



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

SPHE Resources

To support 2nd and 3rd year students
as they return to school

2020






Introduction

As students return to school, their extended absence will have impacted on their learning, wellbeing and overall connection to school. All aspects of wellbeing have been affected by recent events. For many young people, the unforeseen and rapid change in life has presented opportunities. Some will have enjoyed closer family bonds, rich learning experiences, and a greater sense of community. For others the prolonged time at home, with the associated separation from peers, teachers and other supports, will have created significant challenges. While some students engaged well with remote learning, others will have had limited engagement for a variety of reasons, such as inadequate access to IT or Wi-Fi, minding younger siblings as parents worked, difficulty managing the loss of normal routines, lack of access to a quiet space to work.

All students have experienced Covid-19 differently. That said, all students have been away from school for a long time and will need time and support as they settle into learning.

This year's second and third years will be arriving with the usual range of emotions associated with starting into a new school year – excitement, nervousness, anticipation – alongside feelings associated with having missed out on learning and connections with friends for several months. In addition, they will be adjusting to a range of changes to schooling brought about by the pandemic.

The purpose of these lessons is to create a safe space in which young people can reconnect with each other and with school, have conversations about the impact of recent and current experiences of living with Covid-19; and build on their coping strategies so that they can manage learning and day- to-day living in the months ahead.

These lessons are designed for use within the SPHE class during the first weeks of term. Alternatively, they can be used to plan stand-alone workshops during the first days back to school, perhaps facilitated by the guidance counsellor, class tutor or school chaplain.

These special designed back to school lessons support teaching and learning in the [NCCA SPHE short course](#).

Overall aim of these lessons:

- to enable students **reflect** upon and talk about the impact of Covid-19 on their wellbeing
- to help them **reconnect** with their new school and with each other
- to **develop skills**, attitudes and dispositions needed for engaging successfully in learning.

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NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

5 KEY WELLBEING MESSAGES

In transitioning back to school, there are 5 key wellbeing messages that the Department of Education recommend embedding within the school community:

1. a sense of safety
2. calming
3. self and community efficacy
4. social connectedness
5. hope

These messages are embedded within this resource.



THE FOCUS OF THESE LESSONS IS TO

- promote a sense of safety (by sharing public health guidelines, explaining changes to the school environment, creating class rules)
- acknowledge and affirm different emotions and experiences that students may have as they return to school
- re-establish and build connections, relationships and a sense of belonging with peers, teachers and the school
- support students in identifying ways of managing their transition back to school
- build a sense of empowerment, hope and efficacy
- promote a sense of calm by introducing students to ways to relax and regulate emotions
- support students in planning and looking forward to the new school year.

Before meeting with your students, it is important to be aware of your own wellbeing and possible anxieties that you might be bringing back to school. Acknowledge your own concerns and support yourself or seek support to manage these concerns. While it is important to keep your own worries in check when facilitating dialogue with the students, it is also helpful to share a little of your own experience, if you are comfortable doing so. In facilitating these learning activities, it is important to convey a calm and positive tone and express hope and confidence in young people's resilience and capacity to cope. (See guidance for facilitating classroom conversations)

It will also be helpful to meet with other teachers to plan how you will use or adapt these lessons and how to pace and pitch them to suit your students. Some lessons may need to be revisited with a small cohort of students in smaller groups, e.g. with the SEN staff/care team/guidance counsellor.

While the majority of students will bounce back from any negative impacts of Covid-19 in time, a small percentage may have experienced particularly distressing events or show signs of long-term or serious distress and need targeted specialist support.

Schools can share these lessons with parents/guardians to enable them to understand what is being addressed in school and to continue the conversation at home with their children.

GUIDANCE FOR FACILITATING CLASSROOM CONVERSATIONS

All students need time to process the experiences of the past few months and to adjust to the new 'normal'. So what can you do to help?

