

TELL Lesson Plan – KS3-5/FE/HE

This resource provides an adaptable lesson plan with activities for reflective discussion about adolescents' needs, in response to the findings from The TELL Study. The TELL Study found that lockdown in response to the global pandemic situation has been a difficult time for many teenagers (find out more on the Tell Study website, or by clicking [here](#)). Creating opportunities for reflection and discussion on lockdown will support teenagers in developing coping strategies and self-care going forward. This lesson plan has been designed to be as flexible as possible, in order to fit in to available time within a full school, college or university schedule. Suggested times for delivery are during form/tutorial time, during designated PSHE lessons, PSD time or during small group sessions – either remotely or face-to-face. An accompanying **PowerPoint** presentation has also been developed (found [here](#)). **Resource sheets** can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Adaptability

The timings provided on this lesson plan are approximate and can be adapted to fit in with the time available. Similarly, the activities suggested could be split over different sessions if required. If splitting activities, a brief recap from the previous session would provide an introductory activity and support continuity. If doing as one session, it would be useful to include breaks throughout, particularly given how emotive the topic may be for some young people. Additionally, it is worth noting that some of the discussion may bring up uncomfortable feelings for young people, and so ending each session on a positive note could be helpful. It may be a useful time to reiterate where school/college/university support is available – there is more on signposting support at the end of this lesson plan. Each core activity includes positive discussion points/tasks aimed to facilitate developing strategies to support emotional wellbeing in relation to the current pandemic situation (e.g. planning for moving forward). The activities provided within this lesson plan could also be undertaken as part of remote learning. Education staff may want to record audio alongside the PowerPoint or introduce ideas/activities via an online lesson, depending on the learners they are working with. This flexibility supports the need for adequate time for reflection and discussion for each of the core aspects identified as part of The TELL Study findings within variable time and delivery options available in different settings. However, at all times it will be important to ensure ongoing access to support.

Learning objectives

Students will learn:

Strategies to support self-reflection of their experiences of lockdown.

Strategies for coping with the challenges of lockdown and the pandemic.

Strategies to support self-care for mental health and emotional wellbeing in relation to lockdown experiences.

Learning outcomes

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

- Identify/express feelings associated with the lockdown experience.
- Consider steps for planning for their future.
- Reflect on and consider ways to develop their approaches to coping.
- Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies.
- Identify a range of positive self-care strategies that might be useful for their emotional wellbeing.

Resources

- TELL lesson PowerPoint
- [TELL Video](#)
- Post-it notes
- Pens/pencils
- Resource sheet A: (hourglass)
- Resource sheet B: (stress bucket)
- 'Advice for Teenagers from Teenagers' briefing sheet (see end of lesson plan)
- Resource sheet C: (connecting with others)

Key Words

Self-care, coping strategies, emotional wellbeing, self-reflection, connecting, mental health

Introductory activity

- Share the lesson objectives (these can be reworded to meet the needs of the learners, if required) and introduce the idea that the session(s) will allow reflective discussion around experiences of lockdown and strategies for coping, self-care and planning ahead.
- Thinking about the global pandemic since March 2020, including lockdown, write down one word which you would use to describe the situation on a post-it note (these could be shared as a group/class, ideally collected and displayed at the front if restrictions allow or collated remotely during online learning) (e.g. *unprecedented, challenging, uncertain, frightening*)
- Write down one feeling word for how the pandemic makes you feel (these could be shared as a group/class, ideally collected and displayed/shared, if restrictions allow) (e.g. *frustrated, disappointed, weary, concerned*).
- Discuss these – are there words that stand out? can they be grouped? words that come up repeatedly? (*this should allow some reflection of thoughts and feelings around the pandemic/lockdown*)

Core activities

Activity 1: Reflecting on lockdown (10/12 mins approx.)

