

Teacher Resource Guide

A practical guide to support you in the delivery of a series of lessons developed to support young people in KS3 and KS4 experiencing difficult thoughts and feelings



The Charlie Waller Trust

The Charlie Waller Trust is one of the UK's most respected mental health charities, founded by the family of Charlie Waller, who took his own life in 1997 whilst suffering from depression.

The Charlie Waller Trust's mission is to educate young people and those with responsibility for them – so parents and carers, teachers, college and university staff, and employers – about their mental health and wellbeing. Our work extends to adults in the workplace, taking a whole organisation approach to developing a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing.



CoRAY

The CoRAY Project, based at the University of Oxford, worked with young people, researchers and clinicians to develop evidence-informed advice for dealing with difficult thoughts and feelings young people told us they most wanted support with. The CoRAY project has worked in partnership with the Charlie Waller Trust to develop lessons and resources.

The CoRAY project identified the following five themes that have formed the basis of a series of lessons to be delivered within school settings to pupils. Each theme has a briefing document and key recommendations, which you will find in the pack.

- Managing change and uncertainty
- Feeling lonely, isolated and disconnected
- Feeling bored, flat and unmotivated
- Feeling anxious about social situations
- Seeking help for mental health

Contents

1. Using the resource guide
2. Before delivering the lessons
3. Why use these lessons?
4. Teacher guidance when delivering the CoRAY lessons
5. Teaching resources topic 1: managing change and uncertainty
6. Teaching resources topic 2: feeling bored, flat and unmotivated
7. Teaching resources topic 3: feeling lonely, isolated and disconnected
8. Teaching resources topic 4: feeling anxious about social situations
9. Teaching resources topic 5: seeking help for mental health
10. Next steps
11. Further sources of support
12. References

1. Using the resource guide



The Charlie Waller Trust and CoRAY have produced a series of lessons that can be delivered to KS3 and KS4 pupils. For each topic you will find two lesson plans, two sets of PowerPoint slides and accompanying worksheets and videos.

2. Before delivering the lessons

- ✓ Spend some time familiarising yourself with the lesson plans and review the PowerPoint presentations to check whether you need to make any minor changes for your school setting.
- ✓ We have included some extension activities and ideas for exercises you could use in future lessons.
- ✓ Good action planning is essential, including determining who will be delivering the lessons, when they will be delivered and ensuring that colleagues are aware that these sessions are being delivered.
- ✓ Remember the importance of your own wellbeing when delivering these sessions. Teaching about mental health may affect you personally. Before delivering the lessons, it may be helpful to talk to your line manager or other colleagues about any concerns you may have. You may also be faced with managing disclosures from pupils, which can take an emotional toll, so it is important that you are supported by colleagues. There are times when challenging situations affect us emotionally, and it's important to remember that it's OK to ask for help. Think about how you are feeling and identify people you can talk to who can support you to process how you are feeling. Who might be best to talk to? For example:



Your manager



[EAP \(Employee Assistance Programme\)](#) or staff counselling where available



Your GP



A friend or colleague



A family member or partner

Other places to look for help and support are listed on page 15.

And don't forget it may also be helpful to work through your planning with colleagues if you are addressing topics that you feel less confident about.



3. Why use these lessons?

Among 7- to 16-year-olds, the proportion with a probable mental disorder was 18.0% in 2022 – up from 12.1% in 2017 (NHS Digital 2022). While increased awareness and recognition of mental health conditions in children and young people may have contributed to these changes, they also indicate that the prevalence of mental health conditions is likely increasing.

All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils and students, which includes preventing impairment of children's health or development and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Full details are set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance.

Ofsted's school inspection handbook sets out what inspectors take into account as part of school inspections to ensure schools are providing good education, supported by high-quality pastoral care, and this includes making sure that pupils and students know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.