BE A GOOD LISTENER

Think about yourself as a child or young adult. Did anyone make you feel truly listened to? If so, what did they do? Copy this! Be open and interested. Imagine what life has been like for children and young people in many different circumstances. Show empathy but avoid intensely questioning or probing personal stories. Don't put anyone on the spot. Just listen attentively, be interested and show you care.



VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Voice the feelings you pick up without targeting a specific student (e.g. 'It sounds like a number of you are worried about that.'). Remind them that worrying is normal and some stress can even be helpful – motivating us to be alert, focus or take actions to care for ourselves (e.g. it can help us to follow public health guidelines).

FOCUS ON THEIR STRENGTHS AND CAPABILITIES

Help students recognise the strengths they have developed and how these can help in challenging situations. Remind them of how they coped with managing tough bits during the lock-down and the ways they showed resilience.

UNDERSTAND FEELINGS

All emotions, pleasant and unpleasant are like waves, they come and go. They are not a permanent state. Being able to acknowledge our emotions and talk to someone about them can make it easier to cope with unpleasant emotions. Encourage them to talk to their parents or other trusted adults about their concerns.

OFFER REASSURANCE

Reassure students that there are many people looking after them, in school, at home and in the wider society. Keep the reassurance low key. Over-reassuring can make us think we need to be worrying more than we are! Also remind them that there'll be good days ahead and things to look forward to.

SOLUTIONS AND COPING MECHANISMS

Help students find solutions and coping mechanisms together. Brainstorm solutions and ways of coping together, resisting the urge to jump in or interrupt with prescribed solutions. Then encourage them to pick the best solution that might work for them. Allowing them to find mechanisms themselves or in groups will help them repeat it in the future and build efficacy.

DEALING WITH UPSET

If a student becomes upset, let them know that this is very normal and understandable. They may need a private space to avoid feeling embarrassed in front of their peers. Once calmed down, s/he might feel supported by reassurances that others are probably feeling like this too. If appropriate, it might be useful to ask the rest of the group - *Who else feels a bit like this* - a show of hands, or even a few head nods, can be reassuring. It can also be helpful to ask - *How can we look after each other today or what could make today a little better?*

As always, seek support from the school's structures such as the Student Support Team, if you have ongoing concerns about a particular student. If you have child protection concerns report to the designated liaison person (usually the principal) in the school.

ICEBREAKERS



Icebreakers are team building exercises and fun ways to build class connections and positive relationships. They also allow students laugh together and release tensions. Here are a couple of suggestions.

LINE UP

Take the class to a large space indoors or outdoor and instruct them that they are going to form a line according to their birthdays (beginning with January on one end of the line and December at the other). The challenge is to do this without talking and to maintain physical distancing. Once they manage to do this you can suggest that they form a line, this time alphabetically, using their first names (again without talking and physically distanced).

4 CS TO BREAK THE ICE

Distribute pens/pencils and postits/cards to each student. Ask each student to write his/her favourite colour, country, cuisine and character. Collect the cards/postits and redistribute. Ask each student to read out loud and guess who wrote it.

M&M GETTING TO KNOW YOU GAME

Use a sterile glove to give each student one M&M and ask them not to eat it. Then in turns each person will call out their colour and answer the relevant question for that

colour. You might like to do a couple of rounds of this game and you can change the questions. You can substitute coloured stickers!

Share...

-  a favourite food
-  a favourite movie or TV show
-  something about yesterday
-  favourite song or musician
-  something you can't live without
-  anything you like about yourself!

GROUND RULES

Ground rules are most effective when they are negotiated and agreed with students, rather than imposed by the teacher. So when agreeing ground rules with the class it is important that:

- Students are actively involved in deciding the ground rules
- The ground rules are understood and accepted as an agreed basis for working together
- Students understand how keeping these rules will help everyone feel safe and respected in the classroom
- The ground rules are referred to regularly in order to positively reinforce them and revised, or if necessary, renegotiated.