Aim	Activity description	Discussion prompts
To encourage self-reflection of their experiences/feelings associated with lockdown.	<p>Watch the TELL video (this can be found on the 'Supporting Teenagers Toolkit' or by clicking here) and discuss the ideas presented. Ask learners to reflect on their own lockdown experience via discussion prompts (this could be extended to a short reflective writing task if time permits).</p> <p><i>Suggestions for writing task: ask learners to imagine they are writing to a pen-pal in another country to tell them what lockdown has been like for them; similarly, learners could write a letter/email for the future reflecting on their experience; or a memoir-style piece.</i></p> <p>(Note: It is important to ensure learners' thoughts and feelings around the pandemic are validated – these will no doubt be varied.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many feelings resonated with what you had written in the introductory task?• Were there any differences?• Did anything stand out as particularly significant?• How did it feel to hear what other young people had experienced? <p><i>NB: Talking about feelings might be uncomfortable for some young people. It's important that they are aware of where to gain extra support, if needed e.g. someone within education, or an outside organisation. Facilitators of this session may also want to arrange a discussion with a colleague about how the session went/any issues that arose too, for reflection and support.</i></p>

Activity 2: Thinking about change: loss/change/uncertainty (10 mins approx.)

Aim	Activity description	Discussion prompts
<p>To acknowledge the potential feelings of loss/uncertainty associated with lockdown and identify goals to support moving forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask learners to imagine it is 31st December 2019 and they are thinking ahead to the new year. On resource sheet A, in the top of the hourglass write down how you imagine 2020 going? What plans did you have? What did you hope to do? (<i>prompt if needed: exams, moving to college; introductory week</i>)• In the bottom of the hourglass write down anything that happened in 2020 which was unexpected in a positive way (<i>prompt: More time with family, more time for hobbies/interests, etc</i>) *Note: some young people may not be able to note a positive, due to bereavement or loss of some sort. Solution-focussed thinking can appear insensitive sometimes, so this part of the activity may require a more sensitive approach (perhaps expanding to look forward) depending on the learners in your group.• Discuss how it feels when things don't go to plan. Ask learners to think about what they can do moving forward.• Ask learners to write down one goal for the future (<i>prompt examples include working towards college/uni entry, getting a part-time job, mastering a new skill</i>). Use the S.M.A.R.T. criteria (on PowerPoint) to guide and focus planning. What can they do to work towards their goal in the new situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some of the challenges faced by lockdown this year? (<i>e.g. missed exams, school leaving celebrations, moving out of home, work experience</i>)• Can these be categorised into things within my control and things out with my control?• How does it feel when plans change?• Has anything changed this year in a good way?• Is there anything positive from lockdown that can be taken forward? (<i>e.g. more time to focus on self-care; less pressure</i>)

Activity 3: Coping and self-care (15 mins approx.)

Aim	Activity description	Discussion prompts
<p>To understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies and to develop healthy coping strategies that can be used in stressful circumstances.</p> <p>To understand the importance of self-care for mental health and wellbeing and to identify positive strategies that might support this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show learners Resource Sheet B: the 'stress' bucket (adapted from Brabban and Turkington (2002)) (<i>picture of outline of bucket with tap and stopper – also on the PowerPoint</i>). • The bucket represents all things that might contribute to stress for an individual. If these build up, the bucket may overflow, and stress may become unmanageable. It is important to highlight this may change day-to-day, or even hour-to-hour. Sometimes we might cope okay with a full bucket and at other times it may overwhelm us when it is only partly full. It might be useful for teachers to share their own example to normalise that everyone struggles at times (<i>further examples in discussion prompts</i>). • On the bucket, ask learners to write all the things that are on their minds in relation to COVID-19/lockdown. • The tap represents healthy coping strategies that might allow some of the stress to be relieved before the bucket overflows (see <i>discussion prompts for ideas around talking about what coping strategies are</i>). The stopper represents unhealthy coping strategies which prevent the bucket from emptying. Ask learners to compile a list of coping strategies – categorise these into healthy and unhealthy by writing in the boxes above either the tap or stopper. These should be shared during group/class discussion (as permitted by restrictions). • Ask learners to consider which healthy coping strategies they might consider during further lockdown/isolating periods. • Self-care – discuss what self-care is and the importance of self-care. Can learners come up with an 'action plan' with one of each of the 5 steps to wellbeing? (see discussion prompts) • If time permits, looking at 'Advice for Teenagers from Teenagers' together might be helpful (Demkowicz & Ashworth, 2020) 	<p>What things might you add to your bucket that might cause it to fill up? (<i>Facilitator could give their own example, if they felt comfortable. If not, some examples include: balancing work and caring responsibilities, future plans, studying for exams, keeping in touch with friends/family remotely, paying bills.</i>)</p> <p>What are coping strategies? (<i>Something we do which allow us to minimise, tolerate or reduce stressful events</i>)</p> <p>Why are healthy coping strategies useful? (<i>They allow us to manage/handle stressful situations</i>)</p> <p>What sorts of coping strategies might be unhelpful? (<i>smoking, over/under eating, self-harm</i>)</p> <p>What is self-care? (<i>Something to do deliberately to take care of our mental and emotional wellbeing</i>).</p> <p>What are the 5 steps to wellbeing? Take notice (e.g. <i>to how you are feeling; the world around you</i>), give (e.g. <i>say 'thanks' to someone; give a compliment; offer to help someone</i>), be active (e.g. <i>go for a walk; do a 'YouTube' fitness video</i>), keep learning (e.g. <i>bake or cook something new; make something</i>) and connect (e.g. <i>video chat/text a friend; chat to a family member</i>).</p>

