been created?

We gathered insight from young people and teachers across the UK to build a programme which young people have told us they want and need. We aim to equip you with the tools and knowledge to maintain your mental health through life's transitions such as moving through school, changing friendship groups, moving to university or starting employment.

Delivered through scenario-based discussion and relatable topics, such as 'social pressures' and 'exam stress', it will leave you with a better understanding of mental health in yourself and others. Bloom will also give you a suite of tools to help strengthen your resilience both now and in the future. We know from research that there is a link between resilience and mental wellbeing – better resilience can have a positive effect on your wellbeing.

The topics that will be covered:

1. What is resilience?
2. Exam stress
3. Juggling time
4. Managing studies
5. Making decisions about the future
6. Social pressures

What if I need more support?

As you will learn throughout this programme, there are lot of things you can do to help your own mental health. However, if you feel you need speak to someone, we recommend you reach out to someone you trust such as a parent, guardian, teacher or friend.

Workshop 1

What is resilience?

Resilience: introduction



What does resilience mean?

Activity A

Read the scenario and complete the questions:

Eve is late for school by 2 minutes because she slept through her alarm and missed the bus. She rushes into school. She knows she needs to complete her homework before 4th period, so she spends most of her lunchtime in the library and only spends 10 minutes talking with friends. When she gets home, her little brother winds her up and she loses her cool and snaps at him. She decides to take a bath to feel better.



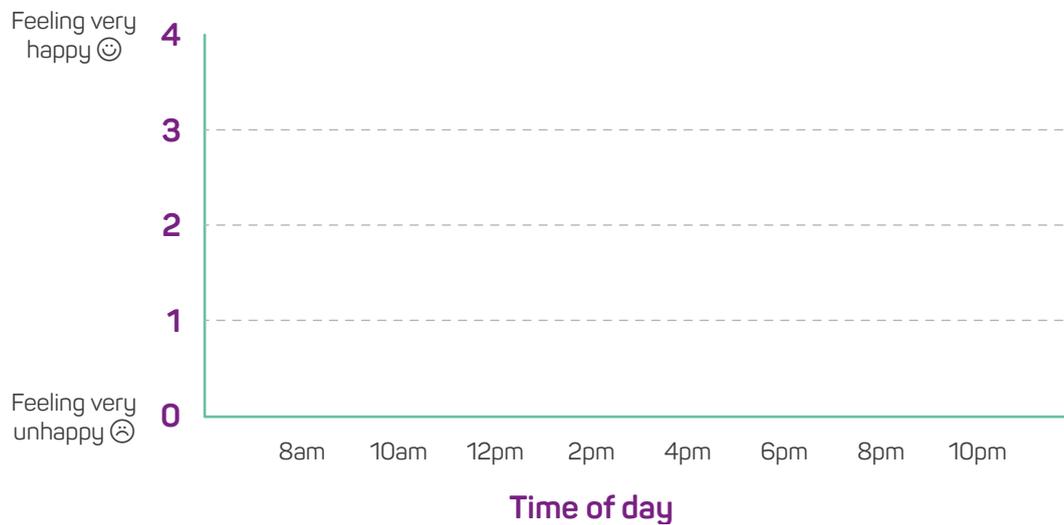
Has Eve shown resilience?

How?

When?

Activity B

Plot the graph based on your day yesterday. 0 = feeling very unhappy ☹ and 4 = feeling very happy 😊



How did you get through the low parts of the day on the graph?



Any suggestions from the workshop you might want to use in future to get through the lower parts of your day?

Activity C

Read the scenario and complete the question:

Ali is really stressed out about his upcoming school exams – he's never been stressed about them before but this year it seems serious! Teachers keep commenting on how they are expecting more from him and he consistently compares himself to his siblings, who are really smart. He's not sure how to be resilient.



What would you recommend that Ali does?

Workshop 2

Exam stress

Activity D

Looking at Jess and Harry, discuss the choices they've made and the likely outcomes of each situation:

Jess copes by working hard, asking for help and letting off steam by listening to music and playing basketball with her friends.

Harry copes by avoiding work, denying that he is worried and letting off steam by spending hours each night on social media.

Write the outcomes of each situation in the boxes below:



Jess' choices:



Harry's choices:

Activity E

Using what you've learnt so far in this session and considering the exam stress toolkit, identify the things you will do and the choices you will make to reduce stress in the lead up to exams.

1 month	1 week	30 minutes

EXAM STRESS TOOLKIT

Use these 12 tools to help you manage exam stress. Some may work better for you than others, but try out even the ones that don't seem natural to you and you may be surprised by the results.

1. Attitude

Be optimistic and do your best. Adopt a 'have a go' mindset and a positive attitude!

2. Relaxation

Do whatever works for you – bath, breathing exercises, sports, music and so on.

3. Self-talk

Become aware of overly critical self-talk and be kind to yourself.

4. Focus

Choose where to focus your attention and your energies. Only multi-task if there is no other option.

