

START!

BACK TO SCHOOL

A HANDBOOK TO SUPPORT YOUNG
PEOPLE RETURNING TO SCHOOL

PRIORITY 1-54

STRESS ZONES

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Priority 1-54 is proud to have created this resource. We invite professionals, teachers, parents and carers and most importantly young people, to share their comments and feedback on how we can improve the design and content. Please email John Khan at: john.khan@priority154.com with any feedback you might have.

If you would like to include this handbook in your organisation's and school's core curriculum, we ask that you contact John to discuss this in the first instance.

We have produced a range of urban artwork to support this resource which can be downloaded from our website: www.priority154.com

TOP TIPS FOR GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

We know while some young people will have been looking forward to going back to school, others will not have. The changes brought about because of the Coronavirus may have left you feeling strange. So here's a few top tips for going back to school.

TIP 1 BE PREPARED

Make sure they're prepared for and understand what's different about being back at school. Talk about how things have changed - like class sizes, social distancing and whether they are able to see all their friends.

TIP 2 RE-ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Routines can be reassuring. Try to get into the swing of what worked before as far as possible such as sleep and healthy eating, or think about new routines that will work better for the situation as it is now.

TIP 3 RECONNECT WITH FRIENDS

Did they see or keep in touch with friends during lockdown? You might be worried friendships might have changed. Even if you did stay in touch, think about things that can help you reconnect now you're back in school. For example, walking to school together.

TIP 4 FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES

Remember the current situation will not last forever and that any negative feelings should pass. Try and focus on the things you can control rather than on the things you can't.

TIP 5 YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

It's important to make sure you look after your own mental health and wellbeing. It's completely normal to be worried or scared during difficult times, and feeling this way is nothing to be embarrassed about. Try to recognise and acknowledge when you're feeling low or overwhelmed.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to our **START** Back to School handbook. This handbook has been designed to help young people who might be moving up to secondary school or returning school after lockdown

Our world has changed a lot since the outbreak of the Coronavirus and lockdown. Sometimes change can be exciting, whilst at other times, change can be challenging and scary. All of these feelings are absolutely normal.

All the activities in this handbook have been chosen to help put your mind at ease and allow you to feel more in control of certain situations you might be worried or anxious about. For example, we know lots of young people are worried about how they will adjust to being back at school and reconnecting with friends and teacher.

Whatever your situation, this handbook will help you to:

- Know yourself and your strengths
- Think how school life might be organised differently
- Know how to manage big emotions and work through any worries you might have about returning or adjusting to school life
- Know who to ask for support

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

You can complete this handbook by yourself or with your parent or carer if you are still home learning.

Follow the instructions for each activity. To complete the activities, you will need a pen or a pencil, colouring pens, glue and scissors which you will find in your pack.

There is a page at the back of the handbook for your notes and sketches. Most of all, we hope you have fun.

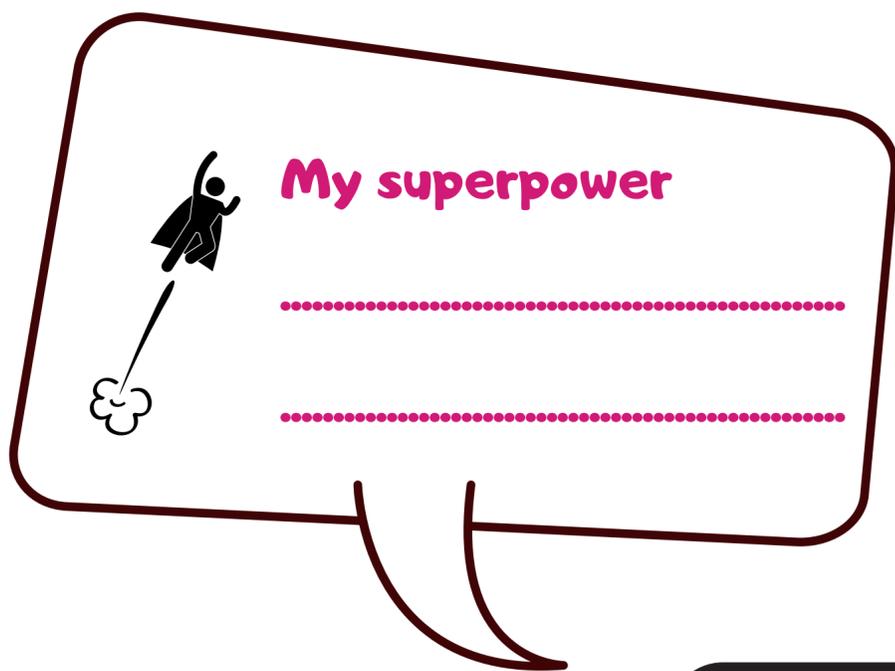
**"You are braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem and smarter
than you know" Christopher Robbin**

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME, ME, ME

Moving or returning to school will involve getting to know new people or reconnecting with existing friends. So it's important that you know who you are, what you like and what you believe in.

What do I do: Write your name and then complete the statements inside each of the different speech bubbles.

