

My strategies

What is a strategy?

A strategy is a plan to do something. When we think about the transition back to school and some of the changes that are worrying us, it can help to make a plan to overcome these challenges.

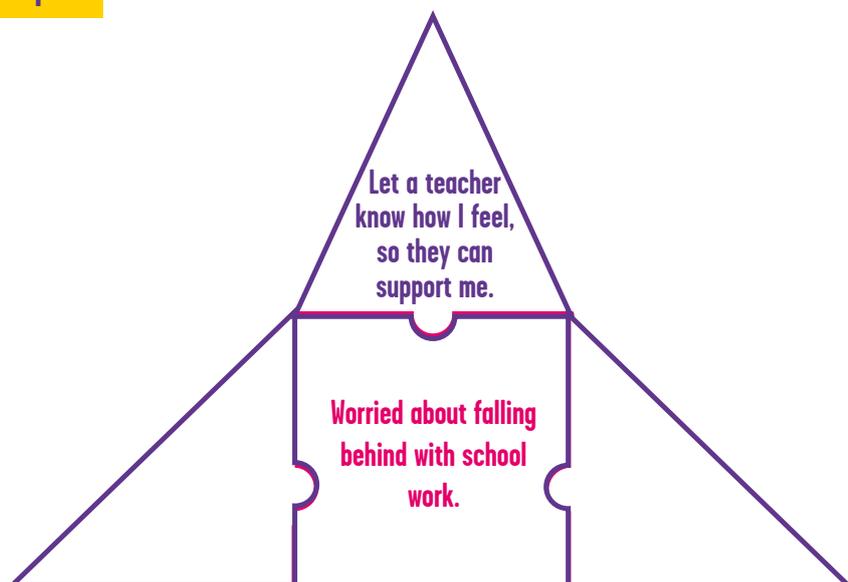
Why is this important?

Sometimes when we feel anxious or worried, it can be hard to think of ways to make ourselves feel better. Having a strategy or a plan can help us to feel more in control of a situation, and gives us a way to cope with the feelings that may come along with it.

Activity:

1. Think about all the things you may be worried about when you are back in school and write these in the section that says "Worry".
2. Then think of a possible strategy or solution that would help you to manage this worry, and write this in the puzzle piece labeled "Strategy 1".
3. Repeat this for the other 2 pieces, thinking of 2 more strategies/solutions to your worry.
4. Carefully cut out your 3 strategy puzzle pieces (ask an adult for help if you need to), and stick them into a separate piece of paper to make a complete shape!

Example:



Time:

10 - 15 mins



What you will need:

- Pens/pencils
- Scissors
- Glue/blu tack/sellotape
- Extra paper

If you get stuck:

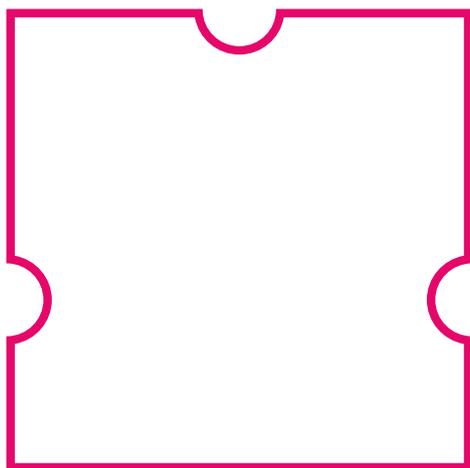
If it's a situation you can't change such as "amount of homework" then think about an attitude you can adopt to help you manage. These can be:

- Asking someone to help you
- Create your own timetable for homework deadlines

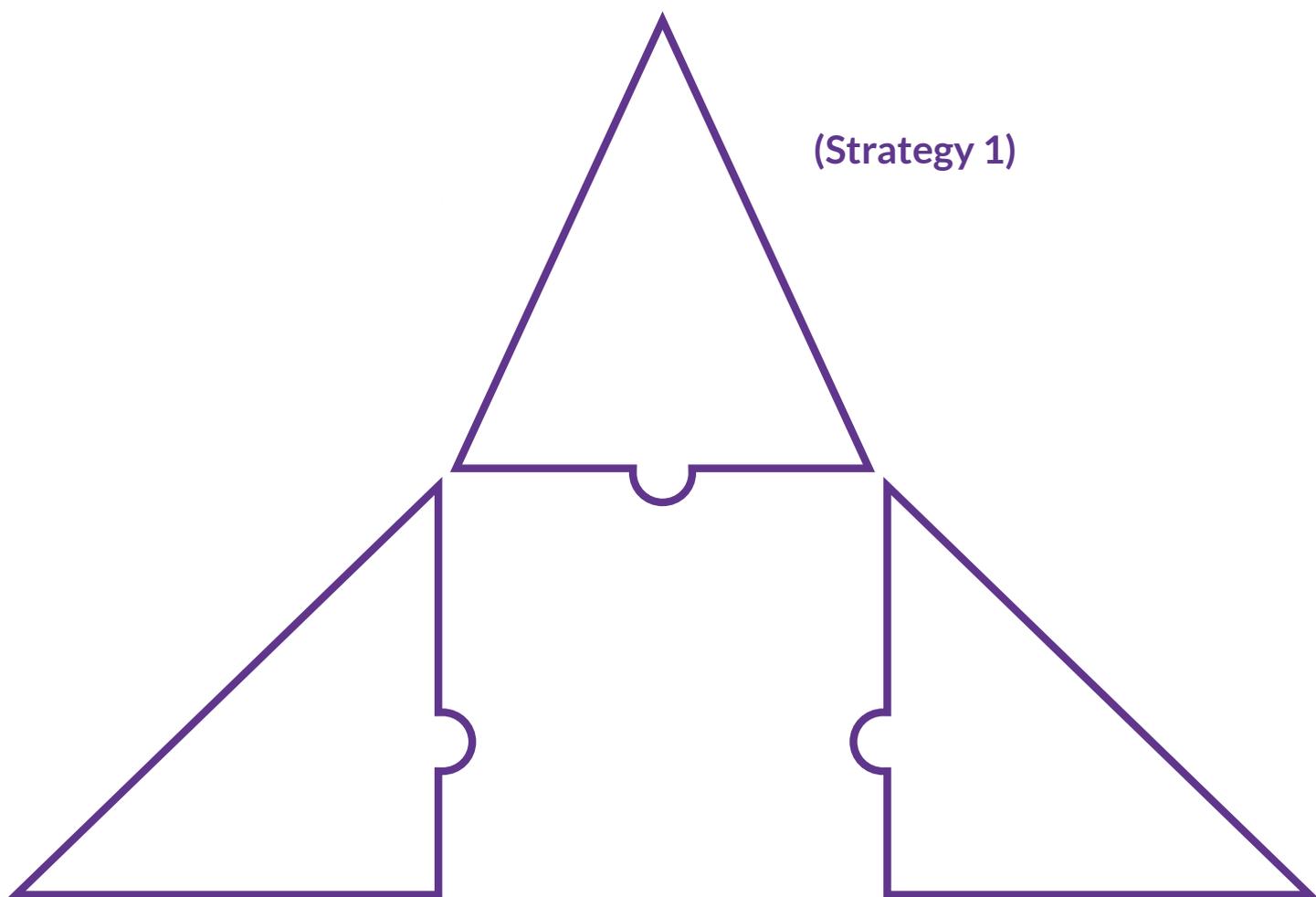
Extension activity:

Create your own puzzle!
Once you have your puzzle, choose another 2 worries from your list and think of 3 different ways to solve this.

My strategies



(Worry)



(Strategy 1)

(Strategy 2)

(Strategy 3)

Things to consider before starting

1. These are sensitive issues

When delivering lessons on the topics of mental health, resilience and emotional wellbeing you might trigger feelings in children that they find difficult to cope with. They may struggle to engage with activities or they may describe negative coping mechanisms. Different children may respond very differently to the same content. It's really important that every activity is well planned and you have carefully considered how any child may be affected and how these individuals might be best supported.

Regardless of how well we plan, it is not always possible to prevent children from becoming upset in the session. Ensure that there is an adult that the child can talk to if they are finding the session too difficult. This might be you or it might be a different adult in the room. Identify a space away from the group where the child can talk and ensure that some time is spent exploring how the child is feeling. As ever, explain the confines of confidentiality and follow up any safeguarding concerns and make sure that the child knows who you are going to talk to and what will happen next.

Sessions such as this can be difficult for all children. During the plenary, check how everyone is and tell them where they can go if they want to talk a bit more.

2. Setting up ground rules for sessions

For children to engage it is important to feel safe, contained and validated throughout the session.

You can foster this environment by getting the children to decide and agree upon a set of rules for the group. These should include listening to one another, keeping things confidential within the space, not sharing more than they want to, respecting what everyone says, not judging each other, being allowed to sit things out and reminding them that the safe space (somewhere else) can be used.

For the facilitator, this is about knowing the group of children and preparing them for having these discussions. Different groups may come up with different ground rules.

3. Safeguarding

After setting up the ground rules with a group or class, it is really important to adhere to the normal safeguarding procedures of the school you are working in. Your school will have a Designated Safeguarding Lead and clear procedures to follow if you are worried about the safety of a child in your care. If you are in any doubt as to whether a child is safe, you should seek advice from appropriate members of staff.

4. Staff considerations

Sessions such as this can also trigger feelings in staff. Ensure that staff are confident in running the session and that they also know where they can go to access support.