5. Effort

Choose how much effort to put in – sometimes (for certain subjects or topics) you may need to put in more effort, and sometimes – less.

6. Breathing

Carry out breathing exercises (take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for a count of 4, hold for 4 and slowly release through pursed lips for a count of 6).

7. Food and drink

Drink water often to hydrate and don't drink too much caffeine, as it can make you jittery, anxious and can affect your sleep. Try to have a balanced diet.

8. Leisure time

Make sure you see your friends, do sport and exercise.

9. Visualisation (imagination)

Before an exam or a test, imagine yourself performing well and/or imagine yourself leaving the exam knowing you've done your best. Do this several times in the lead up to exams and just before. (This is much better than having looping thoughts about how bad the future will be if you don't do well or ruminating on all your past exam 'failures'.)

10. Balance

It's important that you balance hard work and intense study periods with relaxation and social interactions.

11. Revision plan and strategies

Ask for help to put together a revision plan, with breaks and rewards. Use note-making and study methods and patterns that work for you.

12. Support

Ask for help from teachers, tutors, parents, friends and others in your life. They may be able to help you manage stress or come up with helpful study strategies.

Workshop 3

Juggling Time

Activity F

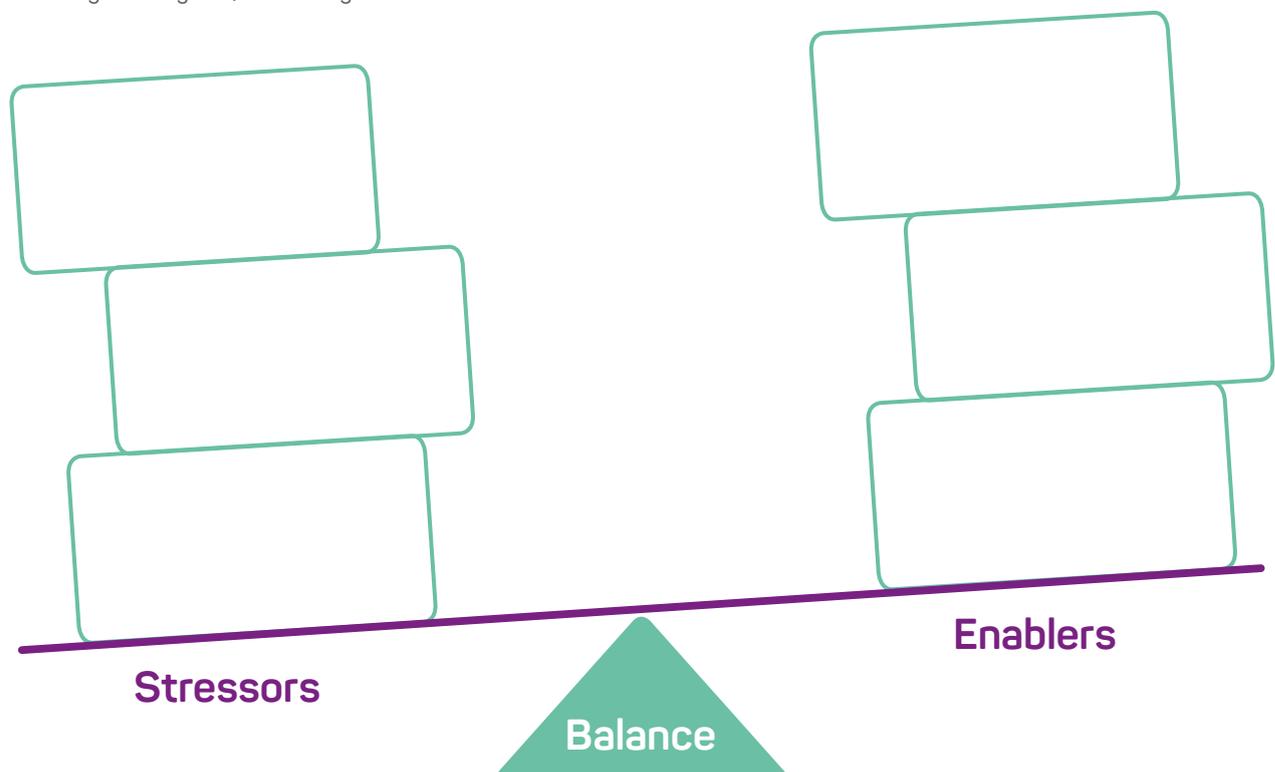
Read through Ahmed's story. Answer the questions on the board and then complete the seesaw.

'I am behind with my history coursework and I'm trying to get back on track, but I don't know where to start. Also, my boss at work keeps asking me to do extra shifts and this is so unfair, because he never seems to ask the older members of staff. I'm worried I'll lose my job if I refuse.'

On top of that, I've been volunteering at a dogs and cats home on Saturday mornings for the past two years. I can't really spare the time but I love animals and I'll be letting down the animals and the other staff if I stop helping out.

