



We'll meet again

A selection of assembly ideas and class-based activities from Place2Be to support your school community as it comes back together.

Following a challenging time, we've put together a series of resources focusing on community recovery and helping you to bring your school back together.

We've split these resources into four themes (self-efficacy, hope, gratitude and connectedness), with each drawing upon some of the factors that underpin wellbeing and positive psychology.

These assembly and class/group ideas are intended as a universal resource for all young people, and staff are invited to use them as starting points to promote emotional wellbeing, resilience and recovery.

If you'd like to adapt or simplify the content found within this booklet, we've also created a version of these resources for primary schools which you can also refer to.

Please remember to follow current government guidance around social distancing when using these ideas.

We hope you find this booklet helpful as you work towards community recovery.

From us all at Place2Be



4 themes to support community recovery:



1.
Self-efficacy
p3-4

2.
Hope
p5-6

3.
Gratitude
p7-8

4.
Connectedness
p9-10

Key



Assembly ideas



Classroom ideas and activities

Theme 1:

Promoting Self-efficacy

While it is natural to have feelings of helplessness and uncertainty, especially during the current crisis, it is important for young people to feel that what they say and do matters and that their actions can make a difference. Self-efficacy is the belief that we can make a difference and have strengths we can draw on in times of challenge. It's also a core belief underpinning motivation, and emotional wellbeing.

Assembly ideas



Materials required:

A story of an inspirational person who displayed self-belief and used their strengths to the best of their ability.

Step 1

Discuss the importance of self-belief/self-efficacy for our mental wellbeing.

What is good mental well-being? Discuss and share ideas.

Introduce/reinforce the importance of self-efficacy for mental wellbeing.

Good mental well-being includes having the belief that we have strengths we can draw on in times of challenge, which can reduce feelings of helplessness. Having self-belief and recognising our strengths can help situations feel less stressful, and more manageable.

Share definitions and thoughts about self-efficacy.

For example:

Self-efficacy is belief in your own abilities to deal

with various situations. Our belief in our own ability to succeed plays a role in how we think, how we act, and how we feel about our place in the world.

Step 2

Share an example of an inspirational person. For example, Nelson Mandela, Roger Bannister, Ghandi, or choose one of your own.

Step 3

Questions to explore
What obstacles did the main character in your example have to overcome in order to maintain their self-belief?

Discuss...

Self-belief does not always mean being immediately successful, but having self-belief can give you the opportunity to think about the things that are under your control, to take one step at a time and work towards your goals.

Recently lots of things may have felt out of our control, such as:

- The instructions from the government e.g. to close schools, to physically distance, to study from home.
- How the virus has spread. How other people behaved.

This can make us feel emotions like helplessness, fear and anxiety.

At such times it is important to remember the things that we can control, and the strengths and the skills we can draw on to make a difference. During the past few weeks we have seen people make a difference by:

- Volunteering and helping others.
- Using their skills to do different things such as making equipment, delivering food etc.
- Thinking about their own behaviour and using the time to make the most of their skills and develop new ones.

Ask for examples or draw on other stories of how

people used their skills and strengths to make a difference.

Step 4

Building up your self-efficacy/strengthening self-belief.

One way to strengthen self-belief is to pay attention to those difficult thoughts and feelings which might make you feel less sure about your ability to cope and manage.

Looking for ways to notice and manage difficult thoughts and feelings can help you feel more confident about working through the situation.

Finish on a quote from Henry Ford (Ford Motor Company)

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can't - you're right.”

Remind students that a sense of self-efficacy and self-belief is important for wellbeing.



Theme 1:

Promoting Self-efficacy

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Letter to your future self

Write a letter to your future self, telling yourself about the things you have learned, how you got through ups and downs and what skills and strengths you drew on, and how you will use them in the future.

Challenge unhelpful self-talk

Sometimes negative thoughts or self-talk can take over and impact on our self-belief. When this happens we typically overestimate the likelihood of the bad thing happening and underestimate our ability to cope if it does.

Encourage pupils to think of a common situation that can lead to unhelpful thinking e.g.

worrying about an exam/ falling out with a friend/ worrying about doing a presentation in class etc. Identify and write down the unhelpful thoughts.

Challenge the thought by:

- Taking it to 'court' and look at the facts for and against.
- Change the thought into a more realistic or helpful one.
- Imagine if the thought actually came true and what you would do next. Come up with a problem-solving plan to explore positive coping strategies.

Flip it

Another way to consider helpful and unhelpful thinking habits is to practise 'flipping' them. Unhelpful thinking habits are the things we tell ourselves that creep up and get in the way of doing what we want to

do. Make a list of helpful and unhelpful thoughts. Give some examples.

