



Assembly guide

Get through difficult times and bounce forward - a resilience themed assembly

Suitable for primary age children

Aims

- 1** To begin to understand that difficult things happen to us but the important thing is how we adapt to the situation that we didn't expect, didn't like or are struggling with
- 2** To understand that people around us can support our resilience. To share examples of how friends, family and teachers can help us get through tough times and how we can remain hopeful
- 3** To understand that getting through difficult times is a vital part of learning and can help inform how we respond in the future, helping us to 'bounce forward'
- 4** For older children, to introduce the word 'resilience' if appropriate

Materials required

- A bouncy ball
- 'Giraffes Can't Dance' (either book or internet video clip) or alternative story to highlight resilience
- Cut-out cardboard balls (one per child)
- OPTIONAL: PowerPoint slides suitable for older children

Step One: Introduction

[corresponds with slide 2]

Key teaching point

It is important to learn how to get through difficult times

Begin by sharing a personal story of a recent occasion in school when you have noticed a pupil or an adult who **'kept trying'** even though what they were trying to do was difficult for them.

NOTE Try to use a story where other people helped the person to keep trying, as the importance of friendships and social supports will be a reflection point at the end of the assembly.

Example: "Yesterday on the playground I noticed some children trying to hula hoop. Some children managed it straight away, but one child just couldn't get it right first time, or the second, or the third. I could tell it was really tricky for him. He had a big frown on his face, went red, and sometimes I could hear big sighs! But you know what, he didn't give in, he kept trying and practising. By the end of break time he still hadn't managed to keep the hula hoop going. He went back into school really fed up! When I went back to the playground at lunchtime, I wondered if he would have given up all together or if he would be there again. And you know what, there he was, with the hula hoop, determined to hang on in and not give up even though it was really tricky for him."

Explain that difficult things happen to us but the important thing is how we adapt to the situation that we didn't expect, didn't like or are struggling with.

Ask if pupils and staff can share an appropriate example of an occasion when they have tried to do something that was difficult for them.

Suggested questions for pupils or staff:

- What did you do?
- Did you keep on trying?
- What helped you to keep going?
- Who helped you to keep going?

Example: Ask the children "Hands up anyone who is just beginning to learn the recorder? How about those who have learnt it for a while? How did you feel when you first started playing? Who helped you get better? Who encouraged you to practice even when you felt downhearted about it, like you were never going to improve and you felt like giving up?"

Or ask the teachers: "How about you, teachers? Is anyone struggling with their New Year's resolutions?" For instance, a member of staff might have started running and by mid-January felt like giving up, but then found a running partner or listened to inspirational music?

Optional extension for older children

[corresponds with slide 3]

Key teaching point

When things don't go as we want them to, it can be really hard to remain resilient. The important thing is how we adapt to the situation that we didn't expect or that is more difficult than we have experienced before.

NOTE If you are not using PowerPoint slides, it may be helpful to write the word 'resilience' on a board or flipchart.

Ask the children if anyone has ever heard of the word 'resilience' or knows what it means? It is quite an unusual word and can be tricky to explain but it is a really important word for us in school and in our lives.

Discuss words and phrases that relate to the word 'resilience'. For example 'Asking for help', 'Learning from mistakes', 'Trying something different' and 'Staying positive'.

Step Two

[corresponds with slide 4]

Key teaching point

We can learn new things or find ways to get better. We can learn by making mistakes.

Introduce 'Giraffes Can't Dance' (or an alternative story of your choice relating to resilience) as a story about a giraffe called Gerald who didn't give up, even though he might have felt like walking away.

You could:

- Read the story
- Watch the YouTube clip: Giraffes Can't Dance
tinyurl.com/giraffedance
- Or choose an alternative story which highlights resilience

At end of story discuss:

- What was difficult for Gerald the giraffe?
- How did he feel about this?
- What did he want to do?
- What helped him to keep on trying?
- How did he feel when he succeeded?

Step Three

[no slide]

Key teaching point

Other people including family, friends and teachers can help us when we are worried or unsure about things. Talking to other people can help us to find ways to do things differently and stay hopeful.

Bounce a ball to demonstrate how it keeps bouncing again and again and again. No matter how hard you throw it, it always bounces back up.

Discuss how the bouncing ball is similar to Gerald the giraffe in the story.

Example: "This bouncing ball reminds me of Gerald the giraffe in this story. At first he thought he couldn't dance but with a little help from his friend he kept on trying until he got better at it. Even though it was really difficult for him. He didn't give up and he kept on bouncing, and because he didn't give up he was able to learn something new and he felt really good about himself and what he was able to do. **He bounced forward.**"

Think about some of the things that helped Gerald keep bouncing forward. Ask pupils what or who they think helped Gerald to get through this difficult time.

You might like to discuss:

- How the cricket supported Gerald by helping him to find his own way to dance. Other people including family, friends and teachers can help us when we are worried or unsure about things. Talking to them can help us find ways to do things differently.
- How Gerald spent some time looking at the moon, thinking about things and relaxing. Continuing to do things we enjoy can help us get through times when things are difficult. It is good to think about the things that you enjoy and that make you happy so you can

remember to keep on doing them even when times are tough!

- How staying positive and remaining hopeful can help us to keep trying. Highlight the positive feelings Gerald had when he didn't give up but kept trying and managed to dance in his own way.

Recall the example of resilient behaviour given at the start of the assembly, drawing attention to the role of others in offering encouragement, hope and finding new ways to do things.

Example: "Remember that story about the child with the hula hoop - who couldn't seem to get it right no matter what? Well when he went back at lunchtime to try again it was still just as tricky for him. But what I noticed was that all of his friends were giving tips, encouragement and advice on how to keep the hoop going. Sometimes a friend held the hoop to help get it started, others offered words of encouragement and explained how difficult it was for them when they first tried to hula hoop too. When he managed to do it a couple of times you should have heard all of the cheers!"

Encourage the pupils to think about what they can do when they are trying to do something that is tricky.

Who might be able to help? Think about friends, family and teachers.



Optional extension for older children

[corresponds with slide 5]

Key teaching point

What sort of things can we do to build our own resilience if we are having a tricky time?

Ask the children what things they can remember to do when they need to be resilient?

Suggestions could include things like talking and listening to other children and adults around them, remaining hopeful and positive, and continuing to do things they enjoy to help them through difficult times.

Ask the children what can they do to help others to be resilient? If appropriate, encourage older pupils to think about how they might help someone get through a difficult time. How can they be a good friend?

Step Four: Time for reflection

[no slide]

When leaving assembly, encourage pupils to take a ball (cut-out on cardboard), and when they get back to class, to draw or write on one side something that they find difficult or want to get better at, and on the other side of the ball draw or write about some of the people who can help them.

Suggested exit song: With a little help from my friends (Beatles), Shake it off (Taylor Swift), Feeling good (Nina Simone), Let it go (Frozen)

Optional follow-on classroom activities include:

- Making a classroom display of all of the cardboard 'bouncing balls' that the children have made
- Make an 'I can' zig zag book from one sheet of paper with six ideas of things to try when things feel difficult
- Outline your hand and on each digit write things children can try when things are tricky, including people they can turn to
- Make a paper origami game with four numbers on the outside. Then either four or eight difficult feelings (for example alone, worried, jealous, tired) on the inside folded sections. Under each emotion word there are then ideas for things to try written under the flaps
- Download our top tips for children from www.ChildrensMentalHealthWeek.org.uk and talk through three things children can do every day to help keep their minds healthy



**Children's
Mental Health
Week 2016**
8-14 February #childrensmhw
ChildrensMentalHealthWeek.org.uk