Everything is getting on top of me and I am not sleeping well. I've been really snappy and sometimes rude to my mum, dad and my little sister.'

Fill in the seesaw based on Ahmed's story. On the left list what the stressors for Ahmed are (the things that are causing him anguish). On the right add how the stress could be reduced in each case.



A tip for juggling tasks and time – focused attention

- We can choose where to focus our attention: e.g. on a disappointing grade, on trolls, bullies or overly critical self-talk.
- We can choose how to direct our attention: e.g. half-heartedly or in a more committed way.
- We can choose when to focus on particular things by planning and prioritising.

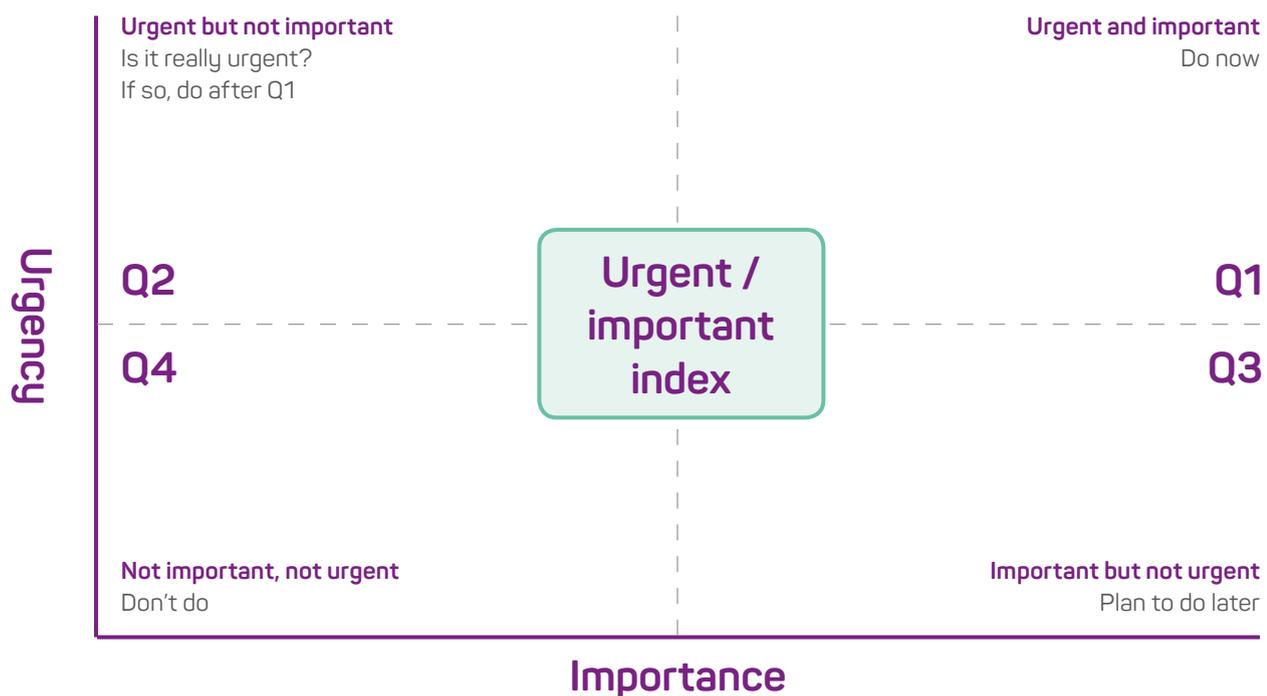
Multitasking

- With more complex multitasking, the stop/start process, where we switch from one task to the next, takes a toll on accuracy and productivity. Rather than saving time, this switching costs time is less efficient, causes us to make more mistakes (because our concentration is affected) and over time can be energy sapping.
- Recent research in neuroscience has demonstrated that multitaskers have more trouble tuning out distractions than people who focus on one task at a time. Multitasking can cause mental blocks and eventually lead to 'burn out' as we get less done, the tasks mount up and our brains get 'frazzled' by shifting focus too often.
- To determine the costs of this kind of mental juggling, psychologists conduct task-switching experiments. By comparing how long it takes for people to get everything done, the psychologists can measure the cost in time of switching tasks. They also assess how different aspects of the tasks, such as complexity or familiarity, affect any extra time cost of switching.
- The conclusion from most if not all of these studies is that focused attention on one thing at a time is more productive and effective than multitasking or switching from one thing to another.

When do you try and multitask? Having read the above, would you now focus on that task alone?

