

# Chapter 1:

## Understanding myself and others

LO:

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2.6

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3.1

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4.1

4.2

4.3

4.4

Understanding ourselves and who we are takes a lifetime. As a species, humans thrive on interacting with others, so it is really useful to understand your own values and characteristics. It helps you to see why you are drawn to others – perhaps they share the same values as you or perhaps they have characteristics you would like to develop. Either way, understanding yourself better is always a positive thing.



### Chapter aims

1. To learn more about characteristics we value in ourselves and others.
2. To figure out who is in my relationship circles/Circles of Trust.
3. To understand the importance of setting goals.
4. To find out more about regulating my thoughts and emotions.
5. To consider the benefits of and difficulties with the online world.
6. To know more about healthy relationships.
7. To think about resilience and what it means to me.



Take your chosen avatar by the hand and travel through the chapter with them.

## 1. Understanding ourselves and those around us



In this section, we will continue the work you may have started in primary school regarding understanding who you are and those around you. As people we enjoy and thrive on interacting with each other. Other people provide strength, encouragement and support in our lives.

The characteristics (e.g. funny, kind, talkative) we see and value in others are also within ourselves, and this is what people see when they get to know us.

Many of the characteristics we use to describe other people are the ones we value within ourselves.



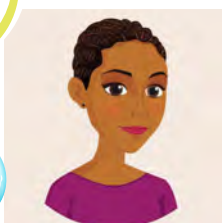
With your partner, discuss what you think each characteristic in the table below means. Tick any characteristic that you think is important. (Use a dictionary if there are any words on the list that you don't understand.)

Characteristics	Do I value these characteristics?
Bravery	
Integrity	
Curiosity	
Wisdom	
Honesty	
Kindness	
Creativity	
Being loving	
Fairness	
Leadership	
Having a sense of humour	
Humility	
Forgiving	
Hopeful	
Gratitude	
Spirituality	





## Activity 2



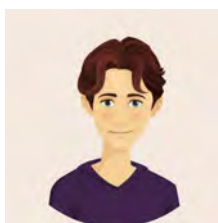
EYA



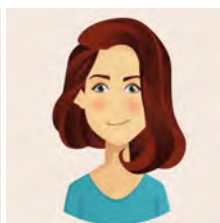
DARA



CAROLINE



BILL



ABBIE

Read again the description of each avatar on page 7 of this book. Choose one avatar to consider when you do this activity. When you look at the characteristics in the table on the previous page which ones do you think your avatar would have, which characteristics would they value and why?

(a) I think \_\_\_\_\_ would have the following characteristics:

\_\_\_\_\_

(b) They would value these characteristics because

\_\_\_\_\_

As we grow older, we start to value different characteristics in people, especially among our friends.

### Margin note:

**Reflection** is when you form an idea or opinion as a result of thinking carefully about it. It's not a 'kneejerk' reaction – it is when you consider something from all angles and then form your thoughts on it.

## Activity 3

This year you may have felt overwhelmed with the amount of information you received about your new school.

(a) In the table below list the things that you now know that you did not know when you started school.

Things I didn't know when I started school	Has knowing this helped me? Yes/No



(b) After filling in the table, do you notice how things change once we get used to a new idea? This is important to remember for school and also in everyday life.

\_\_\_\_\_



## Recognising personal strengths



**Jamie**

**Description:** Jamie is 13 years old and lives with his parents and two younger brothers. Jamie's family strongly believes that members of the family must show loyalty to the family at all times. One of Jamie's brothers was involved in a car accident when he was 4 years old. He now uses a wheelchair and needs to be cared for all the time as he cannot feed himself or get dressed.

**Insight:** Jamie spends a lot of his time at home helping his parents with his other brother who is 6 years old and loves to play with Jamie. Jamie finds it difficult to make friends as sometimes when he plans to go out, he cannot because his parents need help. In his old school other students made fun of him because of this. Jamie is very kind and considerate, he loves telling jokes and he is now learning Chinese. He is good at drawing and enjoys playing games on his Xbox when he has time.

**Needs:** School is ok for Jamie, but he wishes people knew more about what life is like for him with a family member who needs lots of extra care. Jamie would love to be a fashion designer.



**Caoimhe**

**Description:** Caoimhe is living with her granny as her mother is getting rehabilitation for her substance use problem. Caoimhe has not seen her father since she was three – she thinks he lives in France. Caoimhe has a really good relationship with her granny and loves living with her because her granny really looks after her. Caoimhe does not need

to cook or do her own laundry as her granny does it for her. Caoimhe loves baking. Every Saturday herself and her granny bake some cakes. Since her mother has been gone, Caoimhe has found that praying and practising meditation with her granny is very calming and helps her to feel less anxious. Caoimhe really values this time and will often not



meet up with her friends because she would rather do this.

**Insight:** Caoimhe often gets slagged in school about her mother; other students say nasty things about her. Caoimhe is conflicted by this because she sometimes thinks it is true, but she also feels she needs to defend her mother. If she does not, she feels guilty. Caoimhe has two best friends in school who often stand up for her, but Caoimhe wishes she would stand up for herself. She often feels excluded from her peer group because she doesn't live in a traditional family set-up.

**Needs:** Caoimhe is worried about what will happen when her mother comes out of rehab. Will she have to leave her granny's and live with her again? Caoimhe would really like to be a dog groomer when she leaves school.

**Description:** Joe is autistic and has been aware of this since third class in primary school. Joe is the eldest child in his family and likes to take responsibility for looking after his younger brother and sister. Joe spends all his spare time doing this. He doesn't need to do this but he wants to.



Joe

**Insight:** School can be difficult for Joe at times, especially when a classroom is noisy. He does not have many friends in school and sometimes feels very lonely. Joe was hoping secondary school would mean new friends but that hasn't happened yet.