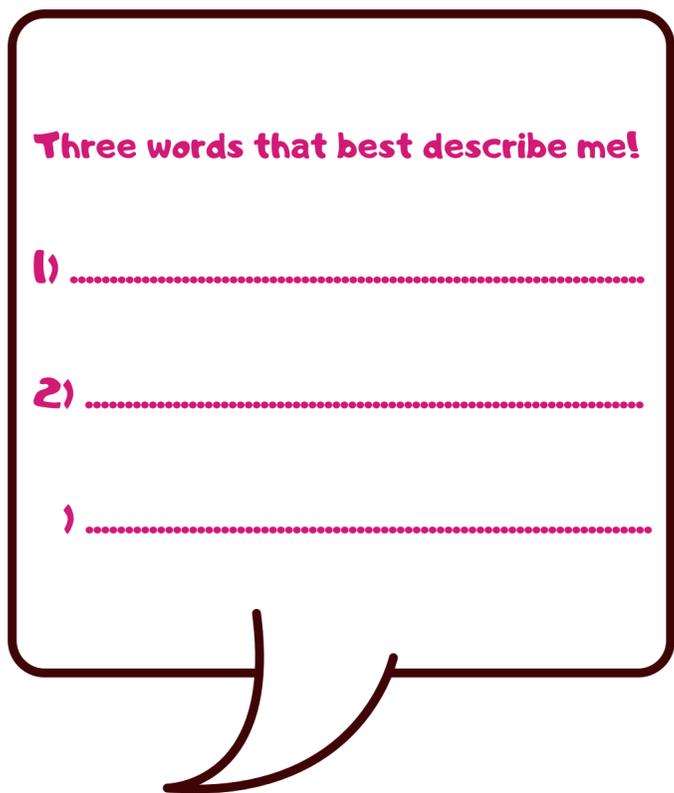
Name:



My superpower

.....

.....

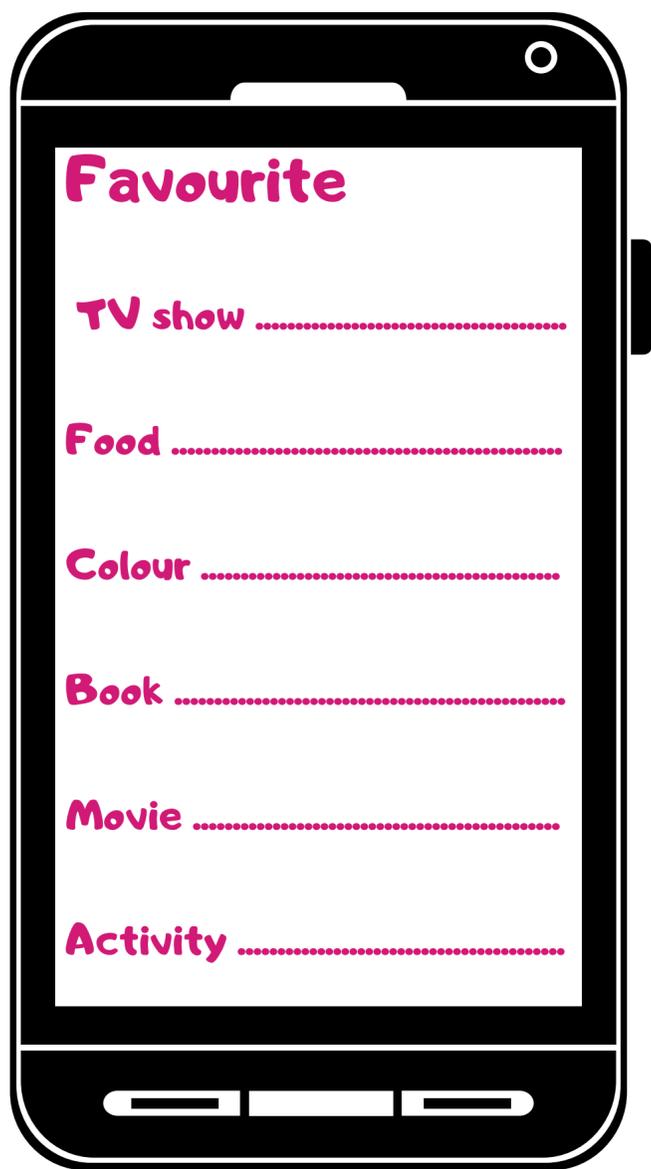


Three words that best describe me!

1)

2)

3)