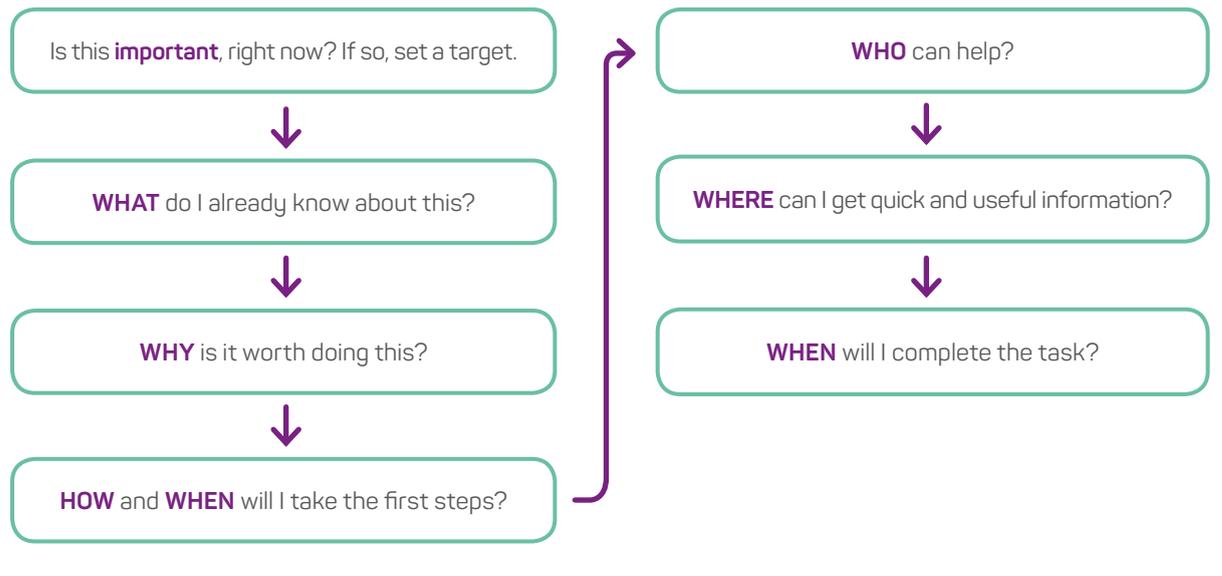
Activity G – Urgent-important index

This is a matrix that people use to help them juggle the demands on their time and energy. Place your tasks in the quadrant (Q) as they fit into each category. For example, things you must do by the end of the day would go in Q1; 'research for your holiday' might fit into Q2. This index can help you when you have a long to-do list and you are unsure where to start. Once you've put it into this index, you start with Q1, then Q2 and so on. Add your current to-do tasks into the index.



Self-coaching – the 5Ws & H

These questions are an alternative to the urgent–important index or can be used as an additional tool in your juggling time toolkit, if you have a lot on and are struggling to juggle different commitments. They are called the ‘5Ws & H’ because 5 start with a W and one with an H!



Activity H: Self-coaching to not say ‘yes’ to too many things

When we get asked to do things, saying ‘no because’ is not a sign of weakness. Nor does it mean you are being unkind or unhelpful. It’s just you can’t do this right now. This is called being assertive. Assertiveness does not mean you are cold or unhelpful. It means you are not a push over and that make decisions based on your own needs and interests as well as other people’s. There is a phrase ‘Don’t kill the goose that lays the golden eggs’ and basically means don’t do too much otherwise you won’t be able to do the good things that you want to do for yourself and others. This list might help you keep your goose (you!) healthy!





When might you need to use these questions above in the next week?

Juggling time toolkit

Use these 8 tools to help you juggle your time. Some may work better for you than others but try out even the ones that don't seem natural to you and you may be surprised by the results.

Assertiveness: learn to say 'no because', 'yes if' or just 'no'

Stop - Think - Reassess - Act

Prioritise activities: e.g. urgent / important & to-do lists

Reduce diversions: gaming, social media, YouTube spirals

Maintain good **physical health:** food, water, exercise, sleep

Ask for **help** from tutors, teachers, mentors and friends

Question and coach yourself

Avoid multi-tasking as it's an inefficient use of time

Activity I – Self-assessment: juggling time

Rate each of these statements from 1 to 10, where 1 = 'not at all', 10 = 'nailed it'

Resilience issue

Rating

I am good at planning and prioritising

When busy, I always try to focus my attention on one task at a time, rather than multitasking

I am good at avoiding distractions (TV, phone, social media, internet)

I will tell my boss at work when I can't do extra shifts or need to reduce my shifts for a short period owing to other commitments

I am good at self-coaching

I always try to focus on the present moment (rather than going over past arguments or disappointments, or daydreaming)

I give myself plenty of breaks, rewards and brain 'downtime'

I ask for help from staff at school/college when I am overwhelmed with studies, work, social and family life



What can you do to address the issues that you have rated as a lower number?

Activity J – Action planning

Based on the conversations you've had in this session what are you going to do in regard to juggling your own time? There is no right or wrong answer as it is your template.

When and how?

1st	2nd	3rd

What will you do?

Notes:

Workshop 4 Managing studies

Activity K

Read the following thoughts from Debra and Jake and answer the questions below.

Debra: 'I've fallen behind in English and geography.

There's just too much to catch up on and I'm never going to achieve my target grades.

