Your access to PSHE Association materials and intellectual property rights

PSHE education is the school curriculum subject designed to keep children and young people safe, healthy and prepared for life, and work, in modern Britain. The best PSHE education is a partnership between parents/carers and schools — and this includes transparency regarding curriculum content and materials.

We are therefore delighted to provide parent/carer copies of all PSHE Association member materials that cover RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education).

This is an example of such a resource. It has been shared with you as a parent/carer by the school or individual who is a PSHE Association member.

We are happy to grant access on this basis of giving you full, personal access to the resource contents, but appreciate your adherence to the following requirements regarding intellectual property rights given the resource is otherwise only accessible to schools and individuals that subscribe to PSHE Association membership.

Intellectual property rights

We are the owner or the licensee of all intellectual property rights in the materials. These works are protected by copyright laws and treaties around the world. All such rights are reserved.

You may print off one copy, and may download extracts, of any page(s) for your personal use as a parent/carer of a pupil at your child's school.

You must not modify the paper or digital copies of any materials you have printed off or downloaded in any way, and you must not use any illustrations, photographs, video or audio sequences or any graphics separately from any accompanying text.

Our status (and that of any identified contributors) as the authors of the materials must always be acknowledged. You must not use any part of the materials for commercial purposes without obtaining a licence to do so from us or our licensors.

You are not permitted to copy, share — electronically (including social media) or otherwise — any part of our materials in breach of these terms of use. Your right to use such materials will cease immediately upon such a breach and you must, at our option, return or destroy any copies of the materials you have made.

Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

Foundations for Wellbeing

Year 3, lesson 4: Managing worries



Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025
Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

Managing worries

This is the fourth of five lessons on self-regulation, mental health and emotional wellbeing, for year 3. This lesson focuses on managing worries.

To encourage pupils to use the self-regulation strategies taught in these lessons more automatically, autonomously and effectively, it is important to revisit and reinforce them regularly, as part of a whole-school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. The extension activities are designed to support this (for more information, see the Teacher Handbook). To learn more, please visit our self-guided online courses, which are available to all School Plus members.

The lesson plan is based on a 45-minute lesson. The timings given are the minimum required to deliver the activities, but you may wish to spend longer exploring each activity.

Learning objective and outcomes

To learn how to recognise and manage worry.

Pupils will be able to:

- identify types of worry and describe how worries might affect someone
- identify strategies that can be used to help manage worries
- recognise the parts of the brain that are active when someone experiences and manages worries

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Resource 1: *What type of worry?* [one per pair]
- Resource 2: *Triangles* [one per pair]
- Resource 3: *Worrying thoughts and more helpful thoughts* [support option, as required]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. They include guidance on establishing a safe learning environment, supporting pupils with additional vulnerabilities, using assessment and personal reflection effectively, and embedding the learning. They also outline useful subject knowledge on the theory and evidence informing these lessons, self-regulation strategies and relevant neuroscience.

The lesson plans should be used flexibly, and you are encouraged to adapt them to meet the specific needs and abilities of your pupils. It is also important to consider sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. If safeguarding concerns arise during this lesson, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with your school policy.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared).
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

© PSHE Association 2025 | www.pshe-association.org.uk

Baseline assessment

Baseline assessment activity (Slides 9-10, 5 mins)

Establish or revisit ground rules. Explain that if pupils have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Introduce Liam on slide 10 and ask pupils to jot down on mini whiteboards a few words in response to each of these four questions:

1. How might this worry make Liam feel?
2. How might this worry make Liam behave?
3. Is there anything Liam could do to help with this worry?
4. Do you think that just by looking at Liam, others would be able to tell he was worried?

Ask pupils to hold up their boards so you can get a sense of their starting points and encourage pupils to say a little more where relevant, to help you identify any misconceptions that might need addressing. Use their responses to adjust the lesson as needed. For example, if the class do not recognise that this worry could have a positive impact on Liam's behaviour (e.g. encouraging him to speak to his friend about how he is feeling and making a real effort to keep in touch), then you may wish to further unpick helpful worries in activity 1.

Introduction (Slides 11-12, 2 mins)

Stress that today's lesson will be looking at worry. How do pupils think this might link to the learning from last lesson? Briefly share slide 11 to recap this and draw out that, just like other thoughts, worry can be both helpful and unhelpful. Introduce today's learning objective and outcomes using slide 12. Explain that this lesson will focus on identifying different types of worries and learning ways to deal with unhelpful worries.