These ready-to-go resources will help you to enhance your PSHE lessons and take a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing as part of a comprehensive PSHE education curriculum is vital. It promotes pupils' wellbeing through an understanding of their own and others' emotions and the development of healthy coping strategies. It also contributes to safeguarding, providing pupils with knowledge, understanding and strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as equipping them to support others who are facing challenges. Finally, talking openly about mental health issues in the classroom is an effective means to breaking down any associated stigma.

4. Teacher guidance when delivering the CoRAY lessons

We have drawn on the [PSHE Association](#) guidance on teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing when writing this resource pack and have highlighted below the key considerations for you to draw on when delivering the lessons.

When delivering these lessons, the emphasis should always be on developing pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, language and confidence to seek support, as needed, for themselves or others. Pupils should understand when to seek help, what help is available, what barriers may present themselves to help seeking, and the likely outcome of seeking support.

Establishing a safe learning environment for both pupils and staff is important for PSHE education lessons, especially when focusing on mental health and emotional wellbeing as it:

- ☒ Protects pupils from possible distress.
- ☒ Enables them to feel comfortable exploring values and attitudes.
- ☒ Enables them to express their own opinions and consider the views and opinions of others, without fear of negative feedback.

Establishing clear ground rules is essential before delivering teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing. These are fundamental to creating and maintaining a safe teaching and learning environment. The process of establishing and reinforcing ground rules is most effective when they have been negotiated and agreed with pupils (rather than imposed), in addition to leading the way by modelling the ground rules in your own communication with the class. Ground rules for these sessions should include:

Confidentiality

The concepts of confidentiality and anonymity should be established at the outset. Pupils need to feel safe discussing mental health and exploring misconceptions or questions in lessons without fear that these discussions will be repeated by teachers or pupils outside of the classroom.

However, always make it clear that if you become concerned about a pupil being at risk, then you will need to follow the school's safeguarding policy, and that you cannot completely guarantee that no other pupil will repeat what has been said.

A way in which this could be introduced is by saying:

We want everyone to be open and honest, but not to directly discuss our own or other people's personal lives. We will discuss general situations as examples but will not use names or descriptions of specific individuals.

Right to pass

Although participation in the lesson is important, every pupil has the right to choose not to answer a question. They also have the right to choose not to participate in an activity or discussion, especially if it touches on personal issues that they should not disclose in the classroom, or if the topic makes them uncomfortable.

It is good practice to share the nature of the lesson topic before delivering the lesson, and invite pupils to let you know, anonymously or directly, if they have concerns themselves or for a friend. This will ensure that your teaching is as inclusive as possible and is matched to pupils' needs.

You could emphasise this by saying: **"We will not put anyone 'on the spot'."**

Seeking help and advice

Young people can find it difficult to ask for help and advice either for themselves or a friend. It may be a young person is not able to recognise the extent that their wellbeing has been compromised. For this reason, it is essential that through these lessons, you work together to empower young people to be able to look out for their friends/peers and they pass their concerns onto a trusted adult at an appropriate time, not in front of others. This means that together you can work towards earlier identification and putting in appropriate support sooner. It could also be helpful to signpost sources of support before, during and after the lesson; this should include support available within school.

The ground rule might be:

If we need further help or advice, we know how and where to seek it confidentially, both in school and outside of school. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.

Safeguarding pupils at risk of vulnerabilities

You may not know of any current issues amongst your pupils but prepare all lessons on the basis that there will be at least one member of the class who is personally affected by the lesson content. Making the lesson safe for that pupil will help to ensure the lesson is safe for everyone.

Safeguards to put in place include:

- ☒ Alert the mental health/wellbeing lead and other relevant pastoral and safeguarding staff about the topic you will be covering and encourage them to discuss the lesson content with any pupils who are accessing support for related issues. It can be helpful to alert parents too – ensuring they know how to provide appropriate support. There is a parent resource which includes information on all five topics, as well as some short films for parents which can be found [here](#).