I feel ashamed of myself for allowing this to happen. When my parents find out, they're going to be mad.'

Jake: 'Everything is getting on top of me and the pressure is mounting.

I'm working really hard but I must work even harder because there is still so much I don't fully understand.

I must do at least as well as my brother, who got top marks in all his exams.'

In each example, what are the issues causing worry and other unhelpful feelings and emotions?



Debra:



Jake:

In each case, what advice would you give to your friend, and what questions would you ask them to help them gain a more helpful mindset?



Debra:



Jake:

Activity L – Your inner coach

You can choose to listen to and believe your inner critic, or to cultivate your inner coach who can help you build resilience and solve problems we come across:

Things your inner critic might say to you:

- ‘You’re no good at this...’
- ‘Your life is a mess...’
- ‘You have no style...’

These comments aren’t helpful. They can dent your self-confidence and stop you from achieving your goals.

Questions to ask yourself as you inner coach:

- What would I like to achieve?
- What will I do first?
- When will I start?
- How will I know when I’m making progress?
- Who can help?
- What skills and experiences do I already have that will help me?
- What’s in it for me?

Looking at these questions and thinking about your inner coach, what are some of the questions you could ask yourself in relation to your studies?



Activity M – Self-talk matching exercise

Draw lines to match the worry-provoking self-talk with the more supportive and resilient self-talk. Where there isn't a matching statement, write your own statement.

Worry-provoking self-talk

I can't cope when things don't go to plan

I just don't have a head for maths and will never be able to do it

I won't start something if I don't think I can do it perfectly

I'm such a failure

I must not make any mistakes

I must get top marks in my exams/ coursework

I accept some people are unkind and disrespectful to each other

Resilient self-talk

People should always be kind to each other and show respect

I prefer it when things go to plan but I accept I sometimes need to adjust

I struggle a bit with maths and may never love it, but I can get better at it

Rational self-talk

These statements can be used with your inner coach to help you to stay calm and to respond to situations in a rational way, rather than reacting emotionally.

Do what I can do from where I am now

Progress, not perfection

I can't change what's already happened, but I can choose what to do next

I'll be okay

These are just thoughts. I don't have to believe them

Press the pause button

MANAGING STUDIES TOOLKIT

Balance study time, leisure time and relaxation

It's important that you balance hard work and intense study periods with time to relax and social interactions.

Press the pause or the off button on your inner critic, and switch on your inner coach

Become aware of overly critical self-talk and remember to press your 'pause button' or 'off button'. If you don't yet have an inner coach, work hard to nurture this influential self-help tool.

Work hard and get advice on study methods, skills and routines

However, working hard on its own is not enough. Sometimes we work hard on the wrong things or in the wrong way. Ask for help on what and how to study and make changes if you are not seeing results.

Say 'no because' and 'yes and' to requests and distractions

Being assertive is a key resilience skill. Otherwise we say 'yes' to things too often and we may do things to please other people. By doing so, we pile on pressure for ourselves. We may then get inwardly angry (become passive-aggressive) or feel overwhelmed.

Look to make small improvements and adjustments in several areas

Lots of small gains will add up to significant improvement.

Make a start

Often we delay doing something and maybe distract ourselves, or maybe the task at hand seems too big, so we are scared or don't know where to start. By just by making a start, we often realise the task is more achievable than we initially thought.

Pay attention to lifestyle: diet, sleep, exercise

This can't be underestimated. Food, water, sleep and exercise are probably the most important resilience skills and ones we can have most control over.

Ask for help

Often, when we don't know something we think we ought to know, we may think that asking for help is a sign of weakness or stupidity. We may think that we are putting a burden on other people or we just don't have the confidence to ask. This is not the case, as people often like to give help – it makes them feel positive about themselves.

Activity N

Rate each of these statements from 1 to 10, where 1 = 'not at all', 10 = 'nailed it'

Resilience issue	Rating
I am good at saying 'no' to requests from friends or family to have some fun when I have planned to study	
I am good at avoiding distractions from my phone or social media when I am studying	
I give myself plenty of short breaks within larger chunks of study time	
I celebrate successes, however small, and give myself credit when I work hard	
If I am falling behind or struggling in some way, there are people I will go to to ask for help	
I don't allow my inner critic to influence me too much	
I drink plenty of water and eat healthily especially when I am studying hard	
I exercise for at least 30 minutes every day (e.g. walking)	
I have a study plan for each of my subjects and can adapt it when needed	



What can you do to address the issues that you have rated as a lower number?

Activity O – Managing studies

- Choose one of the areas where you gave yourself a low score. Think carefully about something you do in relation to this that is not helpful or not having a useful impact. Can you stop doing it?
- Identify one new idea or an approach you will start doing or will do differently as a result of today's session. Write a specific plan of when you will make the change, how, what will you do and why.
- Identify one thing you do well at the moment. Tell the person next to you what you do and then listen carefully to what they do well.

Please fill in the self-assessment action plan below.

Stop: What are you going to stop doing? Start: What are you going to start doing?