Encourage pupils to think of an unhelpful thought and 'flip it'.

E.g. unhelpful thought... I failed my French test, I'm useless at languages.

Flip it

This time I didn't do well but I'm not totally useless. I didn't get every single question wrong.

I might not be the best at French but I can get better at it.

I will ask for some help so I can improve.

My friend is good at French I'll see if he has any tips...

I will work harder for the next test.

Resources

Here are some suggested resources, take a look and decide which ones may be age appropriate for your pupils:

Songs

- The Climb – Miley Cyrus
- Keep Your Head Up – Andy Grammer
- Breathin – Arianna Grande

Poems

- It Couldn't Be Done – Edgar A Guest
- Help Yourself To Happiness – Helen Steiner Rice
- I'd Rather Be – Page Belnap



Theme 2:

Promoting Hope

Research indicates that hope significantly and positively correlates with psychological well-being and coping in the face of adversity. Higher hope is related to better overall adjustment, while hope has also been described as “a personal rainbow of the mind”. The rainbow has been used as a symbol of hope in many households during the coronavirus pandemic.

Assembly ideas



Resources needed:

Poems, video clips of interviews, audio clips of songs. Cards or postcard sized pieces of paper with the words 'I hope' written on.

Step 1

Talk about hope and the importance of acknowledging difficulties, but balancing this with staying hopeful.

Step 2

Read a poem, for example, Everything's Going to Be Alright by Derek Mahon – this poem acknowledges difficulty but concludes positively.

And/or:

Show parts of interviews with people who managed to stay hopeful in difficult circumstances (e.g. Terry Waite, John McCarthy).

Discuss what you found inspiring and invite staff and students to comment, too.

Step 3

Play a song/YouTube clip of a song about Hope.

For example,
Here Comes the Sun
– Nina Simone

Everything's Gonna Be Alright' – Bob Marley
or

[Natasha Bedingfield's song 'Hope'](#) (you may just wish to show part of it)

Step 4

Invite staff to add their 'I hope' cards to start a whole school display about hope (as seen in Natasha Bedingfield's video). As they add their card ask them to briefly explain why they chose this as their hope.

Perhaps prime some students, e.g. form captains, to add theirs during the assembly, too.

As the students leave the assembly, hand out 'I hope' cards (or have them as part of the board display for staff and students to add to later).

[Other ideas for creating a hope board](#)

Remind all students to seek a trusted adult or member of staff if they feel they are losing hope or are worried about a friend losing hope.

Theme 2:

Promoting Hope

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Personal rainbows of hope

Make a personal rainbow that can be drawn or written on. This might include things students want to achieve or are looking forward to. Encourage students to develop small, achievable goals and everyday things, as well as bigger, wider goals. Be creative and use paints or 3D modelling materials.

Interviews

Students may find it interesting to think about how they remained hopeful during lockdown and can interview classmates and staff about how they stayed hopeful. Interesting excerpts from the interviews could be written up in an article for the school magazine or posted on the website or displayed around the school.

Poems

Research and discuss poems about hope, for example, Good Hope (Benjamin Zephaniah)

Hope is the Thing with Feathers (Emily Dickenson) or Sometimes (Sheenagh Pugh). Poems about living with uncertainty may also be reassuring, for example, What If this Road (Sheenagh Pugh).

Write poems about hope and illustrate and display them.

Essays

Investigate essays and writing about hope (for example, those included in the book Hope Nation). Ask the students to write their own stories about when they have had to remain hopeful in the face of adversity.



Theme 3:

Promoting Gratitude

Understandably our thoughts and feelings may be focused on the challenges of recent events and it's not always easy to find things to be grateful for. However, studies suggest that finding things to be thankful for is important for our wellbeing, leading to physical and psychological benefits, as well as being a 'social glue' that connects people.

Assembly ideas

Materials required

Suitable stories and quotes

Step 1

The negativity bias

Has anyone ever heard the phrase 'it's the bad stuff that sticks'? Explain what this means - we have a tendency to focus on the negative rather than the positive. Explore how this is linked to a primitive need to be alert to danger in order to stay safe. However, in our daily lives this is not always helpful. When we over focus (become stuck) on the negative then this can affect how we feel about things, making us feel low or angry or anxious and then affect our behaviour and what we do.

[Live Different Moment - Negativity Bias](#)

or

[Character Education: Understanding Negativity Bias](#)

One way to counteract the negativity bias is to become aware of the things we can be grateful for.

But this can sound easier than it is. However, when we find things we are grateful for, no matter how small, this can help to change our focus and promote wellbeing.

