

## Integrating Skills

Ten ways to support students to become more emotionally resilient

### 1 Self-care and share box

Distribute pieces of paper and get students to write down a tip about a way to help them feel better emotionally or physically, especially if they're stressed. Collect students' suggestions and place them in a box in a visible place in your classroom. At the start of each week, choose one tip and write it on the board. Encourage students to try out the tip that week and ask them how it has helped them. Students could be encouraged to open the box and look for suggestions when feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

### 2 Create an 'act of kindness' calendar

Helping others can promote feelings of positivity and belonging, so create an 'acts of kindness' calendar with your class. Collect suggestions of realistic but significant 'good turns', which students should agree to carry out over the course of the month on a rotational basis. Work together to produce a calendar from your students' suggestions. Over the next month, get students to report back on what they did and what reaction they got. At the end of the month, have a class discussion on how the project made them feel.

### 3 Write a gratitude poem

Write out the alphabet from A to Z on the board. Ask students to use each letter to help them think of something they are grateful for. They could share their ideas with a partner or write a gratitude poem using some of the items on their list.

### 4 Create a culture of gratitude

If your school has a newsletter, ask the editor to include a gratitude section where members of the school community publicly thank each other. Encourage your own students to contribute to this section, and read this part of the newsletter together in class.

### 5 Communication style role-plays

Develop students' awareness of communication styles through role-play activities. Get students to think of one piece of personal good news and one piece of personal bad news to tell their partner. Their partner should then think of two responses to the news, using the 'radiator' and 'drain' styles. Get students to share their role-plays with the rest of the class, and encourage discussion by asking students to comment on how they felt about their partners' responses.

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### 6 Five-minute mindfulness

Deep-breathing exercises can help students relax during stressful times. Build five-minute mindfulness and meditation techniques into your classroom routine, so that students are able to harness these relaxation strategies when they are most needed.

### 7 Get outside (or bring nature indoors)

Promote the restorative power of nature in your classroom. If possible, get students to work outside (paired discussion activities could be on a 'walk and talk' basis, for example). Alternatively, bring plants into your classroom and get students to organise a class watering rota.

### 8 Put on a staff show

Show students that it's OK to look silly and have people laugh at you sometimes – especially when it's for a good cause. Organise a staff talent show, charge a small entry fee and donate the money you raise to charity. Events like this are great for fostering a sense of school community and belonging too.

### 9 Have a digital detox day (or two!)

Students' feelings of stress, anxiety and powerlessness can be increased by the information overload they experience every hour of every day on their electronic devices. Encourage your students to 'switch off' for a day or two. Get them to report back on how they felt before, during and after their detox.

### 10 How are you feeling right now?

An important part of self-awareness is being tuned into your own feelings. At the beginning of each lesson, ask students to draw a happy, neutral or sad face to show how they are feeling. If students want to share why they are feeling this way, give them the opportunity to do this with a partner.

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### 1 Set aside quality feedback time

Make sure students have time to reflect on the feedback you give them. When handing out test results, encourage students to ask for feedback, and suggest ways in which they might do things differently next time.

### 2 Have regular goal checks and audits

Have regular check-ins with your students about their goals. Encourage them to stay focused on their end goal, while keeping the little details in sight (these small details will help them maintain concentration as they work towards their ultimate aim). Conduct regular goal audits, where students reflect on how close they are to their ultimate goal, while having the opportunity to document recent successes.

### 3 Ask questions

When students come to you with questions, it can be tempting to provide an explanation. If you answer the question with some questions of your own, students will learn to think through problems independently and to come up with solutions too.

### 4 Be a role model

Let your students see you fail sometimes. Model an active constructive communication style as much as you can. Demonstrate self-control. If you model self-awareness and empathy, your students will understand the concepts far more clearly.

### 5 Foster a sense of pride in the classroom environment

Students will feel more positive about their studies if they are based in a pleasant, attractive environment. Create as bright and attractive a classroom environment as you can. Wherever possible, involve your students in making decisions about layout and decor, as this will increase their sense of connectedness and autonomy.

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### 6 Promote flexible thinking

Set students a simple task (for example, you could ask them to build a shelter using classroom objects). Once they have completed the task within a given timeframe, ask them to approach it in another way. Get students to share the different approaches they thought of. This activity promotes flexible thinking, by showing that there is usually more than one way to complete a task.

### 7 Create a safe classroom environment

If we are to encourage students to risk making mistakes, we need to ensure that they can do so in a safe, supportive and non-judgemental environment. Early on, establish a code of conduct to ensure that students react appropriately to their peers' contributions.

### 8 Celebrate failure as well as success

Celebrating success (both small-scale and large-scale) can be very motivating for students. However, it's equally important to celebrate failure as a learning experience. With both success and failure, it's important to focus on the process, as well as the final result. Ask students to reflect on the processes they have gone through and encourage them to share these with the rest of the class. In this way, students can learn to analyse where things can go wrong, as well as seeing examples of good processes to follow.

### 9 Establish a peer-support network

Think carefully about the ways in which your students could help each other to succeed with their studies. Observe classroom pairings carefully, and exercise sensitivity and discretion when forming classroom groups. Ask students to draw you their own 'peer network', containing the peers they think could help them with different aspects of their studies. Use this network when deciding on classroom groupings.

### 10 Develop a self-care plan during exam time

Get students into groups. Discuss with students the optimum amount of time they should spend on a revision session. Ask them to create a self-care plan which focuses on getting good sleep, having regular fitness breaks and preparing healthy revision snacks during the exam period.