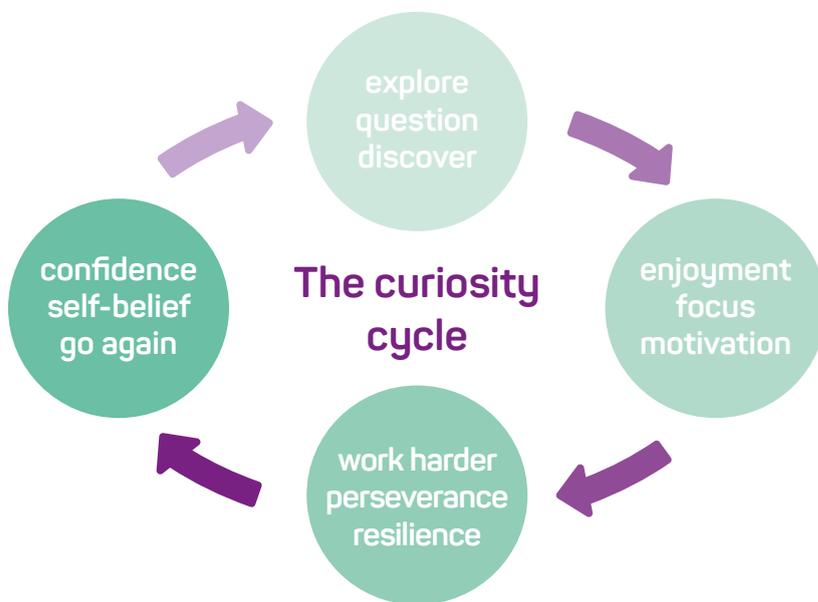
Continue: What are you going to continue doing?

Stop	
Start	
Continue	

Workshop 5

Making decisions about the future

Activity P



Why does curiosity help us?



How are these three concepts the enemies of curiosity?

Comfort zone:

Learned helplessness:

Closed mind:

Comfort zone:

Learned helplessness:

Closed mind:



comfort zone



learned helplessness

The 'enemies' of curiosity



closed mind

Activity Q

Complete the 'force field analysis' chart on a topic that you choose. For each decision factor that you put in the for or against column, give it a number out of 10, where 1 is an insignificant factor and 10 is a very significant factor (see the example in your session). If you can't think of 4 reasons for and 4 reasons against, think of 3, or even 2. Then add up the totals at the bottom to help you make a decision.

 **Topic:**

For	Against
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/> Total	<input type="text"/> Total

Activity R – Action plan template

Based on the conversations you've had in this session, what steps are you going to take when making decisions about your future? There is no right or wrong answer as this is your template.

When and how?