**Needs:** Joe is very good at drawing and loves reading. He would really like to be an animator.



(a) What personal strengths do you think Jamie, Caoimhe and Joe have? List at least two for each person.

(b) How do they bring these strengths into their relationships?



(c) What kind of spiritual or religious beliefs are important to Jamie, Caoimhe and Joe? How do their beliefs affect their daily lives?

### Jamie

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Caoimhe

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Joe

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Relationships



Building relationships is something you have been doing since you were a baby. Your personal characteristics are key to the quality of these relationships. The relationship building began with your family and friends. You may have gone to childcare where you started to build relationships with staff and with other children. As you moved into primary school you may have started to make your own friends in the school yard, and you might have also gone to summer camps or to afterschool activities.





- (a) In the Circle of Trust below, write your name in the middle and then decide where you will put the following:

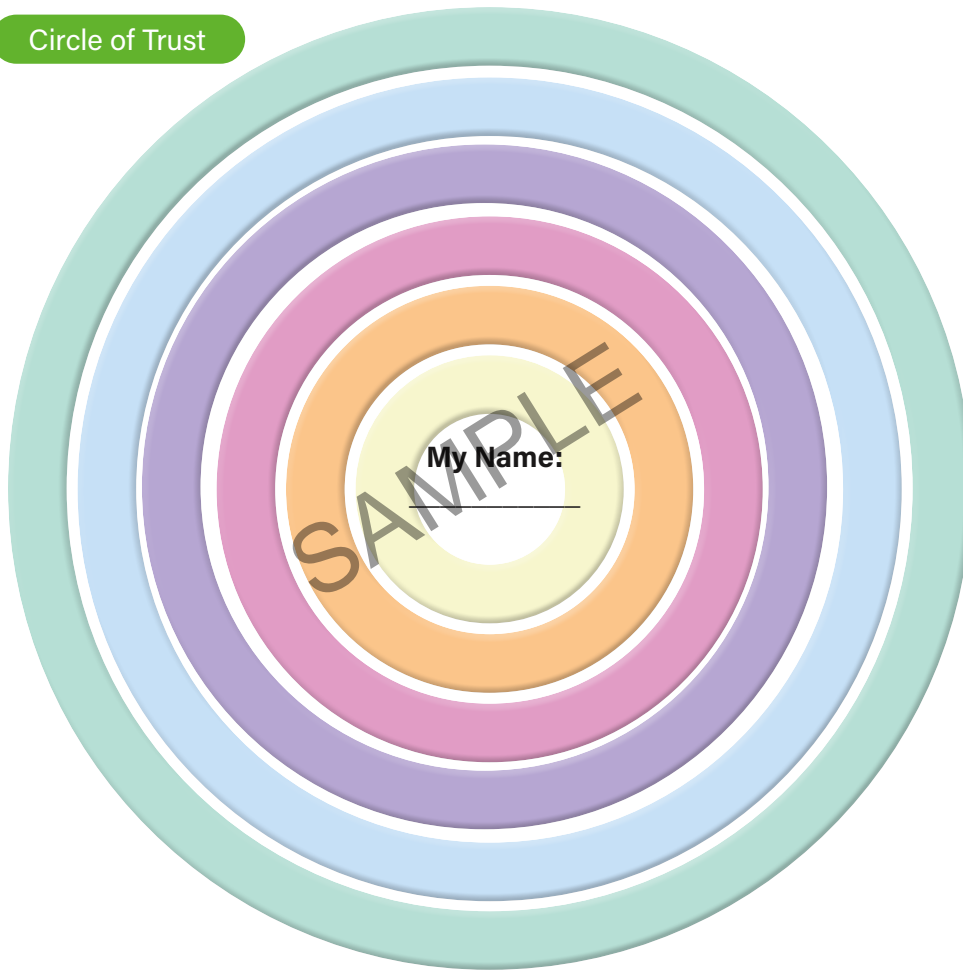
Friends   Acquaintances   Close family  
 Bullies   People we know   Wider family  
 Strangers   Professionals/Helpers  
 People online   Childminders

**Margin note:**

An **acquaintance** is someone you know slightly but not as a close friend, e.g. a local shopkeeper or a neighbour.

(Remember there are some people who are completely outside your Circle of Trust.)

**Circle of Trust**



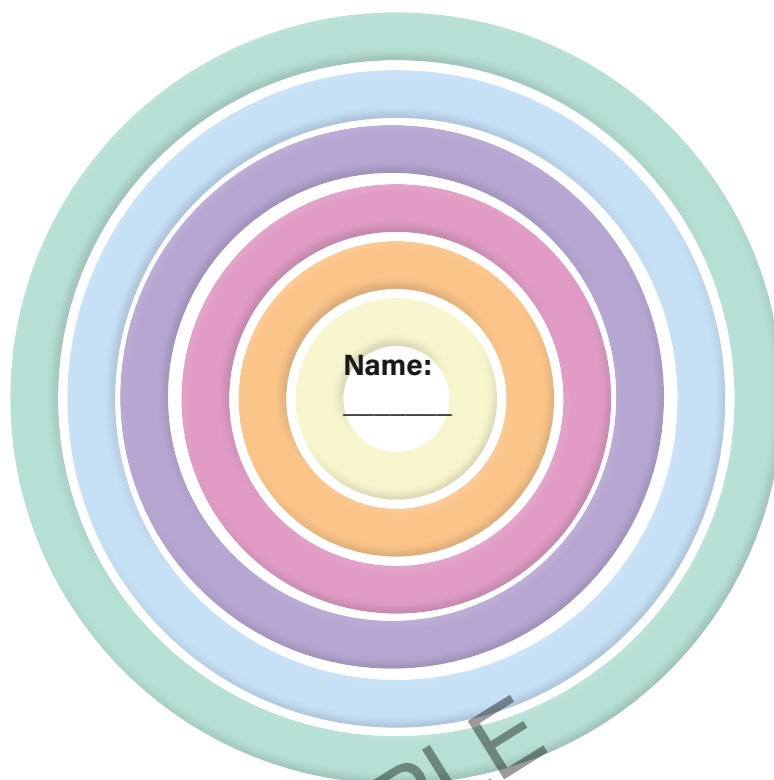
- (b) Who are the people outside your circle?

