

Lesson 1: New challenges

Key stage 4

This is the first in a series of four lessons for key stage 4 exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing, building on the key stage 3 lessons. This lesson examines challenges facing young people as they transition into key stage 4 and how to promote positive mental health to manage change, now and in the future. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.



Learning objective

Students will learn:

- about the challenges young people might face as they move through adolescence
- ways to promote positive mental health to help manage these challenges



Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify the range of opportunities and challenges young people might encounter as they move into adulthood
- explain strategies to help manage these challenges
- analyse how mental health and emotional wellbeing can change throughout life, often in response to external events



Climate for learning

Before teaching these lessons, ensure that you read the accompanying PSHE Association document [Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, handling questions, and additional advice relating to teaching about mental health effectively and safely.



Resources required

Box for anonymous questions



Post it notes



Resource 1: Transition poem



Resource 2: Challenges forum page



Resource 3: Celebrity lives



Resource 4: Then and now



Key words

Mental health, emotional wellbeing, wellness, support

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Introduction	Introduce ground rules and outline the objectives and outcomes	5min
2. Baseline assessment	Students read a poem about transition and identify common themes	5min
3. Identifying changes	Using post it notes, students identify the challenges and opportunities that can occur during the change to key stage 4	10min
4. Challenge forum	Students work in groups to offer advice on a wellbeing forum	15min
5. Celebrity stories	Students read about celebrities who have overcome challenges relating to their mental health and answer reflection questions	10min
6. Plenary and endpoint assessment	Students reflect on how their confidence in managing change has developed as a result of the lesson	5min
7. Signposting	Signpost students to sources of support for mental health issues	5min

Baseline assessment



Introduction

Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. Ensure students know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories. Remind students that they can ask anonymous questions using the question box/ask it basket throughout the lesson.

Explain that today's lesson will be looking at the challenges young people may face as they become adults, with a focus on transition to key stage 4, and the impact this may have on their mental health.



Baseline assessment activity



Project on the board, or give students copies of **Resource 1: Transition poem** and read it out, or ask a volunteer to read it to the class. In pairs ask students to discuss and annotate the poem identifying:

- How the author of the poem is feeling
- What the key concerns are that they are facing
- What other issues they might be worried about

Take feedback, gauging the extent to which the group can relate to the feelings expressed in the poem, and adjust lesson content if necessary.

Core activities



Identifying changes



Ask students to work in pairs to think of the changes that occur for young people when moving into key stage 4, and to write each idea onto a separate post-it note. Students should use one colour post-it note to indicate positive changes, and another colour to indicate negative changes. Remind students that these changes can be about school but might also include social, physical or emotional changes too.

Students are likely to identify:

Positive - more independence, new classes and subjects, can drop subjects you don't like, can go out with friends more independently, planning for the future, less supervision, more confident in who they are, etc.

Negative - Lessons are harder, more homework, more pressure about exams and grades, pressure to plan for the future (e.g. careers), relationship worries, body image concerns, concerns about alcohol/drugs, changing friendship groups, etc.

Develop this activity using the following questions:

- Why is change an important part of life?
- Which negative changes were the most common? Why do we think this is?
- What could school do to support young people during these changes?
- What support is available in school if someone is struggling to manage these changes?



Challenge forum



Working in groups, ask students to imagine that they are working for an online wellbeing forum, giving advice to young people on how to manage challenges. Give each group a different challenging scenario from **Resource 2: Challenges forum page** and ask them to write back to the character, giving them advice about what they could do to successfully manage their challenging circumstance.

Once completed, students share their response with others groups and exchange feedback. Pick up on key points through class discussion. In relation to the final scenario in particular, you may wish to share that developmental changes take place in teenage brains which cause them to push boundaries as they learn independence. While this is a natural process, it can lead to conflict and encourage risk-taking behaviours which could have serious consequences.

Support:



It may be helpful to model an appropriate response to a scenario before setting students this task, or collecting an ideas bank of solutions which could be recorded on the board.

Challenge



Ask students to reflect on other potential challenges (or changes) that might occur in a person's life and how they could cope with them. Examples might include; leaving home, going to university, first job, first break-up, etc.



Celebrity stories – overcoming challenge



Explain to students that everyone experiences challenges in their lives and that even as adults, times of change can be difficult to manage. Hand students **Resource 3: Celebrity lives**, which tells the stories of four celebrities who have experienced and overcome mental health concerns at various times in their lives.

Ask students to work in pairs to summarise:

- What mental health concern did the celebrity experience and how did it affect their lives?
- What contributed to them developing a mental health concern?
- What helped them to overcome or manage their mental health concern?
- What can we learn from these celebrities' experiences?

**When taking feedback from this activity, it is important to highlight to students that while sometimes mental health concerns can develop from specific life events (e.g. Prince Harry, Chrissy Teigan, Ariana Grande), issues like anxiety and depression can sometimes happen for no apparent reason (e.g. Zayn Malik). This can sometimes make it harder for people to seek help.*

Support:



Ask students to just focus on one or two celebrity stories, rather than working on all four.

Challenge



Ask students to identify common themes in all four of the celebrity stories.

Plenary/ Assessment of learning



Assessing progress & reflection

Revisit the baseline activity, using **Resource 1: Explain to an alien**. Ask students to make any additions or edits to their original responses with a different coloured pen to demonstrate what they have learnt. This can be kept as assessment evidence and used to inform future teaching.



Signposting support



Remind students that they can access support at home, and both in school (e.g. through their form tutor, head of year, or school nurse) and out of school, through local and national organisations. Explain to students that there are lots of different ways that young people can seek help from reputable organisations, including text-based support, digital chat support and online counselling, as well as face to face or via phone. Share the following websites and phone numbers with the students:

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Childline - www.childline.org.uk Phone: 0800 1111

Samaritans - www.samaritans.org Phone: 116 123

Shout - a 24-hour text service for someone experiencing a crisis and needing immediate help: 85258

**It may be necessary to lift the mood after this learning - ensure the lesson ends on a positive note, using a strategy of your choice (see accompanying PSHE Association document [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing p12](#)).*

Extension activity

Awareness campaign



Ask students to design a set of tips for managing change and transition to key stage 4 that could be shared with other students on the school website.

Ask students to write their own transition poem, exploring key themes and changes that they expect to occur at another time in their life e.g. first job, leaving for university, moving out, etc.