Favourite

TV show

Food

Colour

Book

Movie

Activity

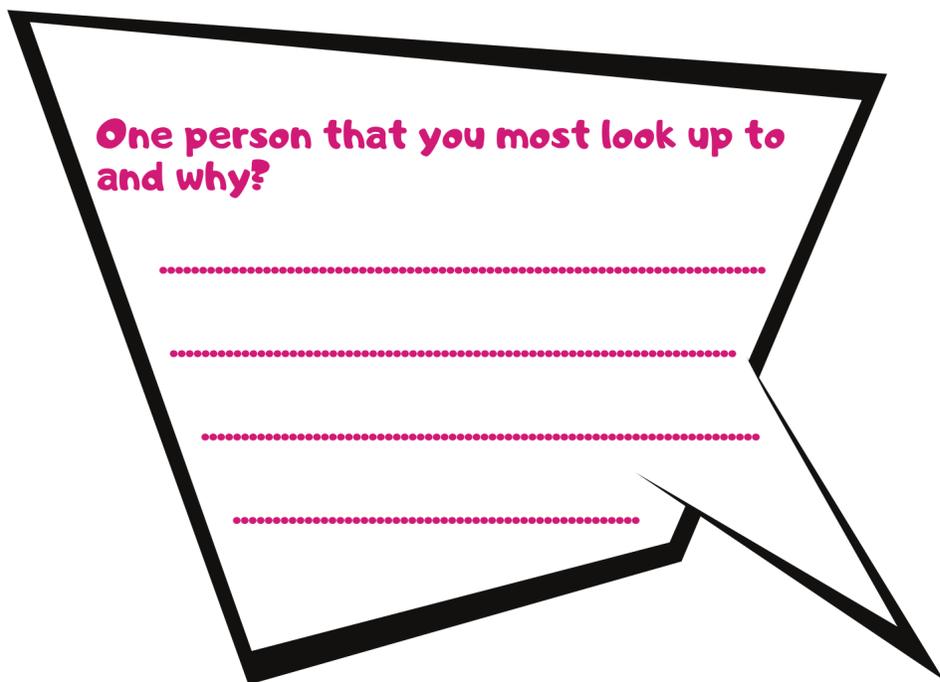


My Perfect day

In the morning, I would

In the afternoon, I would

At night, I would



One person that you most look up to and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEALING WITH BIG EMOTIONS

Our feelings are a normal part of our body. Positive feelings like happiness and confidence, or negative ones like anger or worry, work to keep us safe and are totally normal.

During lockdown, you may have been feeling all kinds of unusual or weird feelings that you may not be used to, or you may have coped really well.

What do I do: Circle all the feelings that you have experienced during lockdown, you might want to also add some of your own. Then underline the 3 that you felt most often.



FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL?

Going to a new secondary school or returning to school after lockdown can bring up a lot of feelings and thoughts, some good and some not so good. Knowing how you feel and being able to tell someone how you feel is important.

What do I do: For this activity you are going to need Resource One, which you'll find at the back of this handbook, scissors and a glue stick. Resource One is a list of all the feelings you might have about when moving or returning to school. Start by cutting out all of the words that best describe how you're feeling about school and then glue them in the thought cloud below.



"When you are feeling worried, remember you are still you. You are not your worry" Deanne Repich

WHEN WE WORRY TOO MUCH

It's absolutely normal for young people to worry about moving to a new school or returning if they been out of school for some time. However, when we worry too much it might start to affect your behaviour in school or at home, your grades and prevent you from doing things that you might want to do.

REFLECTION

Using the scale below from 0-10 1 being calm and 10 very worried, can you say how worried you are about school?



"It makes no sense to worry about things you have no control over because there's nothing you can do about them, and why worry about things you do control? Wayne Dyer

MY WORRY TRIGGERS

A worry trigger is something that might happen that can make you feel scared or nervous. For example, some young people might be worried about changes in their routine, going back to school, being bullied, their friendships or sitting a test.

What do I do: Go through this list below and on a scale of 1-10, identify how worried each of the triggers makes you feel. Are there things that trigger your worries? If so, write these down.



Calm

A little worried

Worried

Very worried

Working as part of a group ..

Being at school ..

Social distancing at school ..

Being in wide open spaces ..

Being around lots of people ..

Making new friends ..

Things not going the way I planned ..

Watching the news ..

Answering questions in class ..

Not feeling prepared ..

Loud noises or raised voices ..

School work..

Having to change my routine ..

Thinking about school ..

Being in tight spaces like a lift ..

Bullying at school ..

Being around certain people ..

Family problems ..

Other people's expectations of me ..

Having too much to do ..

Changes to my body or weight ..

Rumours about me being spread at school ..

Feeling left out by my friendship group ..

Having to make decisions ..

MY EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Early warning signs are feelings we get in our bodies that tell us we are feeling unsafe, worried or scared and something might be wrong. It's important we learn to listen to them before our worries or fears get out of control.

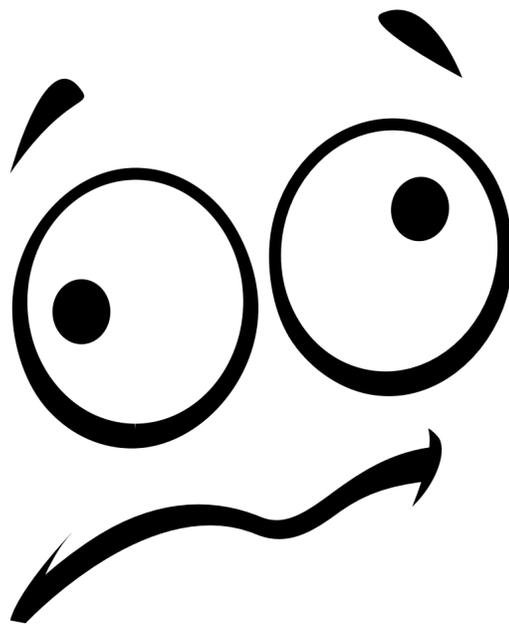
What do I do: Circle or colour in the warning signs that let you know that you're starting to feel worried or anxious.