- ✓ Give the pupil(s) a chance to withdraw from the lesson if appropriate (without being expected to justify their absence to their peers). Consider how to follow up the missed lesson with the pupil(s), as this learning may be especially relevant to them.
- ✓ It is especially important to plan and teach the lesson with the assumption that there is a pupil in the room who is more vulnerable to experiencing trauma or distress in relation to the topic, even if you're not aware of them.
- ✓ You know the young people you are working with. Hold them in mind as you screen all images, terminology and content for things that may be triggering to them. However, be kind to yourself. We can't predict everything!
- ✓ As you educate young people through useful resources such as videos and case studies to bring a 'real life' flavour to lessons, you need to remember to avoid initiating or allowing discussions which could serve as instructions on 'how to', for example, how to self-harm. You need to think about how you can have discussions which seek to prevent these behaviours.
- ✓ While there may be clear physical or emotional indicators that a pupil is vulnerable to the issues discussed, sometimes there will be no such indicators. Some young people work hard to keep their problems hidden, so ensure your lessons are universally safe and never make assumptions about the wellbeing or resilience of pupils.
- ✓ It is also important that you refer to your school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Disclosures

Confidentiality is very important to young people and staff should respect wishes around confidentiality wherever possible. Moreover, staff must remember that young people's health, safety and welfare are paramount and accordingly, staff cannot promise total confidentiality. For example, in accordance with your school's safeguarding policy, if you become aware that a pupil is self-harming, you will be obliged to share this with your school's designated safeguarding lead. This information would usually be shared with their parents/carers too, unless this would pose risk of greater harm coming to the pupil (eg, where there is suspected or known abuse at home). Discuss the need to tell parents/carers with the young person and listen carefully to any fears they may have. A decision should always be made in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

Key issues indicating higher concern



Self-harm



Hopelessness



Talking about suicide



Serious adverse life events

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and those with special educational needs and disabilities may be more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Suicidal thoughts and behaviour

Concerns about young people and suicide include them experiencing suicidal thoughts (also known as suicidal ideation), threatening to die by suicide, or making suicide attempts. Thoughts of suicide may be fleeting, with no intent to act on them, or more severe or persistent, depending on the individual and their unique circumstances. Although some young people never act on thoughts of suicide (though they may openly discuss and explore them), other young people may not mention that they have been having suicidal thoughts and there may be no apparent warning signs before a suicide attempt.

If you are concerned about high risk pupils, it may be helpful to consult with your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which may also be known as Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS), depending on your local area.

You can find further sources of information and support on page 15.



5. Teaching resources topic 1: managing change and uncertainty



Lesson plans



PowerPoints



Worksheets



Full briefing document



Young person briefings



Summary of CoRAY briefing document and recommendations

Young people respond differently to change and uncertainty, some react positively (eg excitement), whilst others react negatively (eg worry). It can be difficult to tolerate uncertainty and, at times, this can lead to distress and affect mental health. Difficulty coping with uncertainty is associated with a range of different mental health issues. These include difficulties around anxiety (Dugas et al, 1997), mood (Boswell et al, 2013), obsessive-compulsive disorders (Lind et al, 2009) and post-traumatic stress (Ogelsby et al, 2016). Learning how to respond to and manage uncertainty may help to reduce some of the mental strain experienced by young people.

Summary of the key recommendations for young people who are struggling to cope with uncertainty and change

1. Remember that uncertainty is normal, inevitable and does not always mean something bad will happen.
2. Identify whether it is useful or possible to remove uncertainty.
3. Try not to avoid uncertainty altogether; in fact, look out for opportunities to experience it more (even if in small ways) to learn that it can be coped with.
4. Learn how to 'sit' with feelings of uncertainty, focus on the here and now and on solvable problems.
5. Look for things in life where it is possible to have control; establish plans and routines.
6. Seek help when it is needed.

6. Teaching resources topic 2: feeling bored, flat and unmotivated



Lesson plans



PowerPoints



Worksheets



Full briefing document



Young person briefings



Summary of CoRAY briefing document and recommendations

Young people may describe feeling bored, flat and unmotivated. While they are common feelings, difficulties with motivation and boredom can also be associated with depression or low mood (eg Watson et al, 2019).