Activity 4: Connecting with others (10 mins approx.)

Aim	Activity description	Discussion prompts
<p>To understand the importance of connection to others.</p> <p>To consider ways to connect even during lockdown.</p>	<p>Consider, as a group, why connection is important (see discussion prompts).</p> <p>Remind learners it is important to consider who they can talk to, what they might talk about and how/when they will be able to talk to them.</p> <p>On resource sheet c ask learners to write down one different person/group that they can connect with in each figure outline (who) (e.g. friends, family members, teacher, pastoral support in school/college, outside organisation) – this could be a group activity if restrictions permit.</p> <p>Following this, ask learners to write on the mobile phone/screen outline topics to talk about with each identified person above (what) (e.g. <i>worries about exams with form tutor, feeling low with school nurse, ways to cope with lockdown with friends, etc</i>).</p> <p>Then, on the clock outline, ask learners to think about how/when they could talk to each person (<i>for example, not able to talk to pastoral support in school at 8pm so who else might be available?</i>)</p>	<p>Why is connection to others important? (<i>humans are inherently social, helps provide identity, helps us build skills, offers support, inspire/motivates us, provides advice, etc</i>)</p> <p>Who could you talk to for support? (<i>friends; family; outside organisation – see signposting info at end; pastoral support within school – check/remind learners of the protocol for contacting pastoral lead or someone outside of their home/education environment.</i>)</p> <p>What are the benefits and challenges of talking to them? (<i>Benefits: discuss problems, gain advice, offload, etc. Challenges: might be uncomfortable, how to approach, etc</i>)</p> <p>What are some ways to connect to others during lockdown? (<i>e.g. household, phone, text, etc.</i>)</p>

Plenary

- In pairs/groups, ask learners to share a strategy/resource/website that they have found useful with others. Collate this list and add to it and display for all to access as part of a regular wellbeing check in.
- Ask learners to identify one (or more) positive thing they will do to support their mental health and wellbeing going forward.
- Ask learners to create a set of tips/advice for students going through a global pandemic lockdown (or other challenging) situation for the first time, based on the activities they have completed.

Extension activities

- On the TELL Supporting Teenagers Toolkit, there are more resources linked to each aspect highlighted by the TELL study. Some of these may provide useful follow ups based on the ideas that emerge from this session.
- The TELL study highlighted adolescents' frustration with the media/government. They expressed their concern about being overlooked and this contributed to their distress. This would be useful discussion point and may support YP in feeling agency. Pick out some media headlines/coverage and analyse with your students. There are some useful resources on the TELL Supporting Teenagers Toolkit to support this.
- Create a list/action plan of self-care/coping strategies that might help young people for when they need it. What could they do to help cope in challenging circumstances?
- Create a leaflet/advertisement with tips/advice for students going through a global pandemic/lockdown situation.
- Create a guide for taking up a new hobby/interest during lockdown.
- Develop a campaign for supporting positive mental health and wellbeing during lockdown. Consider how young people's voices can be heard with regards this.