(i) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (ii) \_\_\_\_\_

- (c) I decided these people were outside my circle because

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Choose one of the three students from pages 14–15 and fill in their Circle of Trust.



(e) Look at your own Circle of Trust and that of the student you chose from pages 14–15. What are the similarities and what are the differences?

Similarities	Differences



(f) What advice would you give to yourself or your chosen student regarding their Circle of Trust?

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### 3. Healthy relationships



Throughout our lives we will develop many relationships. Some will be with family members, some with friends and others romantically. We will have relationships with people in school, with people we work with or share activities with, e.g. rugby, dancing, basketball etc. Relationships give us a sense of belonging and this is vital for our overall wellbeing. One of the most important parts of a relationship is how it makes us feel.



- (a) Think of a relationship you have with someone. It could be a friend or a family member etc. Write down the name of the person and the type of relationship you have with them:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) How does this relationship make you feel?

\_\_\_\_\_

- (c) What characteristics about the other person do you value/like? (You might find it useful to look at the list of characteristics on page 12.)

\_\_\_\_\_

- (d) Complete the sentence:

These values are important to me because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A healthy relationship will have some or all of the following:

- Trust
- Respect
- Equality
- Open communication
- Understanding
- Honesty
- Care
- Shared interests/values

#### Margin note:

**Traits** describe how someone behaves and thinks, e.g. kind, generous.

**Values** are the beliefs that guide a person's decisions, e.g. being helpful, being honest. See page 105 of Chapter 3 for more information on values.

If you had to pick four of the relationships traits listed above, which four would you decide on and why?

Relationship trait	Reason for choosing this trait

## When a relationship ends



Throughout our lives relationships will come to an end. Sometimes the relationship ends naturally. Sometimes you might end it and other times it is ended by the other person in the relationship. Our school friendships can sometimes come to a natural end when we move into secondary school or when we leave secondary school. A romantic relationship might come to an end because you no longer feel in love with this person or something might have happened to change how you feel about each other. Regardless of how the relationship ends, we may sometimes feel a sense of sadness, regret and loneliness; other times we might feel happy and content that the relationship has ended, especially if it was a toxic one.



Think of a friend you may have had before who is no longer your friend. Why did the friendship end and how did you feel when that happened?




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### Margin note:

A **toxic person** is anyone whose behaviour adds upset and distress to your life. Sometimes toxic people are trying to deal with stress and trauma. Their way of coping means they act in ways that often upset others.

## Toxic relationships

All relationships that you value should make you feel good about yourself. If a friendship starts to make you feel bad about yourself, you may need to consider the following:



(a) Read each row in the table below and answer Yes or No for each one.



	Yes/No
Does the person like you for who you are?	
Do you have fun together?	
Do you like spending time with them?	
Do they make you feel good about yourself?	
Are they there for you when you need them?	
Do you feel energised after spending time with them?	
Do you feel like they actually listen to you?	
Would you trust them with a secret?	
Do you know them as a person and not just for their likes and dislikes?	
Do they often drop you or change meet-ups at short notice?	



(b) Write some of the challenges young people might experience in a relationship.

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(c) Then write who or what healthy choices might help them during this time.

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(d) You and your partner can read your answers to each other and then discuss them.

### Toxic romantic relationships



If a relationship starts to make you unhappy it might be time to look a little closer at the relationship. Physical, emotional and sexual abuse can occur in a relationship. Emotional abuse is probably the most difficult to identify as this can be happening for a while before it impacts on your self-esteem and how you feel about yourself.

Some of the signs of a **coercive** relationship can at first appear to be someone who really cares about you and wants to be with you all the time. This is sometimes called **love bombing** and can include the following: Asking you where you are going, not liking your friend(s), ringing and texting you all the time, wanting to track your phone to see where you are.

A toxic relationship can also be violent. You might feel unheard and disrespected. You might feel pressured to do something you don't want to do.



If your friend was in such a relationship what advice would you give them? Discuss this with your partner.

**Remember:** This might be the same advice you need to give to yourself.

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#### Margin note:

To **coerce** means to use force or threats of force to get someone to do what you want.

#### Margin note:

[toointoyou.ie](http://toointoyou.ie) is a very good website for support if you or someone you know believes they are in a toxic relationship.

## 4. Goal-setting, self-control & managing emotions



Now that you have figured out your most valued characteristics and your circle of trust, you are in a very strong position to start to plan your near, medium and long-term future. As a first-year student you have adjusted to many changes since starting secondary school. Being in secondary school will take up a big part of your adolescence and your transition to becoming an independent person.

Being organised really helps our wellbeing and how we feel in situations. Often when we prepare or plan for something, we feel more confident about the outcome. This usually helps to reduce our anxiety (fear) levels in the run-up to the event.



- (a) In the table below list three things that you do now in preparation for school that you may not have done in primary school.

Three things I have to do each day in secondary school (during or after)	The steps I take to plan/prepare

- (b) When you look at the table above what is the one thing you do or have done that you are REALLY proud of. Write it on the certificate below.



### CERTIFICATE

I AM MOST PROUD OF

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BECAUSE

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THIS HAS REALLY SHOWN ME WHAT I CAN DO.

.....

DATE



.....

SIGNATURE



**Note:** Remember that there is no right or wrong answer here. You may be proud of beginning a new activity as it has made you feel fitter, or you may be proud of now knowing your way around your new school as it has made you feel less anxious about getting lost. These are just examples – you can choose whatever has made you feel proud of yourself, no matter how big or small an achievement.



(c) In small groups share what you have written down about how you have been managing yourself since starting secondary school.