--	--	--

1st

2nd

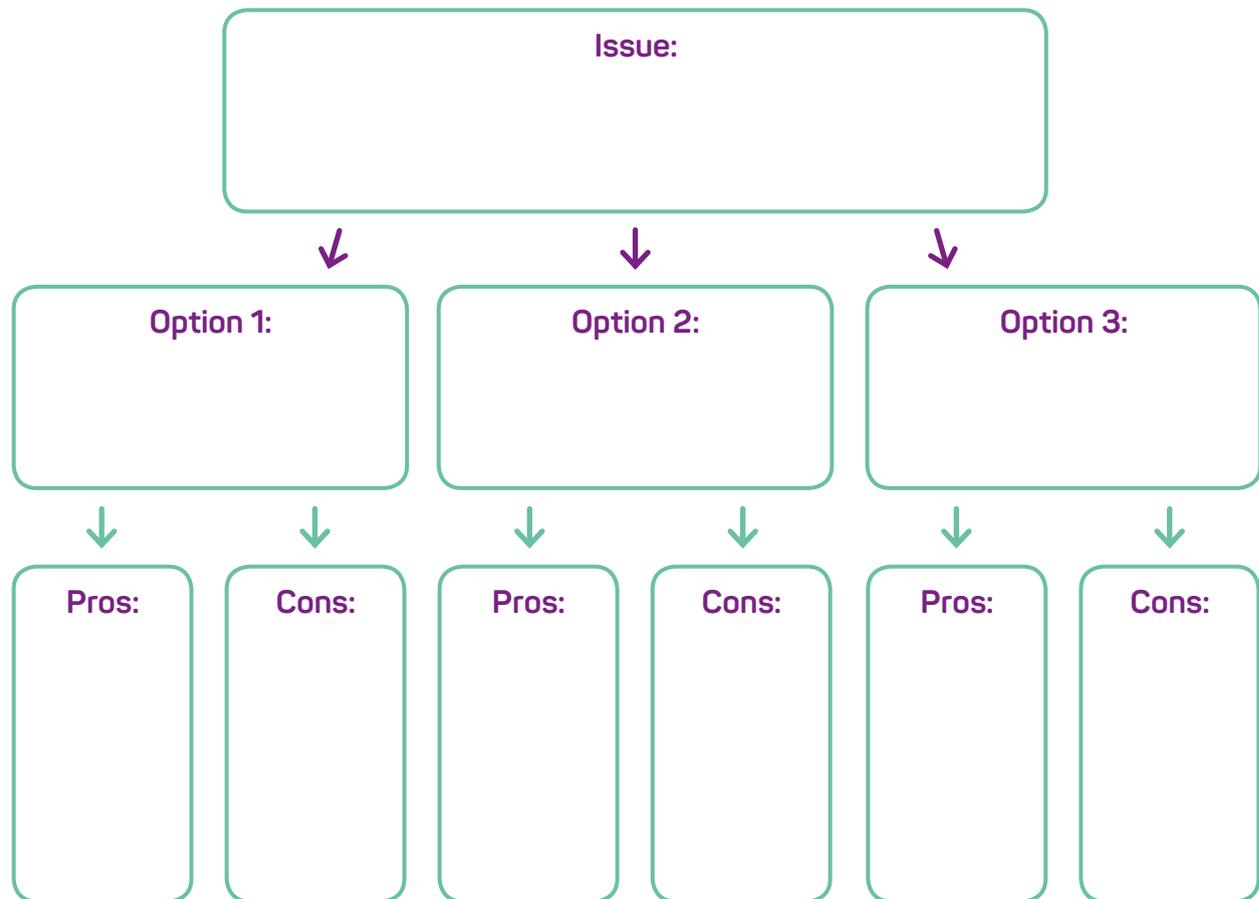
3rd

What will you do?

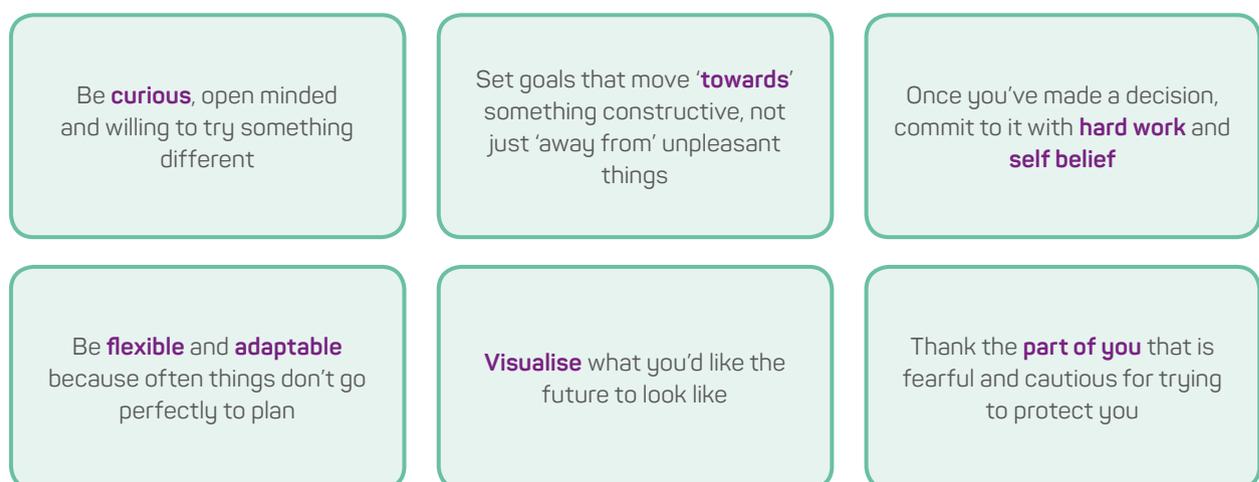
Notes:

Activity S – Alternative template

This is an alternative guide to help you when considering options when making a decision. Start with writing your decision at the top. Then write your three options and the pros and cons of each to help you pick the best option for you.



Decision-making toolkit



Most of these tools to help you make decisions are things that will make sense, but the last item ('Thank the part of you...') is perhaps less clear. When people are worried, stressed or are have mental health problems they often say 'part of me thinks "x"' or 'part of me wants to "y"'. If we are delaying making a decision or don't want to step out of our comfort zone, what often happens is that part of us is trying to protect us from failure, embarrassment, disappointment, pain or a similar emotion. In our minds, we can thank the part of us that is cautious for trying to protect us, but say 'I now choose to try something new and challenging' (or whatever is appropriate to the context) to help us make that decision.

Workshop 6

Social pressures

Activity T

Read David's story and consider the questions below.

'I spend a lot of time on social media, like most people my age, and it used to make me feel bad about myself. Everyone else seemed to be having so much fun compared to me and I felt left out.

I experienced really low moods and stopped wanting to meet my friends. That's when I talked to my tutor at college and we talked about resilience, wellbeing and different aspects of mental health.

She told me I could write a blog about mental health. I was amazed at all the people who said my blogs helped them to make adjustments to their own lives and to understand more about mental health. I have come across amazing sources of information and been introduced to new people. I now know I am just as good as anyone else.