Feeling sick

Shaky hands

Sweaty palms

Hard to sit still



Heart beats faster

Hard to breath

Loud thoughts

Unable to focus

Wanting to run away

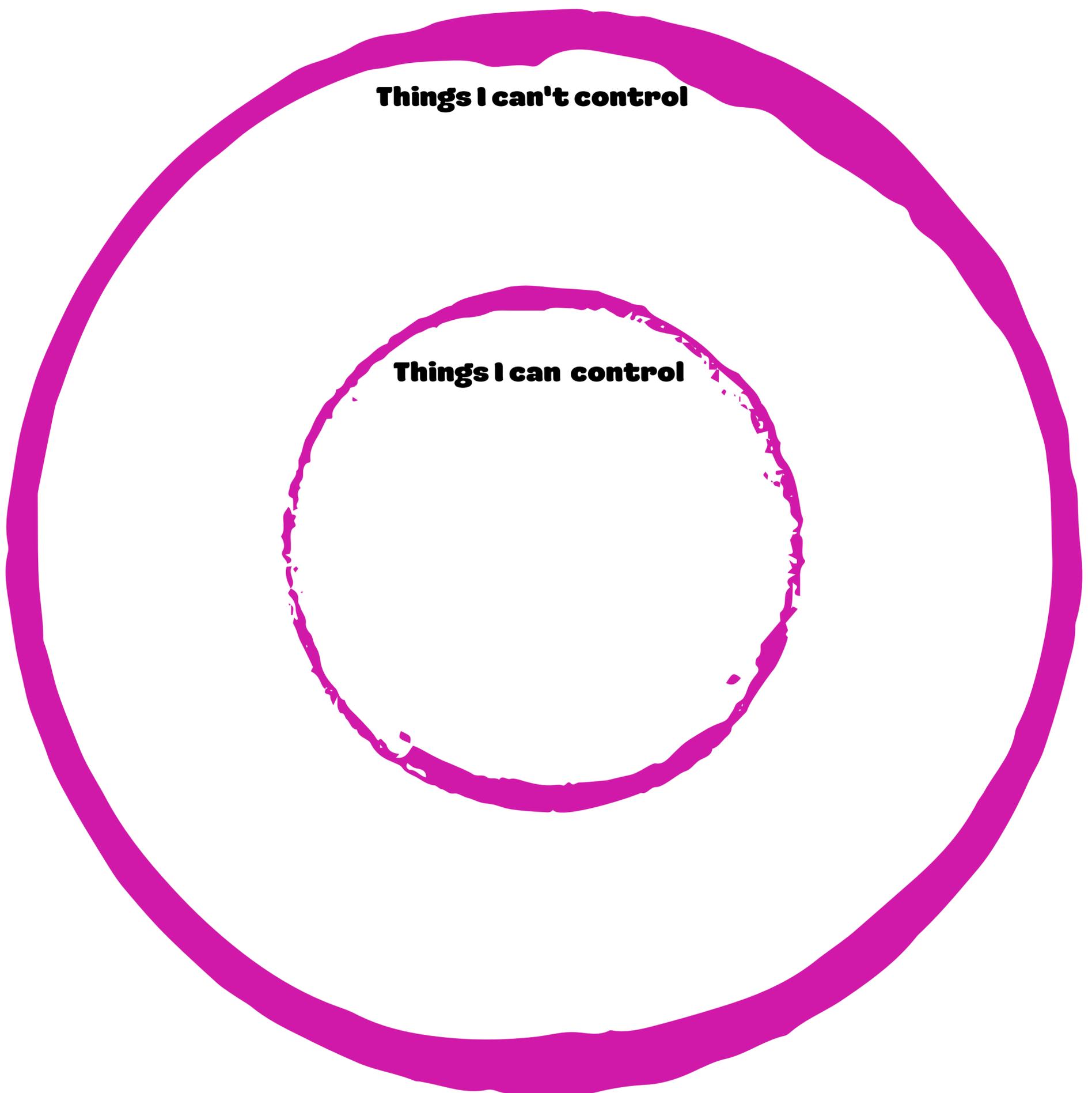
Face and neck feel hot

List any others you might have experienced.

MY BUBBLE OF CONTROL

Sometimes you might get upset or worried about things that are completely outside of your control. This next activity will help you identify the difference between things you can control and things you can't control. By learning to do this you can begin to cope with strong emotions such as anxiety.