(d) When I was doing this activity, I felt \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Something I need to improve on is: \_\_\_\_\_.  
 What one thing can I do today to start that improvement?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

This is goal-setting!

## Goal setting



Goal setting is a very important part of our wellbeing. It allows us to look forward and it also helps us to make plans. It builds **resilience** and we will learn more about this on pages 37–40. Our goals can be short term, medium term and long term.

We all have goals, but we don't always write them down. We might think about them and how to achieve them, e.g. packing my schoolbag after checking my timetable each day (short-term goal), drinking eight glasses of water each day (medium-term goal), entering a poetry competition (medium-term goal).

When we set goals for ourselves it is important to realise what is involved and what we need to do. If your goal is to be a space tourism agent, what plan do you need to put in place to achieve this? We need to plan for most events in our lives.

### Margin note:

**Resilience** means learning how to cope when things go wrong in life. Everyone's life will contain difficult events. We can learn how to 'bounce back' after we have worked through the stress and upset we may feel.



## GROW model

The GROW model can help you to set realistic goals for yourself.

The **G** in GROW stands for Goal so this is all about **naming your goal**.

The **R** in GROW refers to the **reality of the situation**, i.e. where you are at now.

The **O** in GROW refers to what **options** are available to you in achieving your goal. The options often help us realise how attainable (really possible to achieve) a goal is for us.

The **W** in GROW is the **way forward**. What plan can you put together to help you achieve this goal?

Let's put it into practice with an example...



- (a) **Scenario:** Jodie is 13 years old and very interested in astronomy. Astronomy is the study of everything in the universe beyond Earth's atmosphere, e.g. the sun, moon, planets and stars as well as objects, such as faraway galaxies, that we can only see with powerful telescopes. She would really like to share her interests with other young teenagers. Her parents have suggested she create a TikTok for this purpose. As Jodie's friend can you help her use the GROW model to plan for this?



	Action	Timeline
G		
R		
O		
W		

- (b) Now think of your own goals – what YOU might like to achieve, e.g. get on the basketball team, study for exams, make a new friend. Using the same template as you did for Jodie look at your goal using the GROW model too.

**Scenario:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



	Action	Timeline
G		
R		
O		
W		

**Note:** Take a photo of your GROW plan once you have filled it in. You can use it to reflect on the way forward and to check if it is working. Sometimes the way forward might change depending on our circumstances. Being able to adapt to a new situation is vital to keep a goal moving along.

- (c) In the space below, use illustrations or words to describe why goal setting is important for our lives and for our wellbeing.

SAMPLE

## 5. How to handle real life and online life

We now have two worlds to navigate in life: our real-life world and our online world. As you grow up, you may find more of your time is spent in the online world. It could even get to a stage where your online world interferes with your real-life world. If this happens, it is necessary to withdraw from the online world and engage again with the real-life world.

During the Covid pandemic the online world became even more important because it allowed people to engage and connect with other people through their devices. People were still able to feel that they belonged even though they may not have met anyone in the real-life world in weeks.



List four positive online activities people engaged in during the Covid pandemic.

(a)

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(b)

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(c)

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(d)

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### Margin note:

The **Internet** is a network that connects millions of computers worldwide.

### Margin note:

The **World Wide Web** contains websites and webpages.

## Benefits of our online world



## Difficulties with our online world

We have all become aware that the online world can have negative effects on us, leading to poor mental health for some people. You may be aware of some of these effects, but there are others you may not yet have heard about. Negative effects include:

### 1. Misleading information

In recent years misinformation (untrue information that is sometimes created in order to deceive others on purpose) has become widespread. It can spread very quickly. When reading or listening to information online or in the media, you should ask yourself if you think the source is trustworthy. Even if you do, it is worth checking other sources to see how the information is being presented elsewhere. The American presidential election in 2020 was an example of how some people believed information that was not true about the fairness of the election result.

#### Margin note:

**Remember:** Just because someone says something online, this does not mean it is true. And as with rumours, it is better not to repeat information if you are unsure of its truthfulness.

### 2. Bullying, trolls, stalkers

The online world has provided the ideal space for the bully to thrive in.



Write your answers to the following questions and then discuss your responses in small groups:

1. How has the online world provided the ideal place for the bully to thrive in?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is a troll? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is a stalker? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Pornographic and violent images

The Internet makes it very easy for anyone of any age to access pornographic material. Much of this contains violent or extreme images that do not represent what a real-life loving relationship looks like. Pornography creates unrealistic expectations for young people in relationships. Receiving inappropriate images can be depressive, confusing and overwhelming. However, being exposed to these images does not need to have a long-lasting impact if you can talk to someone you trust. It is essential to understand how to move your thoughts away from pornography and eventually forget the images you saw.



#### Signpost 1

Watch a useful video on [watchyourspace.ie/forever](https://www.watchyourspace.ie/forever). Other helpful sites are [webwise.ie](https://www.webwise.ie) and [thinkuknow.co.uk](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

#### Signpost 2

Coco's Law addresses the issue of sharing intimate online images of people under the age of 18. See page 118.





#### 4. Social isolation/wasting time.

Great connections with like-minded people can be made online but if it takes up too much of your time it comes at the price of ignoring your real-life connections with family and friends. It is these real-life connections which ultimately make humans happier.

#### Margin note:

**Internet gaming disorder** has been recognised by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) as a temporary disorder.

**5. Internet Addiction Disorder.** Some people unfortunately find it impossible to limit their online time and spend too much time on their device. It may be gaming, gambling, shopping or social media that is keeping them online. People, even those who believe they do *not* spend much time online, usually fail to accurately estimate how much time they spend just aimlessly scrolling through posts. Setting a time limit on your device is a good way of ensuring you are in control of your online activity.