Core activities

Different types of worry (Slides 13-15, 5 mins)

Using slide 13, emphasise that everyone worries sometimes – and that there are different types of worry. For example, worries can feel big or small, helpful or unhelpful and they can be about the past or the future. Explain that identifying different types of worries can help with deciding how to manage them. For example, thinking back to the baseline assessment, Liam is having quite a big worry about a friendship that is important to him – so it could be a good idea for him to speak to an adult to get some help. Liam is also worrying about something in the future (his friend hasn't moved yet!) and so there are things he can do to try and help – for example, he could talk to his friend about how he is feeling and how they can stay in touch (an example of problem-solving).

To explore types of worry further, give pupils a copy of **Resource 1: What type of worry?** and ask pairs to work together to decide which of these worries are about the past and which are about the

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared)
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

© PSHE Association 2025 | www.pshe-association.org.uk

future. They could write a 'P' next to any worries that are about the past or an 'F' next to any worries that are about the future.

Once they have finished, check pairs' responses by revealing the answers on slides 14-15.

Challenge: Click to reveal the 'Did you know?' box on slide 14 that explains that worries about the past are sometimes called 'rumination'. Can pupils use this word in the lesson when referring to this kind of worry?

Thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Slides 16-21, 15 mins)

Explain that another way in which worries can be different is the effect they have on people. Using slide 16, model completing the triangle to show how worrying about the school play might impact David's thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

Show slide 17 and ask pairs to roll a dice (1-6) and select the corresponding character from **Resource 1: What type of worry?**. Pairs should then work together, writing the character's name and thought onto **Resource 2: Triangles** (part 1 only), before completing the rest of the triangle to show what emotion and behaviour the character might experience from this worry.

Take some brief feedback and emphasise that worries can affect people's emotions. For example, Leo might feel embarrassment, while Kate might experience uncertainty or confusion. They can also affect people's behaviour. For example, if someone often worries about an activity, and does not find a way to manage their worries about it or get help, they might not want to do it anymore – like Nikolai and swimming. Next, ask the class the questions on slide 18 and take feedback.

Draw out key learning:

1. Any worry can cause strong feelings – worries that might seem small to some people could be big to others. But Mani and Andrea's worries are clearly having a big impact on how they feel. For example, Mani feels 'really sad', and Andrea has been 'feeling left out and lonely these past few weeks'.

2. If someone has a big worry that causes strong and challenging feelings, they should speak to a trusted adult so they can get help. Andrea could also be experiencing bullying if she is repeatedly being excluded – so it's really important that she tells someone at home or at school how she is feeling.

3. Whether a worry is helpful depends, in part, on what someone does about it. For example, Kate's worry could be helpful if it encourages her to speak to Yusuf and find out if there is a problem. However, if it makes her feel really upset or rejected, or if she avoids Yusuf because of the worry, without finding out whether he is actually upset with her, then it would be unhelpful.

Remind pupils that everyone will have worries from time to time – and that recognising how worries impact thoughts, emotions and behaviours can help someone decide how to manage them. Using slide 19, return to David's worry about the school play and ask the class:

- If David noticed he was having this worry, what could he do? *(Use this as an opportunity to recap prior learning – e.g. speak to a trusted adult; try to focus on what might be fun about*

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

the play; do something he enjoys, to distract himself from worrying about the play for a little while.)

Explain that another strategy David could try is to think differently about the situation. To do this, he could imagine how someone might speak to a good friend or someone they really care about. Aloud, go through this process – for example, a more helpful thought David could have might be, 'I'm going to do my best to remember my lines by practising. But I know it's OK if I don't remember them perfectly because it's difficult and everyone makes mistakes.' Or, 'What matters is that I have a go and learn from my experience, even if it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable.' Using the triangle on slide 20, model to the class how this different thought could impact David's emotions and behaviours – for example, he might still feel some nervousness, but he might also feel curiosity, determination or inquisitiveness. His behaviour is also likely to be positively impacted – for example, he might be more likely to practise his lines and he might deliver them more confidently.

Note: Make sure pupils recognise that this isn't about David forcing himself to have positive thoughts, ignoring his challenging thoughts, or feeling bad about having them. It's about him recognising the worry and trying to manage it, so that it does not cause him problems.

Direct pairs to part 2 on **Resource 1: Triangles** and ask them to see if they can give each character they looked at in part 1 a more helpful thought for the situation. They should then complete the triangle to show how this more helpful thought could impact the character's emotions and behaviours.

Circulate while pairs are working to get an idea of their understanding and to challenge any misconceptions. For example, if pupils are writing thoughts such as, 'There's nothing to worry about' or 'Everything will be fine!' use questions like, is that helpful? Does it resolve the problem or concern? How might that make the character feel? Emphasise that this strategy can be tricky and may take time, but small steps are a good way to start. It may also be helpful to emphasise that sometimes, trying to swap an unhelpful thought for a more helpful one won't be the best option. If worries are really big or strong, seeking help from a trusted adult is a better idea.