GETTING STARTED

Explain to the students that you want this class to be a space where everyone feels comfortable and safe and can talk about things that really matter. So before getting started it might be helpful for the class to agree some ground rules. To prompt this process, first ask these questions

'What would help to make you feel comfortable and safe participating in this class?'

The ideas generated through this brainstorm can help feed into an agreed set of ground rules.

Openness while respecting boundaries

We will be open and honest, but not discuss directly our own or others' personal/private lives. We will discuss general situations as examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone. We will not put anyone 'on the spot'. Neither will the teacher!

Keep the conversation in the room

We feel safe discussing things within this space, and we know that other students and our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom – except where the teacher is concerned someone is at risk. In this case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy.

Non-judgemental approach

It is okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge, make fun of, or put anybody down. We may 'challenge the opinion not the person'.

Right to pass

Taking part is important. However, we have the right to pass on answering a question or participating in an activity.

Make no assumptions

We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, life experiences or feelings.

Listen to others

We will listen to the other person's point of view and expect to be listened to. Everyone deserves equal space and time to share their experience and emotions.

Using language

We will use the respectful language and the correct terms for the things we will be discussing rather than the slang terms, as some people can find that offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is we can ask our teacher.

Asking questions

We know that there are no 'stupid' questions. We do not ask questions to deliberately try to embarrass anyone else. (You might also consider making a question box available for anonymous questions).

¹ When covering confidentiality, students should be clear that teachers cannot promise to keep information confidential, and that they will share information with staff members with safeguarding responsibilities if they think students are at risk or in danger.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Please use and adapt these activities to suit your particular students' needs and context.

Learning outcomes in focus - SPHE Short Course

2.3 describe what promotes a sense of belonging in school, at home and in the wider community and their own role in creating an inclusive environment

3.3 recognise their capacity to extend and receive friendship

4.8 practice a range of strategies for building resilience

4.9 use coping skills for managing life's challenges

4.11 outline the personal, social, emotional and physical responses to the experience of loss

SESSION 1

Getting back together

Framing the conversation:

We are starting back to school after six months away that none of us planned on happening. All of your teachers want to help you settle back to school and for you to enjoy being back and do well in your learning.

In these classes, you will get a chance to reflect on your time out of school, what you've learned from that and what you need now to help you settle back so that you can make the best of the year ahead. As your teacher/tutor/guidance counsellor

I will be listening carefully to what you are saying and we will agree at the end of each session if there are any ideas/suggestions that you think would be useful for other teachers to hear about so that it will help them to help you.

Explain that in this lesson they will get a chance to ask questions or raise concerns that they might have and talk about how they feel about being back at school.

STEPS

Step 1: Getting ready!

Use an ice-breaker to help students settle in.

Then agree the ground rules that will help make the classroom a safe place for everyone to participate.

Step 2: Staying safe in school

The teacher will need to familiarise him/herself with the practical measures the school has in place for maintaining health and hygiene and bring a copy of the protocols that the school has in place to class.

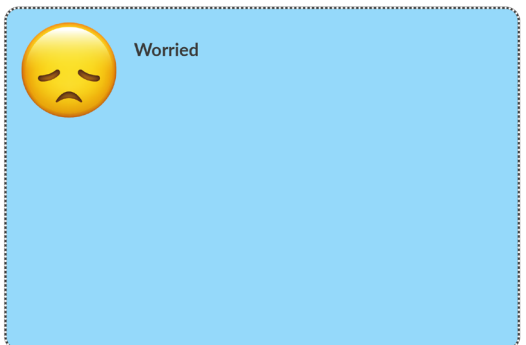
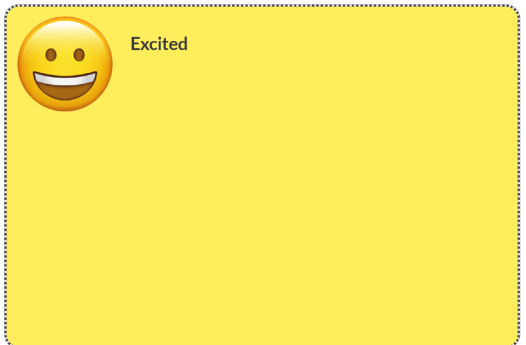
Ask students to form groups of 3 or 4 (physically distanced) and give each group a map of the school. Each group's challenge is to identify all the different places where specific protocols are in place to help everyone stay safe in school. (e.g. entering the school, moving around the corridors, using the toilets, use of common spaces, labs/practical rooms, lockers, etc). They must also note what they are now being asked to do in each situation.