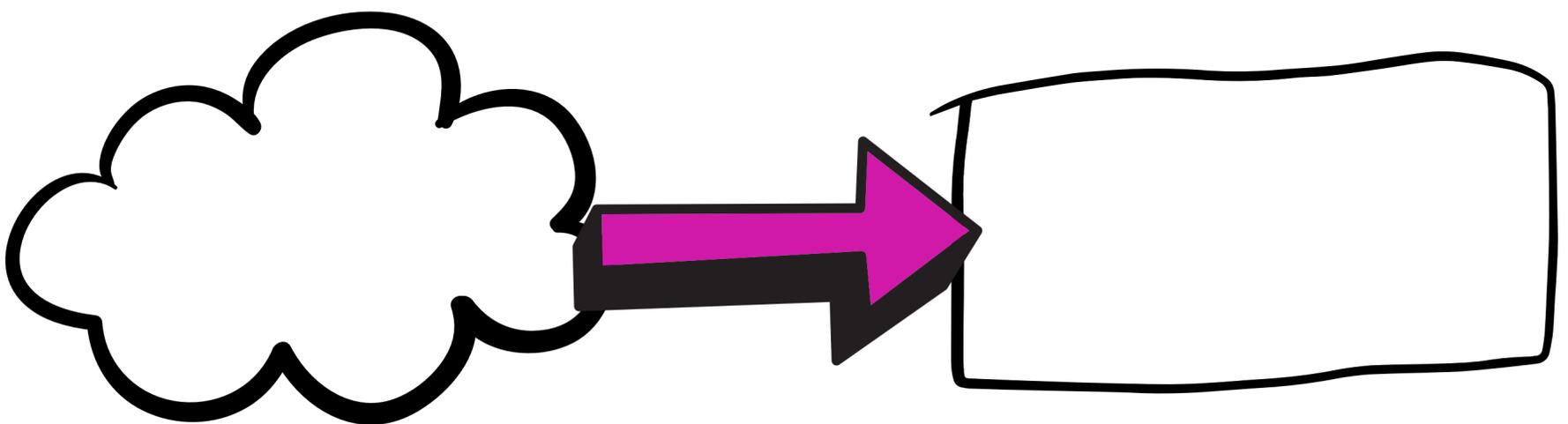
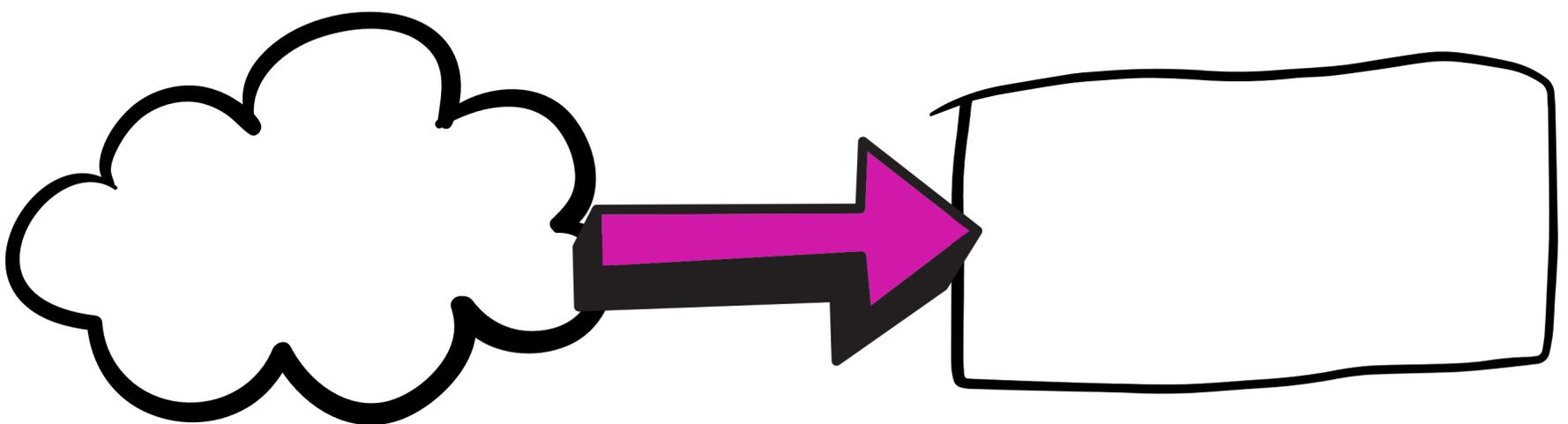
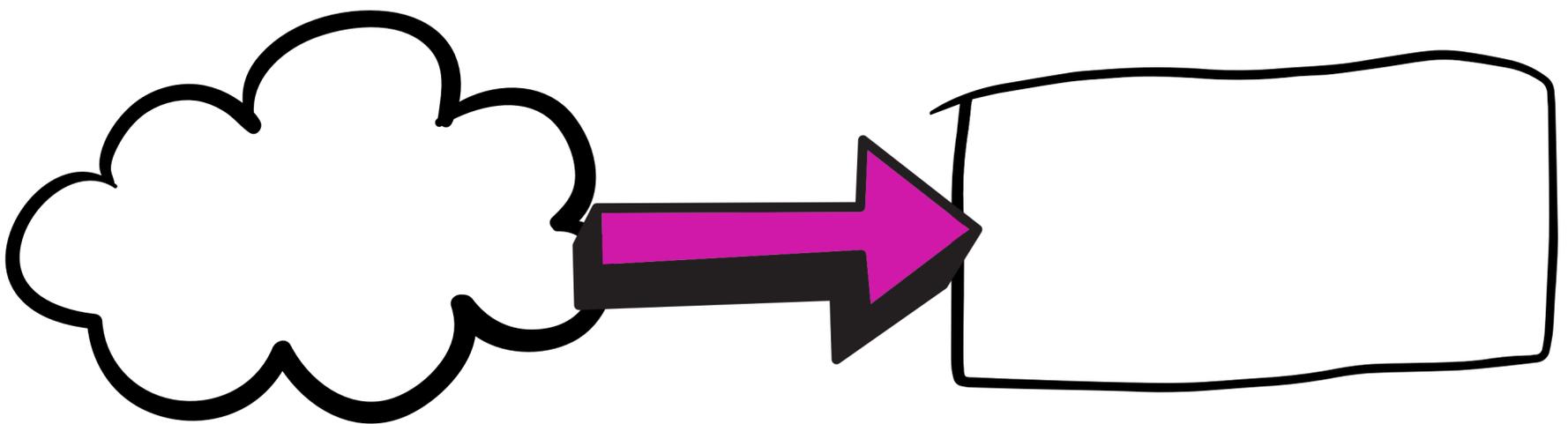
What do I do: For this activity you are going to need Resource Two, scissors and a glue stick. Resource Two is a list of things you can and can't control. Cut out each statement and then glue them in either the inner circle i.e. the things you can control or outer circle i.e. the things you can't control.