#### Margin note:

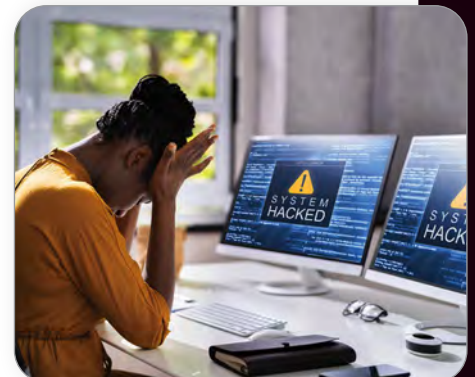
**Sedentary activities:** Activities that do not require any physical movement and that can be done while seated.

#### 6. Health concerns: focus and patience

People are spending more time doing sedentary activities because they are spending more time online. This can lead to weight gain and reduced fitness levels. Exercise is a key component of our overall wellbeing and sitting for long periods does not help our fitness levels. The instant nature of clicking has reduced our attention span. Our decreasing level of patience means we want everything instantly even though delayed gratification can contribute to our feeling of wellbeing. Spending more time on social media is linked to poorer sleep. There is a clear link between playing video games in the evening and not getting enough sleep.

**7. Cyber-crime,** such as hacking into computer systems to steal credit card and valuable personal information. Often the cyber-criminal wants to sell this information or use it themselves. Sometimes companies that have been hacked are held to ransom before the account can be made secure again (e.g. the HSE in 2020). In other cases, cyber-criminals use personal information to humiliate or embarrass someone and not for financial gain.

**8. Spam** is unwanted emails and text messages that we receive. Our personal details and information are valuable so there are companies who sell these details (with our consent) and this is often how we receive spam. When registering new accounts with websites, be careful about what you agree to.





Look back at the benefits and the difficulties of the online world listed on the previous pages. Pick three points from each and reflect on how these can impact a person's own sense of wellbeing.

## Benefits

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(d) Any benefit not listed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Difficulties

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(d) Any difficulty not listed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## How to share

Sharing images and personal information online has become an everyday occurrence. Keep in mind though that once you post something online, you can never get that information or image back. The Granny Rule is a good way to figure out if you should share something. If you wouldn't send it to or show it to your Granny, maybe you need to think about whether you should post the information or not.



### Margin note:

If you are under 18 and you are sharing intimate images of yourself or others, you are distributing child pornography and that is breaking the law. Did you know that even if you delete an image or a text from your phone it can still be found online?

**THINK BEFORE YOU POST!**



## Siobhan

Siobhan is 14 and has liked Zoe, a girl in her class, for a while. One evening she decided to take some photos of herself and send them to Zoe. Siobhan remembered something from SPHE class about not posting images but she could not remember exactly what the teacher said. Siobhan thought it would be ok.

Zoe was not happy to receive the images. She remembered what the SPHE teacher had said and was now afraid that she had child pornography images on her phone. Zoe was really stressed about this and was not sure what to do.

Siobhan started to get anxious when she did not get a response from Zoe to the images. Was she ugly? Was she too fat? Did she not show enough of her body? These thoughts kept coming back to her and she started to get very stressed and anxious.

'OMG what will I do? What if the photos are shared online? I can't go into school tomorrow.'

Meanwhile, Zoe decided to tell a trusted adult and they contacted the police. Zoe felt better as otherwise she would have worried about this all the time.

Siobhan saw two Gardaí arriving to her front door...



- (a) Finish the story and decide what happens next.

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- (b) How will Siobhan feel in school?

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- (c) What, in your opinion, will Siobhan's parents think?

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- (d) Do you think this will impact other areas of Siobhan's life?

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### Signpost

Siobhan will need to show resilience in this situation. We discuss resilience and what it means on page 37 of this chapter.

### Margin note:

A **digital footprint** is left behind when you browse the web, send emails, share videos and take part in social media apps and websites.

## My opinion



The online option of sharing what we think and feel takes only a few seconds to type and send.

What would happen if there was a **delay in sending** function on your device? Would this be beneficial?

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Teenagers often belong to the same groups online. Sometimes people can write and post hurtful comments or images about another person because they might think it is funny or they might feel jealous of this person. Remember when people write or post hurtful comments, this is bullying. The bully is not a very strong person at all. In fact we know that bullies are weak.



- (a) If something is posted online and it hurts you and you feel sad about this or feel angry, what do you think you can do?

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- (b) What are my options if I am part of a group in which someone is posting or saying nasty things about another person in our school?

- (i) 

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- (ii) 

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- (iii) 

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- (c) Discuss the consequences of each action with your partner.



### Signpost

Go to page 152-153 for useful tips on what to do and who you can contact if you or someone you know feels bullied.

## 6. Emotional wellbeing



Our emotional wellbeing is really important and it is something that will change during the course of our life depending on what is happening. Knowing when to seek emotional support is really important if we have a challenging situation in our lives or we are feeling sad.

When you are in a settled state of mind (i.e. not when you are in the middle of a challenging situation or feeling sad), it is a good idea to explore ways to support yourself during these inevitable times that occur in all of our lives. Everyone has different ways/things that can make them feel better. It is important to have healthy choices around this. During adolescence, young people can sometimes explore substance use as a way of coping with a challenging situation but in fact this will have the opposite impact and could result in a lifelong difficulty.

The choices we make during these challenging times are really important. It is helpful to know that you have a number of different activities that can help you during this time.





In the space below write down some of the challenges young people might experience and then write down who or what might help them during this time.

**Margin note:**

**Remember!** All our challenges will pass.

Challenge	Who I could talk to


**Signpost**

If you need help with a problem in your life, look back at your Circle of Trust on page 17 to see who you could talk to. Remember to consider if there is anyone in school you could talk to about the problem.

## Being able to control your emotions (self-regulation)



Our emotions play a huge part in how we react to situations. We can laugh, cry, shout etc. depending on a given situation and how we feel about it. Self-regulation is something we observe from the adults around us and how they respond to situations.