The teacher outlines the different protocols and the group scores a point for each one that is correct. This will also provide an opportunity to clarify any questions or confusion that students may have.

Each group selects one thing that is working well, one thing that might be difficult to do/remember, one thing we all really need to work on. Each group is invited to share their feedback.

Step 3: How are you feeling about being in second/third year?

Students in second and third year are returning to school having been away for six months. In small groups invite students to think about why students might be **excited** to be back and then, consider why students might be **worried**. Record responses on the worksheet on page 12.



SESSION 1

Suggested follow up class discussion points

- Today, why might someone be feeling excited/happy?
- Why might someone in this class be feeling worried about being back at school?
- On the worried side, what would you like to look at more closely over the coming SPHE classes? (For example, students might be worried about how to get organised or motivated for learning, how to re-connect with school friends, how to deal with some of the challenges that arise between friends or friendship groups, how to manage their learning and other activities).

Note these and explain that you will take these suggestions on board when planning future lessons.

Wrap up and check out

On post-its ask students to write *one thing I enjoyed in this class* and *a question or concern I still have*. Explain that you will be looking at these to help plan the next lessons and talking to their class tutor/year head to make sure that they are also aware of any worries or concerns and they will also be working to help ease the transition back to school.

Conclude with a short relaxation or breathing exercise.

Teacher note

It is important to support young people in finding their own coping strategies to help them in managing day-to-day challenges and to convey confidence that they have the resilience and coping skills to manage. Equally, it is also important to let young people know that they are not expected to deal with significant stress or anxiety on their own.

This may be a good opportunity to talk about the Student Support/Pastoral Care team and Guidance Counsellor in the school. If a student shows signs of significant worries or anxiety in the lives, it is important that you seek support from the school support system. Issues regarding child protection should always be referred to the principal or designated liaison person.

Step 4:



Excited



Worried

SESSION 2

How was life in the bubble?

Framing the conversation:

Begin by sharing the feedback received at the end of the previous class. *'In the last class, you enjoyed... Some of the questions/concerns you wrote were...'* Then invite suggestions and ideas about next steps in response to these.

Explain that in this lesson they will get a chance to talk a bit more about what happened over recent months, how they managed the tricky bits and how they are coping now that they are back to school.

STEPS

Step 1:

Set up the students to work in pairs or small groups and give them 7-8 minutes to brainstorm these questions, (one person will need to do the note-taking)

- What was good about being out of school since March?
- What were the challenges during recent months?
- What did you do to make the tricky bits easier to manage?

When all groups have generated a list of ideas ask them to pass their list onto the next group and keep circulating the lists so that students can gain awareness of the diverse and shared experiences within the classroom.

Suggested follow up discussion points

- What were the things that you liked? Why? Did anything surprise you? (e.g. liking spending more time with family or not feeling under pressure to go out and meet people)
- What things did you miss when you weren't in school?
- What was the most difficult or challenging thing?
- What did you do to cope? What worked well? Note these on the board
- Are there coping skills you would like to develop?
- What did you learn/notice about yourself?
- Are there some things you did during school closure that you would like to continue? How might you keep it going?

Step 2:

Use the white board to record the things that students said helped them cope in challenging times.

