

YES

RATIONALE

At this time, it is essential to acknowledge the significantly negative impact of the pandemic on people's lives. To listen, acknowledge and recognise difficult experiences and traumatic events. However, through these experiences there may also be times when traumatic coping emerges, highlighting a person's strengths and capabilities despite everything, slowly helping to provide a sense of hope and optimism about the future. Some psychologists have used the term 'post-traumatic growth', to refer to a person's ability to recover from traumatic events. Processes that promote such resilience including helping young people to successfully process their experiences, use positive coping strategies, seek social support and help others at times of distress.



TIPS

- According to social psychology, a person's sense of self, their identity or individual view of themselves, comes from their experiences, the feedback and interactions they get from others and the social world and environment around them. From a narrative psychology perspective, the stories, anecdotes, dialogue and discourse about a young person, can also help to shape their self-image or identify. At times of crisis, change and uncertainty, the various narratives children have, both of themselves and the world around them, from their past and the current time, can affect their sense of self. Therefore opening up opportunities for narrative and identity exploration could be key in supporting young people to look forwards.
- Positive psychology, through the work of psychologist such as Martin Seligman, has sought to develop and extend a child's ability to develop and grow, opening up possibilities and an optimistic, resilient view of the future. Carol Dweck has highlighted how our self-talk, our views and beliefs of the world around us and ourselves, can affect our motivation, actions and behaviours. She identified a 'growth mindset' as a way of viewing ourselves, abilities and events as open, changeable and developing, leading to increased motivation, perseverance and optimism as opposed to a 'fixed mindset' as a deep seated, fixed trait. From this perspective, a growth mindset leads to a desire to learn and the ability to embrace challenges, persist in the face of adversity, view effort as key to progress, learn from constructive feedback, be inspired by and learn from others and ultimately achieve success. She talked about the 'power of yet', with the term 'yet' having the power to open up the possibilities in achieving mastery in something, changing a potentially fixed mindset statement to one of optimistic growth.

- Provide clear, factual and relevant information for students in relation to any end of key stage formal examinations and their options and next steps.
- Provide dedicated tutor time or virtual drop-ins to help signpost students to further advice and support networks.
- Use student council forums, new bulletins and information sharing to help students identify the things that are working well for them and new ideas about how to support each other may help to promote pupil voice, a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Encourage students to think about the elements of their day-to-day life they can control and change compared with the issues that are outside their control. Helping them to focus on small, positive and practical targets relating to them in the short-term, may help to give them a sense of autonomy and independence. This may include helping them to manage their use of social media what works well and if there are any aspects it would be helpful to change.
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/#how-can-i-have-a-more-positive-time-online?>
- Providing opportunities for free thinking and creativity, for example, through drama, expressive or creative arts, sculpture or design, as a way of communicating their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours as an expression of individuality at this time.

FURTHER WORK

Monitor any pupils who are unwilling to engage and appear to lack motivation towards autonomy and independence. Equally, be vigilant to any patterns of dissociation from peers or from learning especially where this is out of character for the young person.