However as you grow as a teenager it is important to have a greater awareness about what makes you feel strong emotions. Throughout the day you will need to self-regulate many times, including sometimes when you are not even aware you are self-regulating! As adults we (mostly) become competent in this area and therefore not aware we are doing it unless it is a particularly challenging event.

The following situations require self-regulation from you as a teenager:

- You are asked a question in class and you don't know the answer.
- You do not get as good a mark in an assessment as you thought you would.
- You have to sit next to someone who was mean or bullied you in primary school.

Let's think about what type of self-regulation you need in each of these situations.

The development of self-regulation as a skill set is a complex but very worthwhile task. As a teenager you can learn how to better manage frustrations, stress and your thoughts.





## Ways to self-regulate

- Self-talk
- Exercise
- Talking
- Breathing

When a situation arises that we identify as difficult, we often must decide very quickly how to react. It is important to be aware of the immediate choice you are making and what are the implications of it. During this time focus on what helps you and not what will hinder you. Some of the biggest blockers for us can be our **own** thoughts and automatic impulses we have in a situation, possibly as a result of past experience.

Difficult situation → Decision point

Helpful thoughts

Unhelpful thoughts

**Note:** It is important to remember that other factors such as hunger, lack of exercise, lack of sleep and drug and alcohol use can affect our ability to self-regulate.

## Recognising our emotions

When we recognise the emotion we are feeling, it can help us to figure out how to respond to a situation in a helpful way. Managing strong feelings involves knowing the five parts of emotions.

### 5 parts of emotions

1

#### Thoughts

Our **thoughts** can be like stories that our mind tells us. These stories are repeated every time we feel a strong emotion. If you become familiar with these stories, it can help you to manage the strong emotion.

2

#### Urges

When you feel a strong desire to behave in a way that makes the emotion feel better, this is an **urge**. We do not bring on urges ourselves – they are created within us.

3

#### Behaviours

You may not remember how you felt after a particular situation, but you will remember how you **behaved**.

4

#### Feelings

It can be tricky to describe your **feelings** when you are experiencing a strong emotion. You might find it helpful to use a colour to describe your feeling (e.g. black, red) or an image in your mind (e.g. a cat raising its hackles, a fox hearing a hunting horn).

5

#### Body signals

It is important to pay attention to **how your body is feeling** when you experience a strong emotion. This is your mind trying to communicate with you. Paying attention to how you feel in your body can help you to understand your emotion. Body signals carry very important information about the environment you are in and if there is any threat to your safety. They are sometimes called your **gut instincts**.

### Ten skills of emotional self-regulation (being able to control ourselves)

Ten skills of emotional self-regulation that we need to master by the time we are adults.

1. Identifying **which** emotions you are feeling.
2. Identifying which emotions **someone else** is feeling.
3. The ability to **start and persist** in following your goal even when you feel anxious.
4. The ability to **tolerate awkwardness**.
5. The ability to have **intimate conversations** rather than stonewall, avoid them or flee them.
6. The ability **not to crumble** when someone is pressuring you.
7. The ability to **soothe** your own emotions.
8. The ability to **soothe other people's** emotions.
9. The ability to **not go over the top** with positive emotion.
10. The ability to **delay gratification**.

**Source:** *The Anxiety Toolkit* by Alice Boyes

#### Margin note:

Think of someone you admire who showed great self-regulation in a tricky situation.



- (a) From the list of emotional self-regulation skills above, pick two skills you feel you need to practise more.

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) I need to practise these skills more because

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- (c) I will practise these skills by

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Relationships and our feelings

Relationships are a very important part of our lives. We have lots of different relationships: our family, our friends, our teachers, our coaches, people we regularly meet in the shops or on the bus. These relationships give us a sense of belonging. This feeling that we belong is a very important part of us feeling well. It can make us satisfied or content with our lives. And it helps our physical and mental health.



Look at the three photographs below. Is there a sense of belonging in the images?



(a) With your partner, discuss how you can tell that these people feel they belong.



(b) In the table below, list where you belong and what it is about that place/these people that makes you feel you belong.

Where I belong	What makes me feel I belong there

(c) Create a checklist of activities a new student to your school could use to help them feel they belong more in the school.

Activity	Why this could make them feel they belong

## Resilience



To feel well and to handle the challenges we face in everyday life we need to have resilience or 'bounceability.' This is the ability to resolve or deal with a particular challenge, to move on and to feel good about ourselves.

The challenges we face in life can sometimes be big and other times small. It is important to remember we all respond differently to a situation depending on how we are feeling at a particular time. Some of the big challenges in life can be the death of a loved one, losing your job, breaking up with a partner, divorce, death of a pet. A smaller challenge could be something like forgetting to bring your phone to school. These are all challenges but our response to them is what helps us to cope.

Even when we feel ready to handle challenges, it's still better to have the support of friends and family. Look back at your Circle of Trust on page 17 to see who you could turn to for help in a tricky situation.



Think about all the topics we have discussed in this chapter. Your chosen avatar tells you that they are not settling into school and they feel left out. How could you support them?