FACT OR FICTIONS

Whenever you get worried or anxious your mind might begin to race with thoughts that aren't always true. Worrying thoughts are nearly always based on the worse possible outcome. These types of thoughts can often lead you to believe that things are much worse than they actually are and that you might not be able to cope.

What do I do: In the thought cloud write a worrying thought you might have had or might be currently experiencing. Now try and challenge those thoughts by identifying what actually is true about the situation.



Why would you live your life worrying about something that's not going to happen? Bill Parcells

A SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH

Lets start by thinking about something that worries you about moving or returning to school. What is the worry?

.....

HOW WORRIED ARE YOU?

Using the scale below from 0-10, can you say how worried you are?



Can you think of a time when you have been worried before? Write this down.

.....

What helped you to feel less worried that time?

.....

Now thinking about your worry about school. What would help you to feel less worried, even if it's by just by one point on the scale?

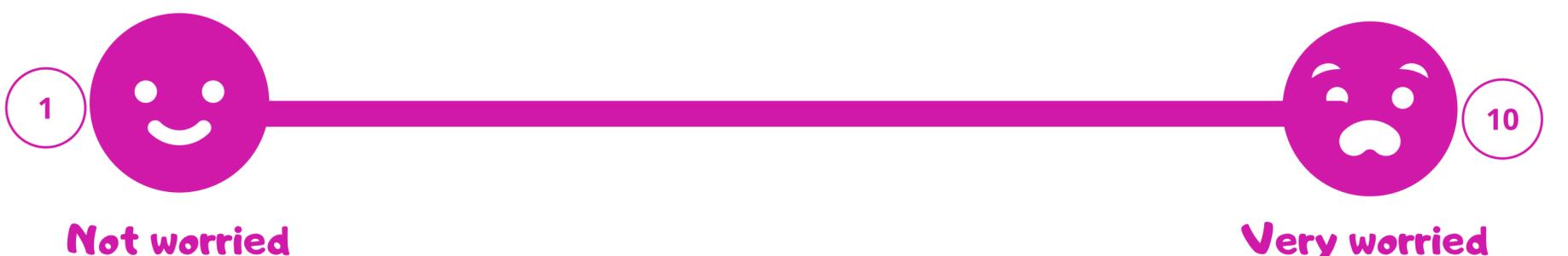
.....

Can you say what will have changed so you know you are less worried?

.....

REFLECTION

Using the scale below from 0-10, can you say how you feel now about your worry?



LET'S TRY IT AGAIN

It may be you've got more than one worry. So let's try it again.

What is the worry?

HOW WORRIED ARE YOU?

Using the scale below from 0-10, can you say how worried you are?



Now thinking about your worry about school. What would help you to feel less worried, even if it's by just by one point?

.....

Can you say what will have changed so you know you are less worried?

.....

REFLECTION

Using the scale below from 0-10, can you say how you feel now about your worry?



"There's always going to be somebody who takes a dislike to you and you can't waste time worrying about it" Paula Radcliffe

MY COPING SKILLS CHECKLIST

A coping skill is the way that you choose to respond to your feelings of stress, worry, anxiety, and other emotions. There are two types of coping skills - healthy and unhealthy. Let's start by focusing on your healthy coping skills.

HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

A healthy coping skills is a way of coping that doesn't harm you or other people physically or emotionally and doesn't lead to negative consequence. Tick the ones you do now, circle the ones you might want to try and cross off the ones that don't work.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking time out | <input type="checkbox"/> Going for walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going for a walk | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming or screen time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing or painting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing yoga | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing your feelings | <input type="checkbox"/> Resolving the problem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Block out noises | <input type="checkbox"/> Drink some water | <input type="checkbox"/> Counting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Think of your favourite place | <input type="checkbox"/> Remember the words to your favourite song | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a trusted adult | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting the right amount of sleep | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a mindful walk | <input type="checkbox"/> Hang out with your friends | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Start a new hobby | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk kindly to yourself | |