Extra support and signposting

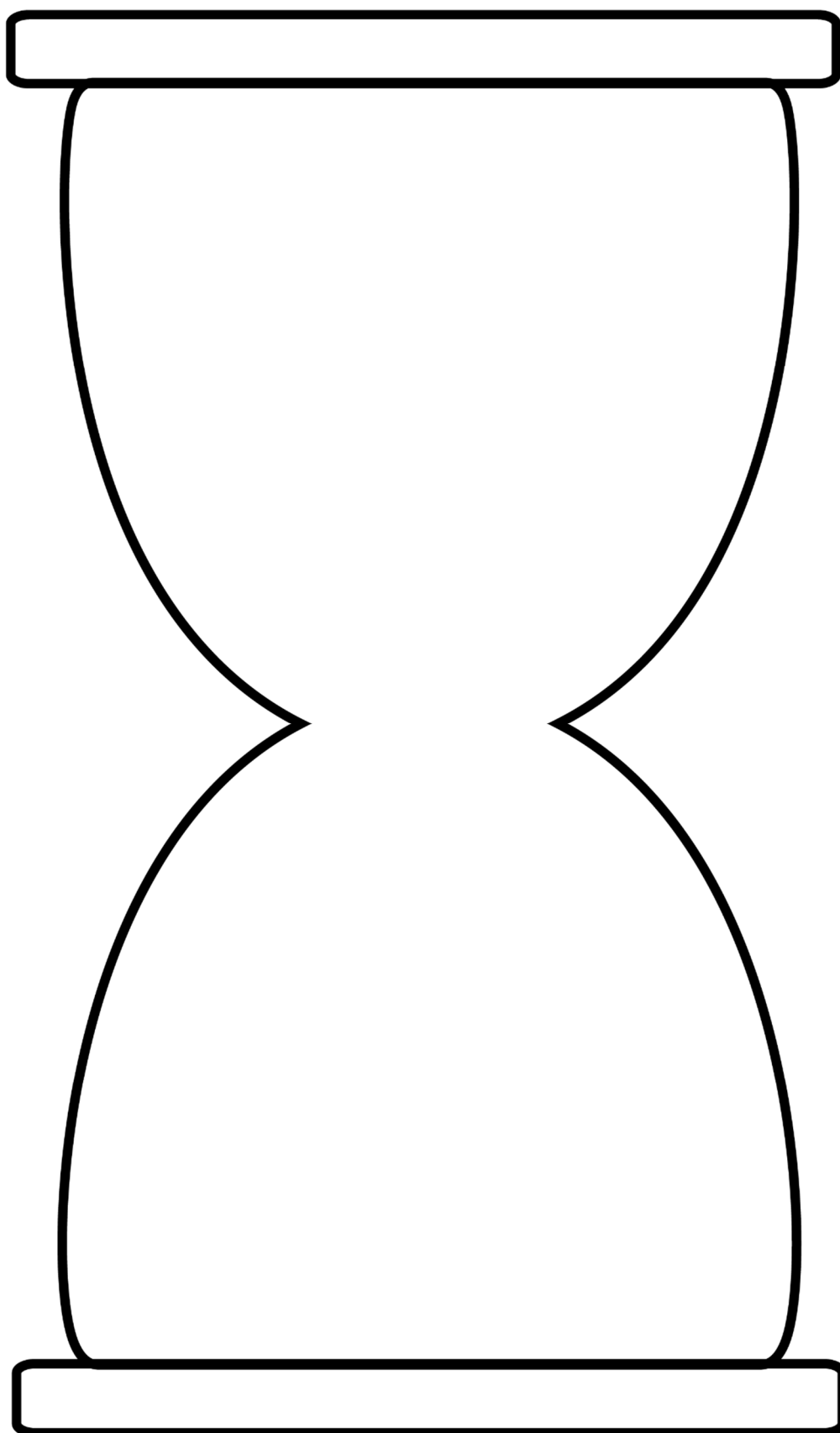
This is likely to be a difficult topic for many young people, so it will be important to remind them where they can access support if they need it both in school (e.g. form tutors, pastoral support, head of year, student services) and out of school (e.g. parents/carers, family members/friends or reputable organisations). Below is a list of organisations which might also be useful:

- **YoungMinds** – A charity that provides information about mental health and wellbeing for children and young people: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/>
- **Childline** – A free and confidential service offering help and advice on a wide range of issues (phone or online): www.childline.org.uk / 0800 1111
- **Samaritans** – A charity that provides emotional support to anyone in distress or struggling to cope: www.samaritans.org / 116 123
- **Anna Freud Centre** - The Anna Freud Centre has guidance on the things children and young people can do to look after their mental health and wellbeing www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care

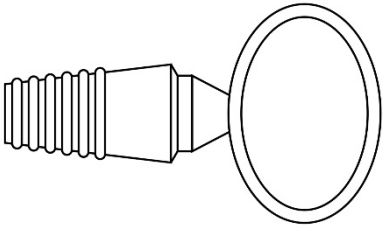
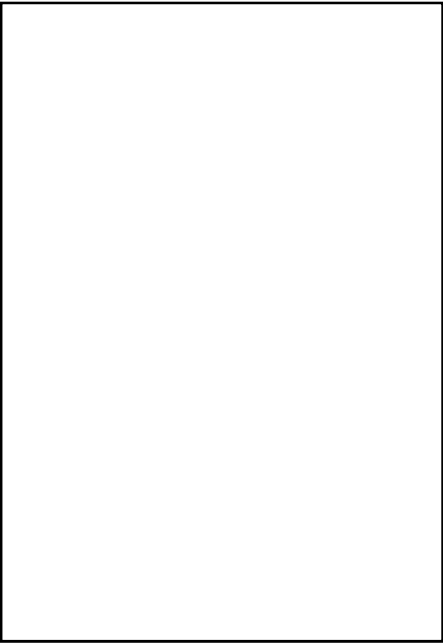
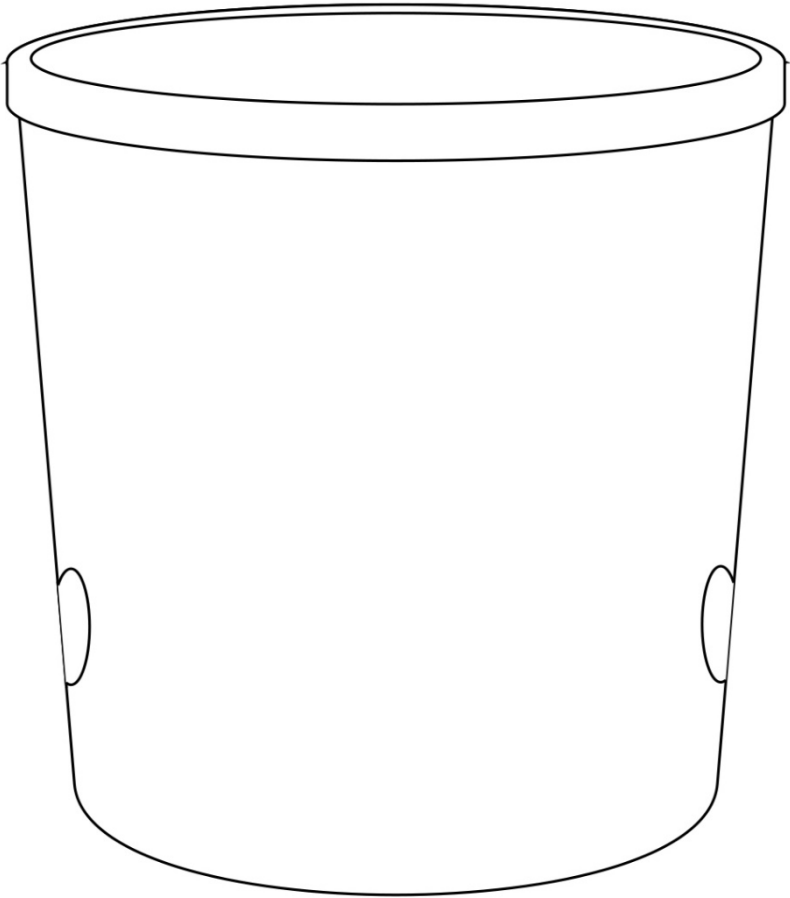
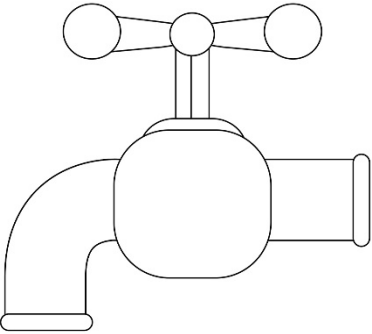
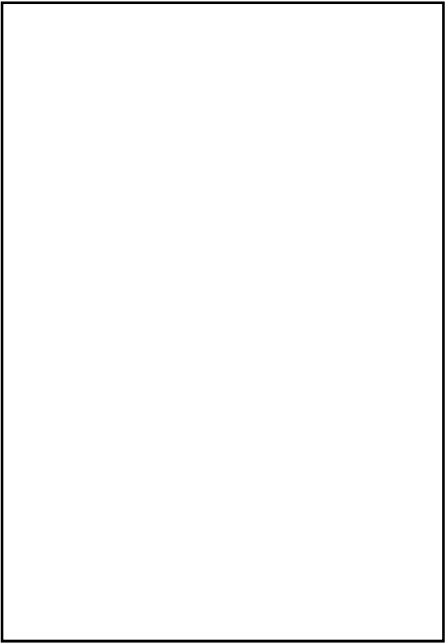
Education staff 'health alert'