Summary of the key recommendations for young people struggling with feeling bored, flat and unmotivated

1. Be kind to yourself.
2. Notice and record time spent on daily activities to see what helps.
3. Work out what matters or is important to you.
4. Do more of what matters.
5. When feeling unmotivated, start doing something anyway.
6. Notice and pay attention to how it feels to do what you are doing.
7. Imagine positive future images in detail and imagine the steps needed to get there.
8. Try to notice and address any negative 'self-talk' that is getting in the way of enjoyment or motivation.
9. Make a commitment to others.
10. Seek help when it is needed.

7. Teaching resources topic 3: feeling lonely, isolated and disconnected



Lesson plans



PowerPoints



Worksheets



Full briefing document



Young person briefings



Summary of CoRAY briefing document and recommendations

Most people experience loneliness at some point in their lives, often when going through a change or transition. Loneliness is associated with a range of painful feelings and emotions, such as sadness, anger, pain and frustration.

Summary of the key recommendations for young people who are feeling lonely, isolated or disconnected

1. Be kind to yourself.
2. Reach out to others where you can.
3. Feel more connected by helping others.
4. Focus on building the social relationships you want.
5. Take part in different activities, try different things to see what works best for you.
6. Look out for what helps you to feel more connected in online interactions and do more of it.
7. Have realistic expectations – friendships and relationships can be hard work and take time to develop.
8. Seek help when it is needed.

8. Teaching resources topic 4: feeling anxious about social situations



Lesson plans



PowerPoints



Worksheets



Full briefing document



Young person briefings



Summary of CoRAY briefing document and recommendations

Worrying about social situations can involve being afraid of being judged by others, feeling self-conscious in public or being concerned about meeting new people. While these are common feelings for adolescents, excessive worrying about social situations is associated with social anxiety disorder (APA, 2013; Leigh & Clark, 2018). Social anxiety disorder is one of the most common anxiety disorders among young people, and often begins during adolescence (Solmi et al, 2021). Social anxiety can have a significant negative impact on development and functioning, including education, relationships with others and self-esteem.

Summary of the key recommendations for young people who are feeling anxious about social situations

1. Notice what you think, feel and do in a social situation – it can take some time but is a useful step in helping you to manage feelings of anxiety.
2. Try to shift the focus from what you're worrying about in your head to what is going on around you right now.
3. Put your fears to the test – discover how you really come across in social situations by testing out your fears, rather than basing your views on how you feel inside.

9. Teaching resources topic 5: seeking help for mental health



Lesson plans



PowerPoints



Worksheets



Full briefing document



Young person briefings



Summary of CoRAY briefing document and recommendations

Among 7- to 16-year-olds, the proportion with a probable mental disorder was 18.0% in 2022 – up from 12.1% in 2017, but a similar rate to 2020, when it was 16.7%, and 2021, when it was 17.8%. However, many young people don't seek or access support, either informally (eg from friends or family) or formally (through services). For example, NHS Digital found that young people aged 5-16 with a probable mental health disorder were nearly twice as likely to report not having some form of social support than those the same age without a probable mental health disorder. Young people face a wide range of barriers to seeking and accessing help. Many young people do not know when or how to seek support, or do not feel comfortable seeking help, despite there being potential sources of support available (Radez et al, 2020).

Summary of the key recommendations for encouraging young people to seek help

1. It can be difficult to know the difference between what is 'normal' and what is 'a problem' in relation to mental health – if difficulties are interfering with everyday life (like sleep, eating, schoolwork) then it is worth seeking help or support.
2. It can be hard to put feelings into words, that's understandable and won't just apply to you.
3. It is a good thing to ask for help or support if it is needed. Try not to feel embarrassed or put off by other people's reactions if they don't get it quite right straight away.
4. There are different types of help and support available for you to choose, and you can try different options.
5. Mental health professionals will keep information about an individual's mental health confidential, unless they think that there is a risk of harm to the individual or other people, in which case they may share information on a 'need to know' basis.
6. Mental health professionals want to help, try not to be put off if change does not happen immediately, this might take time.

