COPING WITH CHANGES

1 hour
Create a safe and positive learning environment by agreeing ground rules for the lesson.

In this lesson we will learn to:
- recognise different changes that may happen in our lives
- consider how we cope with change.

Resources
- sticky notes
- action plan handout.

Digital resources
- Changes film
- Resilience film.

Activity
1. As the students come in to class, ask them to think of something that could have changed for someone their age over the last year (remind the students not to share each others personal stories in a class setting). This could include moving, changing hairstyle, changing friendships, hobbies, someone dying, body changing, having more responsibility.

2. In pairs, ask the students to record some of the changes that they have just discussed on sticky notes.

3. Write the headings: ‘sudden change, difficult change, exciting change and small change’ on the board and ask groups to decide where their suggestions might go and to stick them under the relevant headings.

4. Discuss – what is obvious? How did you decide? Did everyone agree? Remind the students that lots of changes in our lives can be exciting and challenging, like getting older or taking on new responsibilities – and that how we react to changes differs from person to person and depends on how we view a change.

5. What can help us to prepare for changes and challenges that may lie ahead? Ask students for ideas. Bring together as a class and discuss. Allocate one of the changes listed on the board to each pair and ask students to create an action plan for how to best prepare for and cope with this change. What thoughts could they practice, actions beforehand? Share some of these. If there is time student can design a toolkit recommending ways to face changes ahead to display.
6. Closing activity – Changes: Ask each student to think about all of the things that have changed in their lives in recent years, small changes happen every day, from what we eat, what we wear, how we get to school and so on. Other changes we can plan and prepare for to help us cope with them and make the best of them. Sometimes changes happen that are out of our control and we have to find ways to cope with them and find a way to think positively about what has happened. Ask each student to think of an exciting positive change that might happen for someone their age over the next few years. Ask some students to share these before they go.

7. Remind students of where they can go to for support if they need it.

**Key message**
We all react differently to changes in our lives. Changes are inevitable, nothing stays the same. Some changes are harder to cope with than others. What is important is that when we are struggling with how we are feeling, we need to be able to ask for help and talk to someone. Everyone faces challenges from time to time and we can’t feel happy all the time. Asking for help can help you to deal positively with your problem.

**Reflection**
What do I have in my toolkit?

**Links to:** Managing stress | Let it out | Talking helps | Positive thinking | Who are Samaritans? | Being assertive