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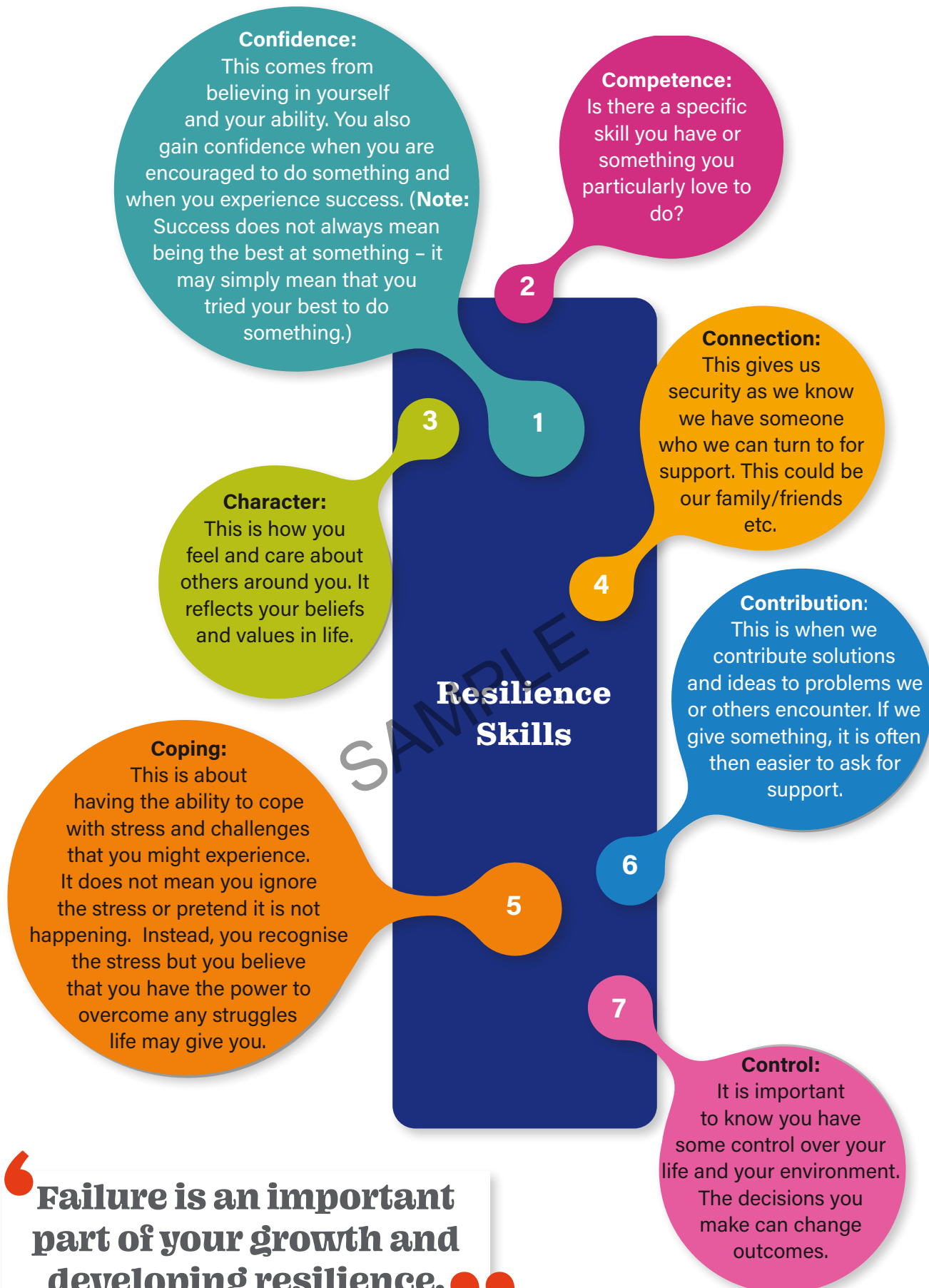
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One of the key messages in this section is to remember there are tough times in everyone's life. Some people experience them in childhood; other people might experience them as an adult. It doesn't matter when it happens. What matters is that you decide to move forward. It is about you deciding 'this has happened but I have the determination to move on.' This is easy to say but when it happens it can be more difficult. Often talking to other people or your One Good Adult can really help. (See page 149 for more about your One Good Adult.) Sometimes we can climb out of the pit ourselves, other times we need a helping hand. It is important to remember YOU WILL BE OK.





“**Failure is an important part of your growth and developing resilience.**”

Michelle Obama



## Building resilience



We are not born with resilience but we can develop it through a mindset shift, through healthy habits and through practice. As a baby you had to learn to walk, speak, feed yourself etc. With practice you learned to do all of these things. Likewise building resilience is something you need to practise and sometimes this can be through the conversations you have with yourself about a challenge.

### What to do?

You have forgotten your books for school. This could be a stressful situation. However you may decide: *It has happened. I can't change this. So I will tell my teacher that I forgot my books today but I will have them with me tomorrow.*

1. **Be proactive:** Take action immediately or as soon as you can. Don't let it grow and grow inside your head. In other words, don't overthink it. Ask yourself: What can I do now? How can I minimise the problem?
2. **Downtime:** As we know taking time out and resting is really important for our wellbeing. Getting enough sleep is particularly important – we can then think better as we have the energy to do so. Set aside time every day for yourself and do some reflection on your day, e.g. some meditation or listening to music.
3. **Mindset shift:** Often changing the way you think about adversity or problems you face can be the most important part of forming resilience. Sometimes when people face a problem or challenge they give up and do not try to resolve it; they think 'why me?' Instead of that question ask yourself: 'What can I learn from this challenging situation that might help me in the future?' Reframing the question makes you start looking for solutions and helps you grow stronger. Otherwise the response can lead to self-pity and you become stuck in a situation that you do not want to be in.
4. **Our relationships:** Building healthy relationships around us is important because we know we have someone to turn to when we need extra support. Having a connection with other people is vital to us as human beings. These relationships are also important when you achieve a goal. These are the people who cheer you on and celebrate with you.



“  
If you are depressed, you are living in the past.  
If you are anxious, you are living in the future.  
If you are at peace, you are living in the present.”  
Lao Zi

#### Margin note:

For more tips on resilience, search online for **youtube - resilience - byoh**



(a) What is in the image below?