Relate this to Thursday evening clapping for key workers. Encourage students to think about how this was not only a moment to stop and show gratitude in the middle of the crisis, but also brought people together and allowed them to feel connected.

E.g. became a kind of 'social glue' allowing connection even when we were physically distancing.

Step 2

What is gratitude?

Explore how gratitude is more than simply being polite or nice.

[The science of gratitude clip.](#)

Step 3

Changing your attitude to gratitude

Encourage pupils to think of gratitude like a 'muscle' which needs to be flexed to keep strong.

Remind pupils about studies linking gratitude and wellbeing.

Challenge pupils to exercise their 'gratitude muscle' and find things they are grateful for.



Theme 3:

Promoting Gratitude

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Gratitude Infographic

Look at a [gratitude infographic](#) and create your own.

Letters

Write a letter to someone who has inspired you. This could be someone living or dead or someone you have never met;

- Write as though you are addressing the person directly.
- What are you grateful to them for? Try to describe clearly what the person has done to make you grateful.

- Describe the difference this has made to you and how you are doing now because of this.

Gratitude Jars

Try keeping a gratitude jar in tutor groups or classes. Encourage students and teachers to write one thing they are thankful for each day. This can be something simple such as a nice cup of coffee or a sunny day, or can be for an act of kindness or the actions of a friend. These anonymous gratitude notes can be shared at the end of the week to explore the wide range of things we can find thanks for.

Mindful Gratitude Prompts

Take a quiet moment to consider gratitude using these prompts – or make some prompts of your own.

- I'm grateful for three things I hear
- I'm grateful for three things I see
- I'm grateful for three things I smell
- I'm grateful for three things I touch/feel
- I'm grateful for these three things I taste

Resources

Here are some suggested resources, take a look and decide which ones may be age appropriate for your pupils to prompt further discussion about gratitude.

Songs

Thankful – Kelly Clarkson
Grateful – Rita Ora
Thank You For Being A Friend – Cynthia Fee
Thank you - Sly and the family stone



Theme 4:

Promoting Connectedness

After some time away from each other, humans often have a strong desire to re-connect. Although many of your pupils may have stayed digitally connected with each other, they may have missed being part of a bigger class, year group and whole school community – as may you, as staff.

There is a large body of research on the central importance of social support and social groups in combating stress and overcoming adversity. Here are some ideas to help you and your school community to reconnect.

Assembly ideas

Resources needed:

- A poem about connectedness e.g. No Man is an Island (John Donne)
- [A 'good news story'](#) about how communities helped each other out during the lockdown.
- Music about connectedness, for example:

Lean On Me
– Bill Withers

I'll Get By With A
Little Help From My
Friends – The Beatles

Umbrella – Rhianna

Step 1

Read the poem and discuss its meaning.

Step 2

Show the good news story clip about how communities came together during lockdown and ask staff and students to add what they saw (in real life or online) that moved them.

Step 3

Ask for or suggest ideas about how you can keep the community feeling going now we are all back at school, e.g. having a random acts of kindness day once per half term where students and staff carry out a random act of kindness for somebody. This could include writing a lovely message on a board, leaving a treat on somebody's desk. If these are done anonymously it can feel even more special.

[How to Change the World With Kindness](#)

[The Science of Kindness](#)



Theme 4:

Promoting Connectedness

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Hold a 'Random Act of Kindness' day

Once per half term students and staff carry out a random act of kindness for somebody. This could include writing a lovely message on a board, leaving a treat on somebody's desk. If these are done anonymously it can feel even more special.

Create poems together

The poem *Alone* by Maya Angelou or *Everyone Sang* by Siegfried Sassoon could be read as an inspiration for

creating your own poems about connectedness and how this can uplift us. Create an acrostic poem from each of the letters in the words 'together again'.

Create together

Get each member of the school community to make something individually, for example paint on a pebble or tile, stitch a pattern on a small piece of cloth, draw on a piece of paper, take a photograph, make clay figures etc. Then combine individual efforts to make a form, year group, or whole

school display.

Sing together

Ask your pupils to research songs about connectedness and belonging e.g. *Lean on Me* - Bill Withers or *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* - The Hollies. Learn the words together and sing to other classes or year groups.





**“Thank you for everything.
I feel I’ve got my child back”**

Parent during coronavirus lockdown

Place2Be is a charity working with schools to improve the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Get in touch with us to find out more about what we do and how we can support your school community:



Visit place2be.org.uk



Email enquiries@place2be.org.uk



Call 0207 923 5500

Place2Be is a national charity working in England, Scotland and Wales.

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