10. Next steps

It is important to keep the discussions/conversations going around the five themes. Consider next steps and what you may do as a school after delivering the lessons. You may want to think about building in a reflection lesson, so that you can review how students have found the lessons and what they have done.

You could also use the Charlie Waller Trust Wellbeing Action Plan:

<https://charliewaller.org/resources/wellbeing-action-plan-young-person>

11. Further sources of support

EDUCATION SUPPORT

educationsupport.org.uk

Free listening to teachers by trained counsellors.

CHILDLINE

0800 1111 (free 24hr)

childline.org

Confidential listening for anyone aged 18 and under.

SAMARITANS

116 123

samaritans.org

jo@samaritans.org

For confidential emotional support 24/7.

STUDENTS AGAINST DEPRESSION

studentsagainstd Depression.org

For information and self-help material.

PAPYRUS

papyrus-uk.org

Suicide prevention and support.

THE MIX

themix.org.uk

Essential support for under 25s.

YOUTH ACCESS

youthaccess.org.uk

Mental health info and guidance for 11- to 25-year olds.

ANNA FREUD

annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care

Useful ideas for looking after yourself.

BEAT

0808 801 0711

beateatingdisorders.org.uk

(youthline for under 18's)

Help and information about eating disorders.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY (CALM)

0800 585858

thecalmzone.net

A free, confidential and anonymous helpline and webchat service, for anyone struggling or in crisis.

ANXIETY UK

03444 775774

anxietyuk.org.uk

Support services to help with anxiety.

MIND

mind.org.uk

Mental health charity offering advice on mental health.

YOUNGMINDS

youngminds.org.uk

Mental health charity offering advice to children, young people and families.

Continued...

NSPCC ADULT HELPLINE

0808 800 5000

nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/

If you are worried about a young person, you can call them for free advice.

SHOUT

Text 85258

You'll then be connected to a volunteer for an anonymous conversation by text message.

NHS mental health services

MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINES

nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/

24-hour NHS urgent mental health helplines for people of all ages in England.

NHS EVERY MIND MATTERS

nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

Advice and tips to help look after your mental health.

You can look for local support in your area here: [Hub of Hope https://hubofhope.co.uk/](https://hubofhope.co.uk/)

12. References

- APA American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: Author
- Boswell et al, 2013 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23381685/>
- Dugas et al (2012) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3712497/> Dugas, M.J., Laugesen
- N. & Bukowski, W.M. Intolerance of Uncertainty, Fear of Anxiety, and Adolescent Worry. J Abnorm Child Psychol 40, 863–870 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2017.07.035>
- Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance.
- Leigh, E., Clark, D.M. Understanding Social Anxiety Disorder in Adolescents, and Improving Treatment Outcomes: Applying the Cognitive Model of Clark and Wells (1995). Clin Child Fam Psychol Rev 21, 388–414 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-018-0258-5>
- Lind et al 2009 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0887618509001376>
- NHS Digital <https://digital.nhs.uk/news/feed/year/2022>
- <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/children-and-young-people-s-mental-health>
- <https://pshe-association.org.uk>
- Ogelsby et al 2016 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26803928/>
- Radez et al 2020 <https://www.nationalelfservice.net/populations-and-settings/child-and-adolescent/barriers-support-mental-health-adolescents/>
- Solmi, F., Downs, J.L. and Nicholls, D.E., (2021). COVID-19 and eating disorders in young people. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 5(5), pp.316-318.
- Watson, R., Harvey, K., Pass, L., McCabe, C., & Reynolds, S. (2020). A qualitative study exploring adolescents' experience of brief behavioural activation for depression and its impact on the symptom of anhedonia.
- Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12307>