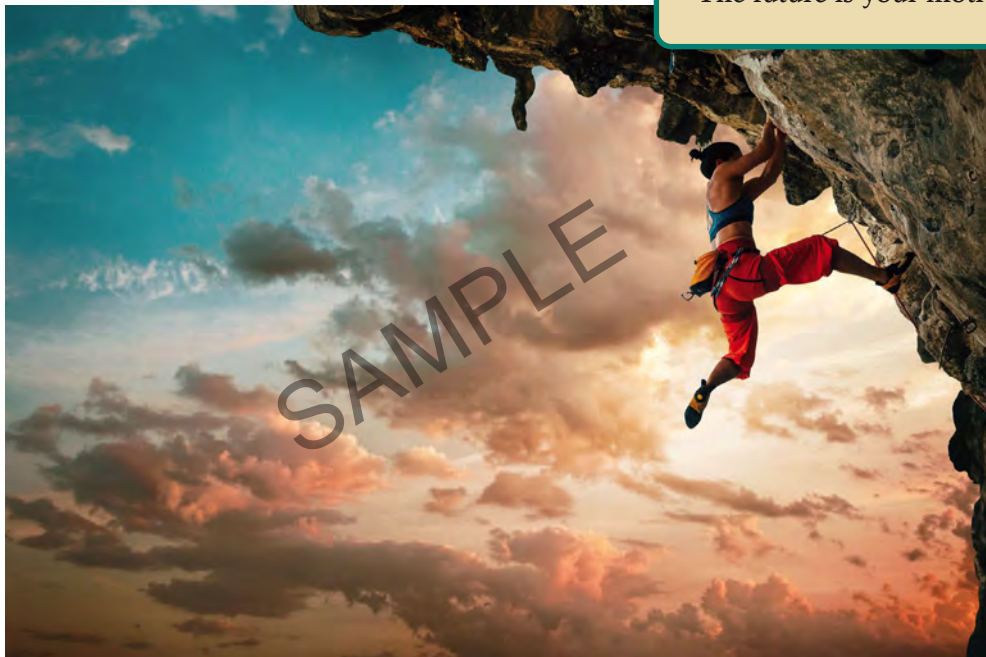
(b) How well do you think this image illustrates resilience?

(c) Collect images that you think are good at showing resilience.

(d) Create a class collage of all the images collected.

**Margin note:**

The past is your lesson.  
The present is your gift.  
The future is your motivation.



# QUESTIONS ON THIS CHAPTER

## 1. Where am I now ...

In **Chapter 1: Understanding myself and others** you have looked at a lot of issues. In the table below, mark how you feel about the topics covered.

Issues covered in Chapter 1	I understand	I somewhat understand	I need more time to understand	CBA ideas for 2nd/3rd Year
Characteristics we value in ourselves and in others				
Getting to know my new school				
Who is in my circles of trust				
What is a healthy relationship				
When a relationship comes to an end				
Toxic relationships				
Relationships and a sense of belonging				
Setting goals				
The GROW model				
Regulating my thoughts and emotions				
Benefits of our online world				
Difficulties with our online world				
Sharing intimate images				
Understanding resilience				
7 resilience skills				
Resilience basics				

# QUESTIONS ON THIS CHAPTER



## 2. Empathy map

This is an empathy exercise. Empathy is where we try to really understand what another person is feeling. By doing this we can develop an emotional connection with them and perhaps help to figure out what they should do next, in this case in relation to understanding themselves better, as well as those around them.



Read the sample empathy map below. Then fill in the blank empathy map on the next page for your chosen avatar.

### Margin note:

**Empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

## Sample Empathy Map



**Chosen avatar:** Abbie

**Issue:** She has made friends with some new people online. She doesn't really know them and they are being a bit weird.

### HEAR

**What friends say:** Lucky you! You have new friends – they seem exciting.

**What family say:** They don't know about these online friends so they don't say anything. They think Abbie should stop being online so much.

**What influencers say:** Make as many friends as you can – YOLO!

### THINK AND FEEL

**What really matters:** Abbie having new friends.

**Worries/dreams:** That these new friends might not be as nice as her real friends. These new friends have started asking her personal stuff Abbie feels she must keep meeting them online or they might get mad at her.

### SEE

**What really matters:** These new friends are different from her real-life friends.

**Worries/dreams:** She is not sure about these online friends – they keep asking her when will she be on her own at home.

### SAY AND DO

**Appearance:** Tired from being online through the night!!

**Attitude in school:** Lack of focus because of being tired.

**Behaviours:** Convinced that she must keep meeting her new friends online or they will get mad with her.

Pains	Gains
<b>Fears:</b> That these new friends might not be what they seem to be.	<b>Wants:</b> Having new friends.
<b>Frustrations:</b> Abbie is not sure how to stop linking in with these new friends.	<b>Needs:</b> Someone to help her deal with new friends.
<b>Obstacles:</b> She is not sure of her next step.	<b>Measure of success:</b> Being more sensible/clued-in when linking with strangers online.
	<b>Goals:</b> Learning how to be safer online – how to check whether you can trust people you meet online or not.

# QUESTIONS ON THIS CHAPTER



Chosen Avatar: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Choose any of the 5 avatars from page 7.)

Issue from Chapter 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Look at page 41 for a list of topics in Chapter 1.)

## HEAR

Notes

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## THINK AND FEEL

Notes

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## SEE

Notes

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## SAY AND DO

Notes

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Pains	Gains



## QUESTIONS ON THIS CHAPTER



### 3. Reframing a problem

Sometimes we need to reframe a problem so that we can figure out a solution to it. If you get stuck in negative thinking, try considering the problem from another angle. Read the example below.

#### Example:

Leo, a 12-year-old boy who is shy, finds making friends in his new secondary school really hard. He is a very enthusiastic gamer and has many friends online from all over the world. He is one of the best at Minecraft.

If Leo could connect with other gamers in his new school in person, he could share his skills and ideas.



Now choose one of the five avatars on page 7.

Think about a need they are likely to have in relation to any of the topics raised in this chapter. (Look back to page 41 for a list of topics covered in this chapter.)

Then consider the following questions and answer them on behalf of your avatar:

(a) I chose \_\_\_\_\_ (*avatar's name*).

(b) I think one of their needs is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(c) It would make a positive difference to their life if \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_