



# Guide to Thrive

Inspire students to leap into Year 7

## Classroom Activity:

### Whole Group Discussion:

### *What can I control?*

Ask students: "How do you feel about not being certain of what will happen next?"

Do we all experience change and uncertainty in the same way? Elicit discussion about age, culture, traditions around discussing change and uncertainty etc.

### Class Activity:

The purpose of this activity is to reflect on what can and can't be controlled. Remind students that the hand is an important visual reminder of control. Explain to students that if something is in their hands, they are in control of it. For example, if they are holding a piece of rubbish in their hand, they are in control of the rubbish.

They can choose to hold the rubbish, roll it in their hands, throw it in the bin, throw it at someone, etc. If something is not in their hand, they're not in control of it. If the rubbish is on a table inside a locked classroom, they cannot control what happens with the rubbish, even if they would really like to.

Step 1: Begin by telling students to trace their hands onto a piece of paper.

Step 2: On the inside of the hand, write, "In my control." On the outside of the hand outline, write, "Out of my control."

Step 3: Now, encourage students to write or draw the things that are in their control on the inside of the hand. This could be things like: my behaviour, my thoughts, the words I choose to say, the words I choose to keep to myself, the way I react to others, etc.

Step 4: On the outside of the hand, write things that are not in their control. These could be things like: my mum's job, the weather, the pandemic, the way people talk to me.

#### Can Control



#### Can't Control



Reflect on what can and cannot be controlled.

Ask students questions about their feelings around transition. Adapt for Year 6/7. If students have done the diagnostic exercise (in the Life Ed introduction to transition pack), you may already be aware of some of the main concerns in the class.

- How are they feeling about going to school/how has it been starting a new school?
- What are they most worried about at the moment?
- Who do/can they talk to about their concerns?
- Discuss the concept of change, and what can and can't be controlled. Elicit responses as needed.

Ask students, what does this tell you about transition/starting a new school? What can we control and what do we have to let go?

This activity can build capacity in students, reduce stigma around control, stress and anxiety, and introduce techniques for self-regulation and coping.

### **Optional Learning Activity:**

You can also lead students through a visualisation in which the things they want to control that are out of their control are falling through their fingers. For example, if you have student whose parent/s and carer/s is/are going on a work trip, think about getting the student to visualise the experience.

The student could visualise a car or a plane passing through their fingers. Help the student to create a narrative: "I cannot control my dad's/grandmother's/carer's trip. I cannot control when they leave or when they return. I CAN control my actions. I can choose to call or text them. I can choose to notice things that make me happy each day until they get back. I can control my actions."

Let students know that trying to hold on to something tightly in their hands that is truly outside of their control can leave them feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.

It's hard to hold on to something that we have no control over!

Visualising themselves opening their grasp and releasing whatever that thing is, can be a powerful way to relinquish that tension and focus on the things "at hand" or the things that are truly within their control.

### **Grounding**

Let your students know it is ok to feel overwhelmed about change. If any of your students ever feel overwhelmed or experience out-of-control feelings, they can name five things they can control right now in the moment. This is also a grounding activity. For example:

1. I can control my breathing.
2. I can control my thoughts.
3. I can control my words to myself.
4. I can control my words to others.
5. I can control my body.

Think of other ways to help students to develop grounding strategies.

### **Homework:**

#### **Reflect**

Allow a few days for students to reflect on control and sitting with change with their family. This can be done in their own time, through discussions or exploration.

#### **Discuss and Document**

What works for family members to manage feelings of stress and uncertainty? Are there any cultural or gender differences? These discussions can be an effective way to reduce stigma around anxiety and mental health, and support families to talk more about what can and can't be controlled. It can also allow students to share their worries with parents and carers, siblings or other family members. Encourage students to make a list of ways to manage stress, and strategies to stay grounded when they feel stressed.

#### **Present**

Encourage students to share their findings with their peers. What have they learnt about managing feelings of uncertainty?