Social media can be hurtful, but it can also be a source for good. It all depends on how you use it.'



To what extent do you agree with David's conclusion about social media: 'It all depends on how you use it'?



What are the helpful and hopeful messages in David's story?



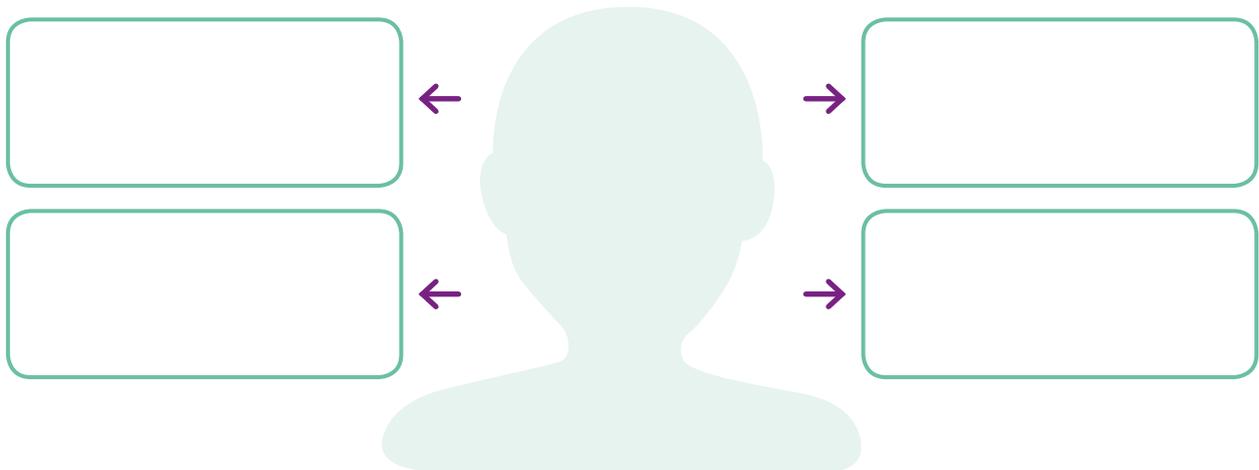
What are your experiences of how social media can be a force for good in terms of building self-esteem and resilience?

Tools for self-sabotaging thoughts or unkind things people say

Distract	Focus your attention on something constructive or fun Talk to someone kind and positive
Distance	Thinking something doesn't mean it's true Other people saying something doesn't make it true Distance yourself from unkind or untrue thoughts
Dispute	Dispute unhelpful thoughts on the basis of: evidence (is it true?), logic (am I making illogical connections that don't exist?) and usefulness (is it helpful to think this?)

Activity U – Your social network

In each box identify one person in your social network and their role. For example, one friend might be for life chats, one for exercising with, your sibling may be for when you're in a low mood...



Social pressure toolkit

In this chart, we've listed some things you can do that can help you deal with social pressure. Which three do you find easiest to do and which three do you find hardest to do?

Balance hard work with 'down time' and relaxation	Assertiveness: saying 'yes if', 'no because' or just 'no'	Create your own life story
Balance taking managed risks with staying safe	Seek professional help and advice	Because you think something doesn't mean it's true
Balance being true to yourself with doing things to fit in	Build your supportive social networks	Because someone says or writes something about you, doesn't mean it's true

Activity V – Self-assessment: My social pressures

Which of these social pressures apply to you? Assess yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = 'not at all', 10 = 'in a major way'.

Social pressure	Rating
Wanting to fit in	
Taking part in risky things I don't really want to do	
Keeping up to date with fashions and trends	
FOMO – fear of missing out	
Being accessible 24/7 (e.g. on social media)	
Making negative comparisons with friends, celebrities and other people	

Please provide some examples of what you have learned in the workshop and how it may help dealing with social pressures.



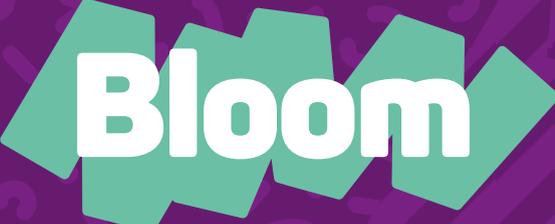
Tips and hints for dealing with social pressures:

Activity W – Action plan

Similar to the exercise you did earlier (Activity L), think about the things you can start doing now to help you cope with the social pressures you're experiencing. Think of what's not so helpful and you will stop doing and the things that are working for you now and with which you'll continue. Write them all down.

Complete the chart based on what you have reflected on in this workshop.

Stop	
Start	
Continue	

The logo for Bloom features the word "Bloom" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a cluster of overlapping, light green, irregular shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals. The background of the entire page is a vibrant purple with a complex, repeating pattern of various geometric and organic shapes, including circles, lines, and abstract forms, creating a textured, almost crystalline effect.

Bloom

For young people's mental health

www.mentalhealth-uk.org