Then give each group a copy of the 6 indicators of wellbeing explaining that when we talk about being 'well' it has many aspects and these 6 things sum up what's most important for our wellbeing.

In their small groups ask them to match the 6 wellbeing indicators with the different coping mechanisms that students mentioned that are on the white board.

Example

- face-timing friends = connected
- going for a walk = active
- making myself get out of bed = responsible and resilient
- doing something to help out at home = respected and responsible
- keeping a time-table or routine = responsible and resilient

JUNIOR CYCLE WELLBEING

INDICATORS OF WELLBEING



ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?



RESPONSIBLE

- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk and do I make right choices?



CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?



RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?



RESPECTED

- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?



AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?

SESSION 2

Step 3:

You can follow up by facilitating a whole-class discussion examining all the indicators or break up the indicators and give one indicator to each small group to discuss with these questions:

- Looking at the one indicator that your group has been given, complete the sentence ... This is important for young people's wellbeing because
- What can you do to support or help yourself with this?
- How can we help each other with this? (e.g. Connecting - we can spend time with others, do something kind for someone, etc.)

This is an opportunity to affirm students' sense of efficacy while also affirming the importance of getting help and support from a trusted adult, when needed (as seeking help is also a sign of efficacy). They can be encouraged to seek help from a member of their family or extended family, or a teacher in school.

Possible extension activity:

Show the following clip from Mental Health Ireland on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. (2 mins 40 sec). **Five Ways to Wellbeing** and discuss how the five ways relate to what the students have already suggested when considering the 6 indicators of wellbeing.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are simple actions to practice each day to maintain or improve our wellbeing.

- Connecting with others
- Keeping active
- Learning new things
- Giving to others and
- Noticing the world around us (e.g. practicing mindfulness or gratitude)

Step 4:

Conclude by sharing a link to a short survey (See appendix). Ask student to fill it in over the coming days so that you can share the feedback in next week's class.

This survey can be found at this link.

When this link opens, you will be given an option to duplicate the form for your own use. You will then have an editable version of the survey that you can adapt or use. Responses will be collected to your own MS Forms platform and no data will be collected or stored by NCCA.

A screengrab of the form can be found on the following pages.

Step 5: Reflection on learning

Invite student to reflect on their learning using these 3 questions:

1. **What** have I learned today? What are the important ideas I'm taking away with me?
2. **So what** does this mean for me?
3. **Now what?** What small practical things will I do to support my overall wellbeing?



Learning Remotely Survey

This survey aims to help your teachers have a better understanding about what remote learning was like for you when you could no longer attend school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your teachers would like to know what aspects of remote learning worked best for you. It would also be useful to know if there are any approaches used during this time that you would like to see continued now that you are back at school. We will use your feedback from this survey in two ways:

- To discuss the findings in SPHE class and share your ideas with your teachers
- To improve the support we provide for your learning in school.

Thank you for taking the time to do this survey and please take your time completing it.

1. Please rate the degree to which you strongly agree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

During the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoyed learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was motivated to learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt happy with the contact I had with the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Did you have access to the following to support learning from home?

	Yes	No	Sometimes
A desktop computer, laptop, or other device to access schoolwork from	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wi-Fi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. When learning remotely, please mark whether the following statements were

Always true
Sometimes true
Never true

	Always true	Sometimes true	Never true
I was able to organize myself and make a work plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could work at my own pace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had the skills I needed to be able to work on my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers gave just the right amount of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I got helpful feedback on my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I preferred classes that happened in real time – e.g. Zoom, Google classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Always true	Sometimes true	Never true
I preferred when teachers sent a short recording I could listen to or view at my own pace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was more comfortable working at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt isolated working at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt safe at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easier to communicate with my teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easier to communicate with my friends/classmates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. If you would like to comment on any of the above please use this box:

Enter your answer

5. Are there any parts of learning remotely you would like to continue in face-to-face learning back at school? Please include your suggestions here:

Enter your answer

6. Are there particular skills that would have helped you while working from home? (E.g. planning, prioritising, goal setting, coping skills)

Please include your suggestions here:

Enter your answer

7. To what degree did learning from home help you to develop the Wellbeing Indicators?

	A lot	A little	Not at all
Active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resilient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aware	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Finally - please use this space for anything else you would like to share regarding your experience of learning remotely

Enter your answer

SESSION 3

How was learning in the bubble?

