

Coping with stress

Approximate time: 15 minutes

Materials: Pens, post it notes, hat or jar

Aim/outcome: To think about different coping mechanisms

Explanation:

- Ask the whole group: what are the different ways someone might cope with stress? As the pupils come up with ideas, ask some volunteers to write the ideas on post it notes. Stick these around the room. Make sure you include “Do something else” as an option for people who may not want to use the other coping mechanisms that have been suggested by the group. The coping strategies could be anything from going for a walk, talking to a friend, playing a computer game or listening to music.
- Now tell the group that everyone, silently and on their own, needs to come up with a scenario that might make someone feel stressed (eg they have too much to do at work/too much revision). Each of them need to write these on a post it note, fold it and then put it into a hat or a jar.
- Once everyone has put something in, give the scenarios a good mix. Then head back round the participants and let them choose a scenario to read. They should then decide and move the sticky note next to the coping technique they think would work best to cope with that scenario. (If you don't think pupils will want to do this as a large group they can pick out a scenario in groups of 3 and discuss where to put it.)
- When everyone has chosen their coping mechanisms by moving their sticky note, give the group a couple of minutes to quietly walk around round and see where people posted the scenarios. Ask the group to share with each other: Are the coping mechanisms the ones you would choose if you were experiencing that scenario? What would you choose instead?
- Highlight that just as everyone deals with stress differently, we also all have different ways of coping with stress. This can be a very personal thing, and sometimes what works best for each of us can depend on the situation.