

Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies toolkit

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and while they offer a welcome break for both pupils and staff, it can also mean that children don't have access to some of their usual support systems, like their friends or trusted adults in school.

One way school staff can help pupils get ready for the break is by introducing them to healthy coping strategies, including self-care techniques and ways to manage their emotions.

In this toolkit, we're sharing resources to help children build healthy coping strategies, including lesson plans, classroom activities and wellbeing plans.

When learning about healthy coping strategies, it can also be helpful to learn more about what unhealthy coping strategies can look like, so we have included resources on these too.

Trigger warning: This toolkit contains mention of self-harm and eating disorders.

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Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families



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Resources

Building healthy coping strategies

Self-care summer: plan and poster

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and this self-care plan and poster will get children thinking about strategies for looking after their wellbeing during the break.

Go to resource



Tools for managing emotions – Mentally Healthy Schools

These tools are designed to help children understand and manage their emotions and feelings, and stay calm and in control in the classroom.

Go to resource



10 step guide to mindful listening – Meditation in Schools

Practising mindfulness can be a great coping strategy for children. This resources shares a 5-minute mindfulness exercise for 5-9 year olds to help your pupils feel calm.

Go to resource



Wellbeing: looking out (Year 2) – Kapow Primary

Six lesson plans on wellbeing for Year 2 pupils, focusing on different healthy coping strategies including exercise, connecting with others and breathing exercises.

Go to resource



Resilience game – Mentally Healthy Schools

Being resilient means that children will be better able to cope with challenging situations. This simple board game explores common scenarios that children may encounter in their day-to-day life at home or at school, and the resilience they may need for tackling them.

[Go to resource](#)



Learning about unhealthy coping strategies

Concerned about a child or young person?



If you are worried that a child or young person is at risk, you should involve your designated safeguarding lead as a matter of priority, who will contact the parents/carers and other services as necessary. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, ensure that they are taken to their GP or A&E as a matter of urgency, depending on the severity of the concern.

Understanding self-harm in children – Nip in the Bud

A short film and factsheet for educators to learn more about self-harm in children and what action to take

[Go to resource](#)



Managing urges to self-harm – Childline

Practical resources for children and young people to help them manage overwhelming emotions and urges to self-harm.

[Go to resource](#)



How it feels to be a child with an eating disorder – BBC

A 5-minute video helping school staff understand what it feels like for a 10-year-old to experience an eating disorder.

[Go to resource](#)



Self-care summer: staff toolkit and poster

Self-care summer isn't just for your pupils! Download our free staff toolkit and poster with lots of useful self-care suggestions for education staff.

[Go to resource](#)



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