Support: Give pupils **Resource 2: Worrying thoughts and more helpful thoughts** which provides them with thoughts to write onto **Resource 1: Triangles**.

Challenge: Ask pairs to pick one character from those they have worked on. Is there anything that would make it difficult for the character to replace their unhelpful thought with a more helpful one? Can they think of any tips to help the character with that difficulty?

Using the senses (Slides 22-26, 10 mins)

Returning to the character of David, ask the class to imagine that he's finding it a bit tricky to manage or change less helpful thoughts when he worries about the school play. Reassure pupils that this is understandable and that managing and changing thoughts is often difficult, especially to start with. But there are other strategies that David could use to take his mind off the problem, such as using the senses. By focussing on the senses, he can interrupt his worries or distract himself from them (using distraction in a helpful way).

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared)
Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

© PSHE Association 2025 | www.pshe-association.org.uk

Using slide 22, agree the five main senses as a class (touch, sight, smell, hearing and taste) and then show slide 23. Discuss and agree what each of the images could represent and use this to make a class list of sensory focus activities that David could try. Finally, ask if pupils have any more ideas of their own that they'd like to add? You may wish to focus on the senses of sight and hearing.

Using slide 24, remind pupils about the 'See, hear, move' strategy (introduced in the year 2 lessons) and explain that this is another example of how David could use the senses to help him with his worries. Ask the class if they can remember what David needs to do to carry out the 'See, hear, move' strategy, before using slide animation to reveal the three steps.

Emphasise that all the strategies explored in this lesson will become easier the more David practises them! This is true for trying to swap less helpful thoughts for more helpful ones, and for using the senses to interrupt or distract from worrying. And the reason for this is the brain.

Using slide 25, explain what is happening in David's brain as he uses these strategies to manage worry. Emphasise that when David practises managing worries in this way, he will be sending calming messages to his amygdala to help stop it from taking over.

To check pupils' understanding, ask the questions on slide 26 (pupils could use the Amazing brain poster – Appendix 2 in the Teacher Handbook – to help with this):

- Which part of our brain will be active when we worry? *(amygdala)*
- Which part of our brain will be active when we use strategies to think differently about worries? *(the prefrontal cortex – or PFC is active when people swap unhelpful thoughts for more helpful thoughts, and it's also active when people use sensory focus activities to distract from worry)*
- Which part of our brain will help us to learn and remember helpful strategies? *(the hippocampus)*

If pupils find it difficult to remember the names of the parts of brain, stress that the most important thing to understand is that the more someone practises strategies for managing worry, the better their brain will get at helping them to use the strategies and manage worries in future.

Using slide 26, briefly ask the class what David could do if even after using all these different strategies, he is still having worries and finding he is feeling nervous about the play a lot.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 27, 3 mins)

Emphasise that if this happens, David can speak to an adult to get some help. Ask the class to suggest any adults that David could speak to at school (for example, teachers or helpers) or at home (for example, his parent or carer, or another family member).

Remind pupils that – just like David – if the strategies explored today aren't working or if worries are causing really strong or unpleasant emotions, it's important they speak to a trusted adult at home or at school who can help. Pupils can also contact Childline: www.childline.org.uk/kids.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025

Endpoint assessment and reflection

Endpoint assessment and reflection (Slides 28-29, 5 mins)

Using slide 12, remind pupils of the learning objective and outcomes for the lesson. Show the thought, emotion and behaviour triangle on slide 27 and ask pupils to individually note down in their books or on mini white boards their responses to the four questions shown.

Use this endpoint assessment to gauge pupils' progress and identify any gaps or misconceptions that may need addressing in future lessons.

Using slide 29, remind the class that different strategies will work for different people. Ask pupils to silently reflect on two sensory focus activities from the class list that they'd like to try out next time they are worried and would like to take their mind off their worries. As this is a private reflection activity, answers should not be shared with the class.

Check the question box and respond to any remaining questions.

Closing the lesson (Slide 30)

Finally, using slide 30, reinforce the key learning by summing up for the class what they have achieved in today's lesson.

Activities to extend and embed the learning

Worry jar (Slide 31)

Create a class worry jar full of strategies to help with worries. Ask each pupil to write down one strategy they have learned today and put it into the jar, so when someone is having a worry, they can pick something from the jar and give it a try. Pupils could use the strategies posters (Appendix 3) in the Teacher Handbook to help, if needed.

Helping others with their worries (Slide 32)

Challenge pupils to try to notice when a character in a book or TV show has a worry. Can they help the character by thinking of a more helpful thought that could replace their worry? They could also recommend a sensory focus activity to help distract the character from their worry and identify someone they could speak to if they still feel worried.

Parent/Carer copy (for personal use, not to be shared). Copyright © PSHE Association 2025