UNHEALTHY COPING SKILLS

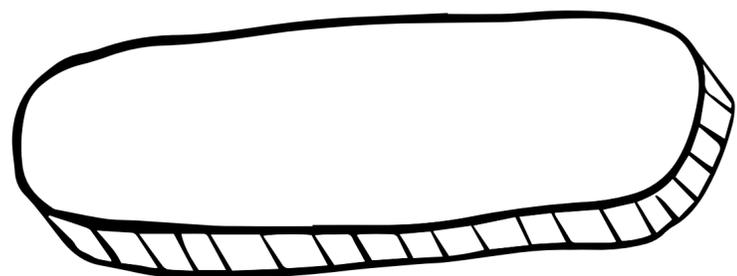
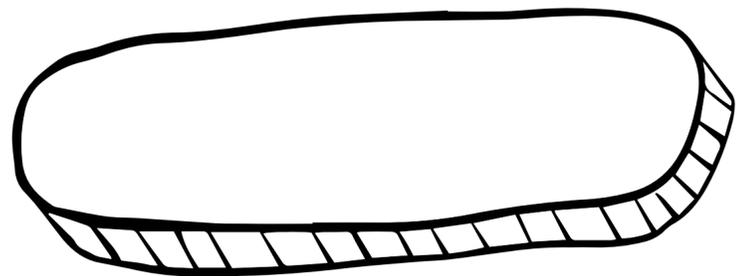
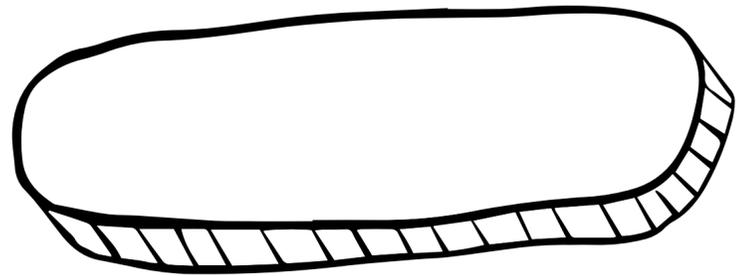
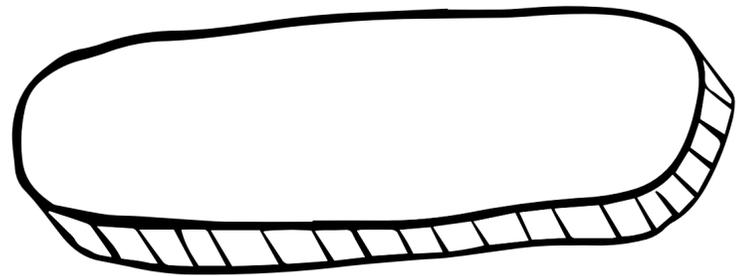
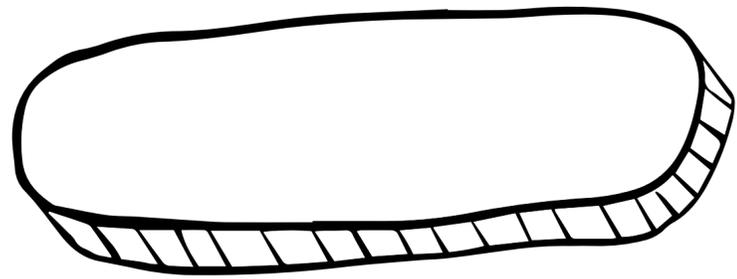
An unhealthy coping skills might make you feel better in the moment but can lead to negative consequences and can be harmful to you and others.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being unkind to others | <input type="checkbox"/> Shutting down | <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding the problem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Pretending not to care | <input type="checkbox"/> Blaming others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being unkind to yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> Sending unkind social media posts | |

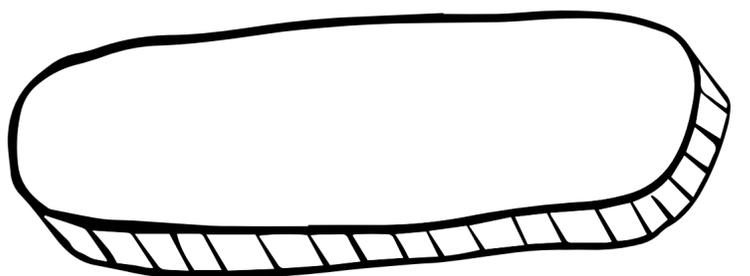
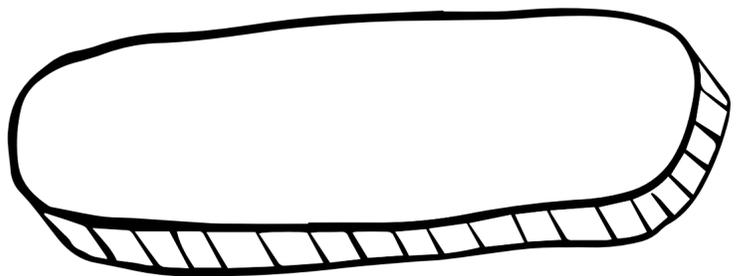
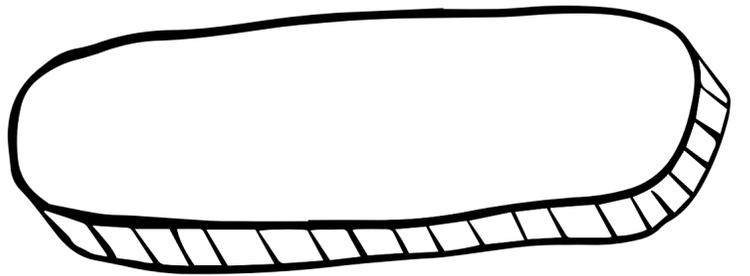
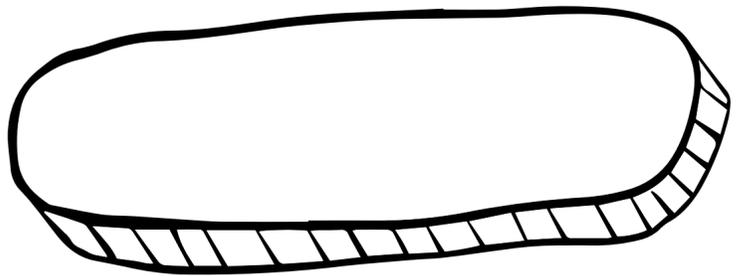
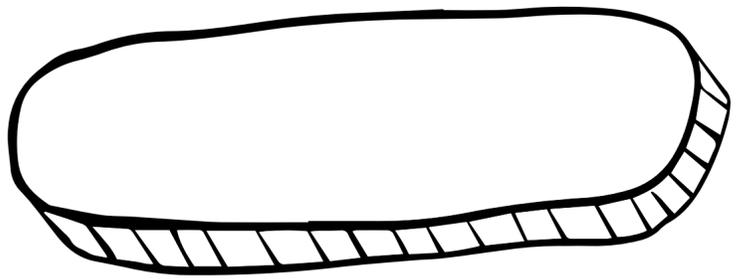
TRIGGERS AND COPING SKILLS

Write down your top 5 worry triggers and then identify 5 healthy coping skills.