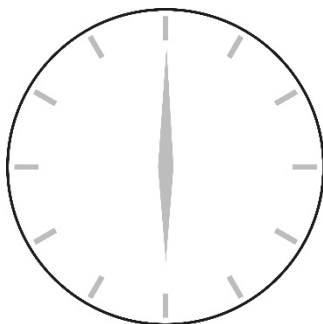
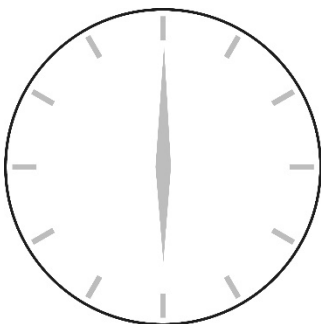
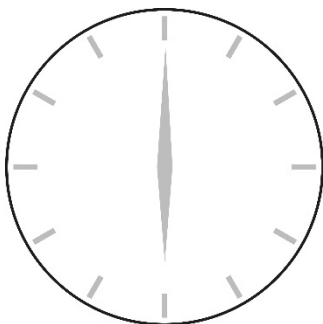
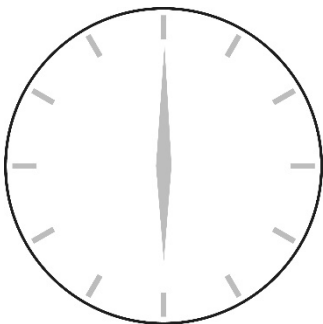
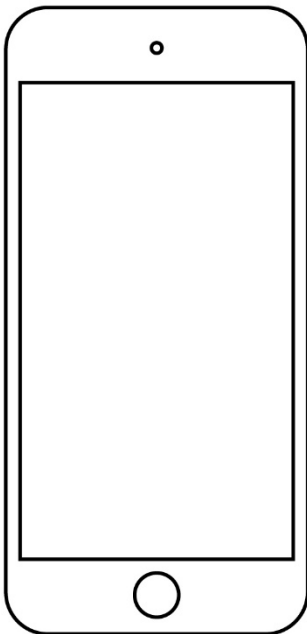
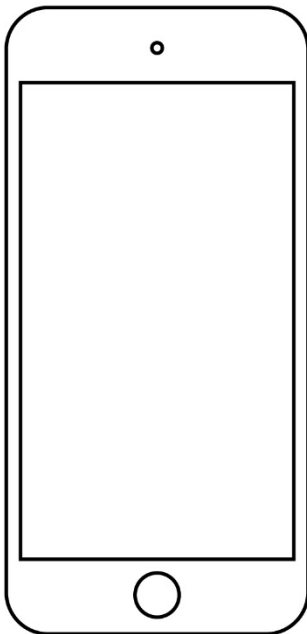
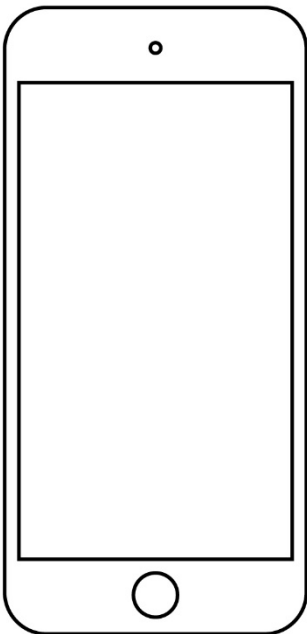
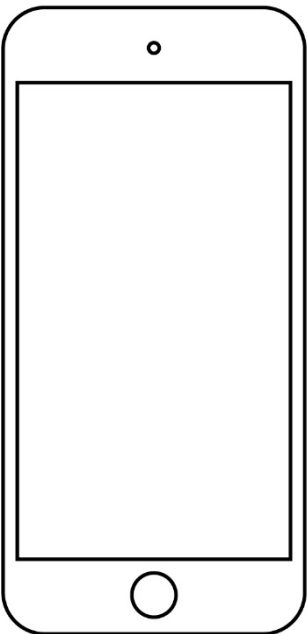
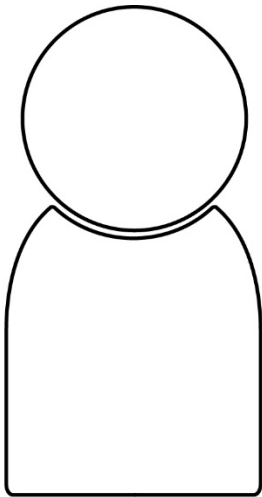
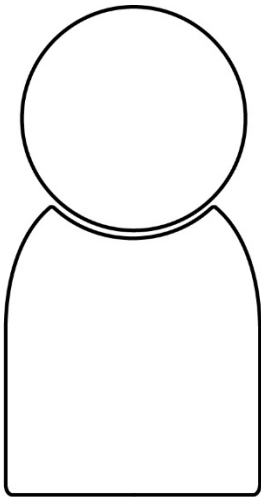
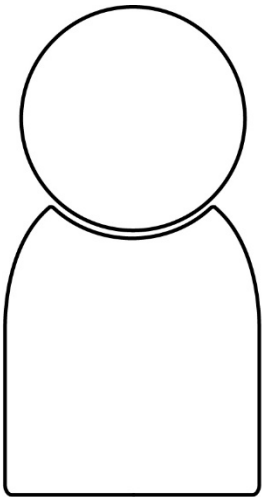
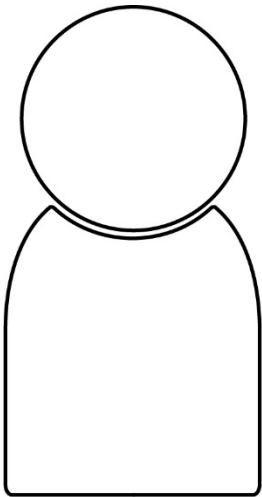
Lockdown and the pandemic has affected everyone in some way. Often education staff are focused on the needs of the young people they work with, and can overlook their own wellbeing. Staff should be mindful of the personal impact that their work may be having on them and engage in self-care and seek support where needed. In the Supporting Teenagers Toolkit (available via www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/tell-toolkit) you can find some resources focused on how education staff can care for their wellbeing during COVID-19.