Framing the conversation:

Begin by brainstorming with the class what's going well since their return to school and invite their ideas about one thing that would make it better.

Explain that in this lesson they will get a chance to look at the survey findings and look at what we can learn from it.

Teacher note

It may be important to remind students about the boundaries and ground rules for discussion that have previously been agreed. For example, in talking about learning during school closure, it is important not to name specific teachers. It is also important to acknowledge that the situation wasn't ideal for students and teachers alike and focus on what we can learn from it.

STEPS

Step 1:

In advance of the class, the results of the Google survey should be downloaded in graph form and photocopied ask students to form small groups and give each small group the results of one section of the survey (rather than having to digest it all!).

Students will work in small groups to review the findings with these questions on a worksheet to guide them:

- Were you surprised with the results? Why/why not?
- In your opinion, what were the reasons for these responses?
- How do you think this survey might be used by your school to help students' learning?

Suggested whole class discussion:

- What are the big messages for students and our school from this survey?
- What skills are coming out as being important to support learning?
- What one thing would this class like to focus on in the coming weeks/months?
- What one or two practical suggestions will go forward from this class to your teachers/school management?

Teacher note

You might find it interesting to compare the experience of students in this class/school with that of other students in Ireland (See appendix)

SESSION 4

Staying connected, even if learning at a distance

Framing the conversation:

Remind students that one of our most basic human needs is the need to feel connected, included and have a sense of belonging. Remind them of previous discussion about the 6 indicators of wellbeing and how being connected is an important one of these. In this lesson they will be sharing ideas on ways to maintain and build upon these connections.

ICEBREAKER

Blobs or Lines is a good icebreaker to help students get to know each other a little better now that they have been together for a while. Invite student to create a blob, i.e. stand together, socially distancing, or simple stand up if any of the following sample statements are true for them.

- I prefer pizza to burgers
- I can speak more than one language
- I can play a musical instrument
- I like cooking
- I play on a team
- I have a brother/sister in the school
- I am an only child.

STEPS

Step 1: Exploring connections

Ask the students to think about a time when they felt a feeling of belonging or connection to a group of people. Quietly remember what did

that feel like? Where were you? What were you doing? Who was with you? How did you feel?

Invite students to share some situation where they have felt connected in pairs.

Then explore with the whole class:

- What are the different places/situations where young people of your age can feel connected? (sport, school, online gaming, social media?)
- What does it look like/feel like?
- In those different places where you feel connected, what is happening, i.e. what are others doing, saying, that helps you to feel part of a group/a sense of belonging?
- Why is 'connection' important for all of us?