WORRY TRIGGERS



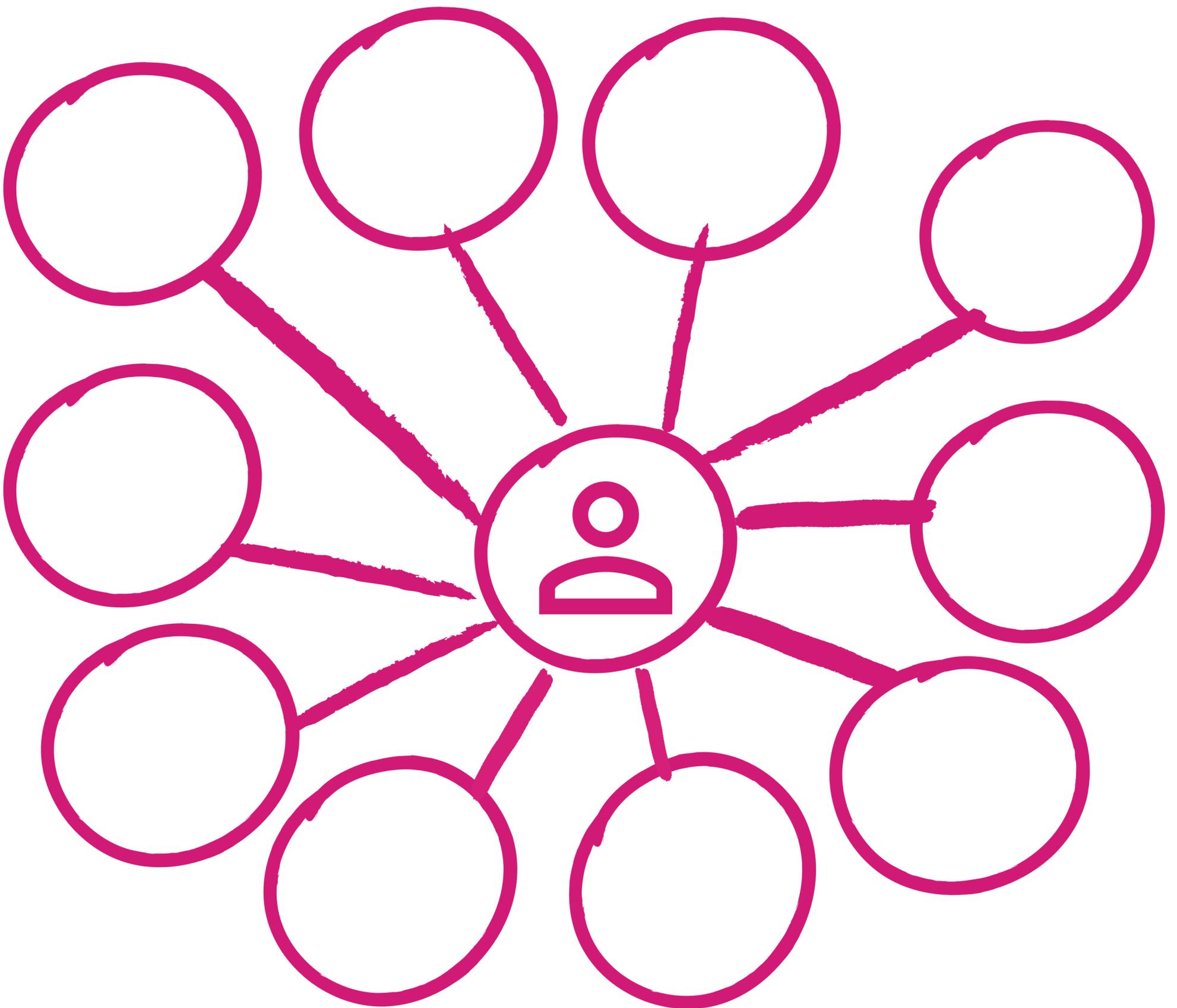
COPING SKILLS



MY FAMILY/MY TEAM

Knowing who to turn to support in and outside of school can be really useful.

What to do: Map your family/team mentioning all the important people in it who you might turn to for support. Start with family members then add other trusted adults who look out for you e.g. teachers or sports coach.



RESOURCE ONE: FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOLS

Nervous

Happy

Proud

Worried

Scared

Sad

Mixed Confident

Brave

Excited

Inspired Courageous

Trapped

Lost Isolated

Bored

Uncertain

Angry Overwhelmed

Determined

Relaxed

Calm

Frustrated

Alone

Stressed

RESOURCE TWO: MY BUBBLE OF CONTROL

Other people's actions

Things I did in the past

How I handle my feelings

Limiting the news I watch

How I take care of myself

How I handle my feelings

How I take care of myself

Things I did in the past

My own social distancing

My actions

Predicting what happens

How I treat others

How I interpret situations

How I interpret situations

How other people follow social distancing

What other people think of me

Other people's feelings

The amount of toilet paper in shops