Developed by Dr. Kirsty Pert and Dr. Ola Demkowicz (University of Manchester). With thanks to Rebecca Dunne, Alisha O'Neill, Carla Mason, Dr Terry Hanley, Dr Emma Ashworth, and Catherine Holden for their valuable contributions towards development of the lesson plan.



Resource Sheet B





Teenagers' Experiences of Life in Lockdown (TELL): Caring for your wellbeing

Briefing #1, July 2020

Ola Demkowicz & Emma Ashworth

ADVICE FOR
TEENAGERS,
FROM
TEENAGERS



We asked 16- to 19-year-olds what advice they had for others managing lockdown. They told us it is important to put your mental health first, and that how you do that depends on the individual. Here's what they advised, entirely in their words. This advice is also similar to evidence around what helps with wellbeing - so The TELL Study Team support it!

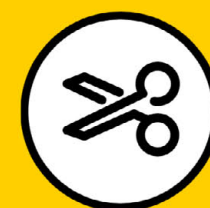
"Go easy on yourself..."



It's okay to feel
angry, sad, and
confused



A lot of people are
"improving themselves"
in lockdown, but
comparing to others
isn't beneficial



This is a major
crisis, we have
to cut ourselves
some slack



Writing down how you
feel helps you to try
and understand why



Don't beat yourself up over
not doing what you've planned,
and praise yourself when you
do better than you expected

"Spend time doing the things you love..."



Do whatever makes you feel happy!



Take time for yourself whilst doing something you enjoy



Finding a hobby can make you feel better



Listen to music you've known for a while or re-watch a show you really enjoyed the first time

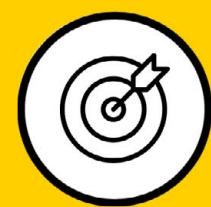


Try to find excitement in things that you wouldn't normally be excited about

"Stick to a routine..."



Make sure you get up and dressed every day, and try to leave the house once



Setting mini-goals to achieve every day can take away negative feelings and help you feel better



Have set times for working with consistent breaks



Make new traditions, for example watch a film with your family every Friday



Try to find new things to do with your time so you feel like your day is a little different

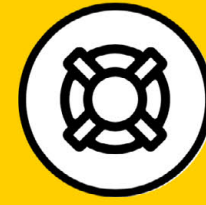
"Stay in touch..."



Keep talking to
your friends



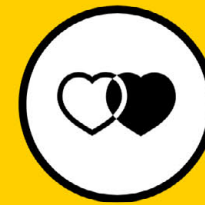
Phone your
family and
friends regularly



Support those
around you



Spend time with your loved
ones and love them hard



Talk to the people you miss
and let them know you miss
and appreciate them

"You're not alone..."



Don't feel like
you have to go
through this alone



Reach out to those
that care about you
- trust me, you're
not a burden



Talk to people
about how you
feel on a daily
basis



If you're feeling anxious or
depressed then call a friend
you trust



Don't be afraid to reach out to
services if you're struggling.
Childline are there if you want
to talk (0800 1111)

“Try your best to remain positive...”



When you're feeling depressed, think about your future - this won't last forever



Imagine how good it'll feel when you can actually go out and do all the things you love again



Don't see this as a lockdown, but as a retreat



It is really important that we remind each other that this is only temporary



Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass but learning to dance in the rain

What is The TELL Study?

TELL (Teenagers' Experiences of Life in Lockdown) is a research project led by researchers at The University of Manchester and Liverpool John Moores University. TELL aims to understand 16- to 19-year-olds' experiences of the UK lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly their wellbeing. We asked teenagers aged 16-19 in the UK to provide a written account of their experiences of lockdown, telling us what lockdown looked like for them, what it felt like, and how they managed it. We also asked what advice they would give to others. More than 100 teenagers shared their experiences with us. This briefing shares the advice our participants offered for other teenagers. Thanks are due to the wider TELL Study team: Alisha O'Neill, Terry Hanley, and Kirsty Pert (of The University of Manchester).



@TheTELLStudy