Step 2: Creating connections at school

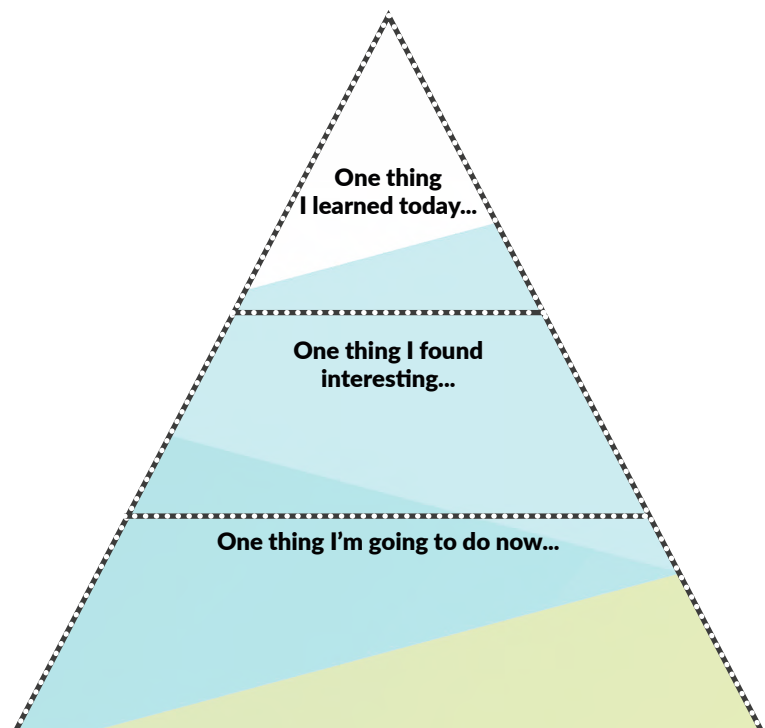
Suggested discussion points

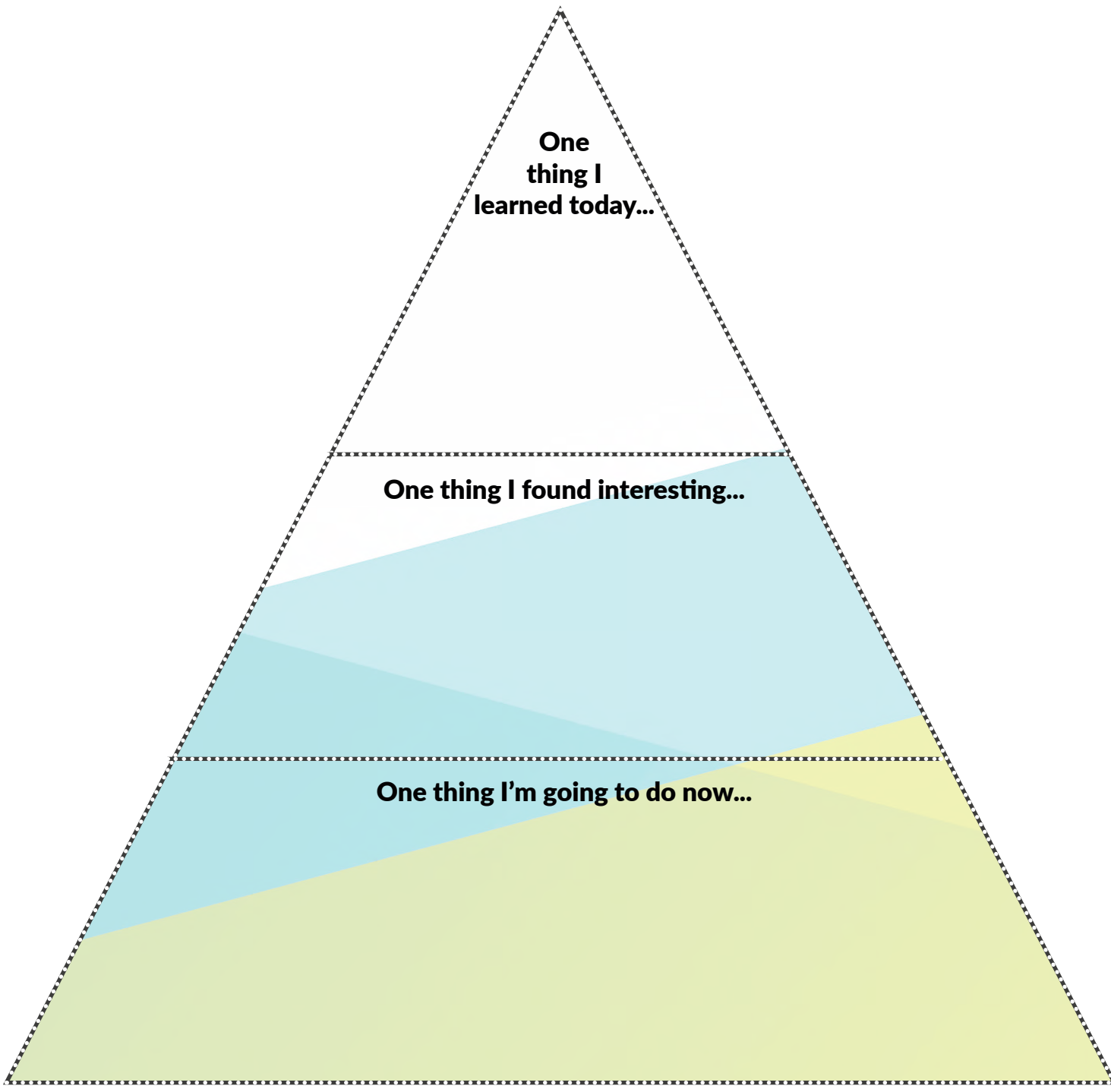
- What would it feel like/look like if everyone felt a sense of belonging to this class/to this school?
- What are the little things we can do for each other to help create a sense of connection/belonging?
- What could teachers do to support this?

Step 3: Wrap up and reflection

- One thing I learned today ...
- One thing I found interesting...
- One thing I'm going to do now...

Conclude with a short breathing or relaxation exercise





**One
thing I
learned today...**

One thing I found interesting...

One thing I'm going to do now...

APPENDIX 1

During June 2020, a group of post-primary students from different schools around Ireland were asked about their experience of learning remotely and this is a summary of their feedback. It might be interesting to compare this with your students' feedback.

What worked

- Making my own schedule
- Zoom classes worked well (Facilitated learning)
- Forrest App on my phone (Stops me using your phone while studying)
- More interaction with teachers
- Mental health sub -group
- Remote learning allowed more flexibility about when to study – could work around other demands at home
- Live classes with extension activities if interested in going deeper
- OneNote including the feedback option
- Voice memos being used for teacher feedback or instructions for learning – option to listen back
- GoogleMeet combined with Google classroom

Challenges

- Making my own schedule
- Lack of structure – more self-discipline needed
- Sometimes hard to get a quiet space at home
- Some subjects lend themselves more easily to remote learning – not the same need for interaction
- Missed talking to teachers
- Access to devices – shared laptop, no lap top, difficulty with Wi-Fi
- Some students did not participate at all –overwhelmed
- Some did not engage from Day 1 and found it hard to catch up/ re-engage
- Took teachers time to get a manageable balance between the workload they were giving their students and independent study
- Students really missed friends to vent, to share, to have fun
- Some students felt isolated. particularly those who were experiencing difficulties with learning

Skills that students felt they needed:

- Self-motivation- goal setting, independent learning,
- Self-management – scheduling, prioritising, avoiding distractions after putting boundaries on learning day
- Coping skills
- Staying connected – communicating with friends, teachers

USEFUL WEBLINKS

Relaxation techniques for use with children and young people (DES/NEPS)

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/new-relaxation-techniques.pdf>

Five Ways to Wellbeing

www.mentalhealthireland.ie (scroll under resources)

www.yourmentalhealth.ie

Click on “Looking after your mental health”.

<https://www.walkinmyshoes.ie/campaigns/mindyourselfie/mindyourselfie-resources>

A website with resources for young people developed by St. Patrick’s Mental Health Services.

<https://schools.au.reachout.com/wellbeing-5s>

A website with lots of five-minute activities to help build relationships, connections and wellbeing.

Learning to Learn Guidance, Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)

<https://www.stpaulscollege.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2ND-YEAR-STUDY-LEARNING-TO-LEARN-IGC-17.pdf>

Find out your learning preference

<https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/?p=questionnaire>

SPHE online resource portal site

<https://www.pdst.ie/pp/healthwellbeing/distance-learning>