Session 6
I can’t stop worrying about the future.

Why this session matters
Most people worry about the future - young people too. They worry about things like: exam results; fitting in with their peers; social pressures or dynamics; expectations from teachers, parents and themselves to do well; the unknown; uncertainty about the future; someone close to them dying; getting into university; job prospects; parents separating/divorcing; money issues; health issues; and their appearance. In order to alleviate this worry, it is essential for them to understand that their wellbeing and security is innate and that future events do not have the power to dictate how they think or feel or give them/take away their wellbeing. When they think that they can, this illogical thought/premise will lead to the creation of assumptions, scenarios and expectations, and they will inevitably spend time over-thinking and ruminating about these situations. This detaches them from the present moment. Their thinking will try and help them but will be misguided, repetitive and fixed. They will seem to lose their psychological freedom. They will feel demotivated, scared of trying and even hopeless. Their behavior will likely be to withdraw, avoid things and they might display aggressive/addictive type behaviours. The realisation that it is illogical to think that future events/circumstances can put a feeling in them is liberating. It will free their minds to think about the future in a resilient, considered manner such that they know they cannot predict what they will think and feel in a future moment. They will spend less time imagining future scenarios and more time in the present. It is here that their minds will feel naturally motivated to deal with what lies ahead.
Learning objectives

Students will learn that:

1. Feelings of stress, pressure, anxiety and worry arise when we attach our wellbeing/security to a future event. It will seem as if this future event has the power to give us our wellbeing or take it away.

2. This illogical thought or false premise leads to the creation of assumptions, scenarios and expectations. We feel demotivated and unconfident to face the future.

3. Future events cannot take away our wellbeing and put a feeling in us. This realisation is the antidote to worry and will free our minds to think about the future in a logical, resilient, confident and considered manner.

4. The question: Do you think that someone or something is putting a feeling in you? contains in built self-correction. It alerts us to what side of the line of logic we are on and gives us an opportunity to reconnect with the present moment. It is here that we feel innately motivated and confident to face whatever the future may bring.
Session 6 breakdown
I can’t stop worrying about the future.

1. Warm up and bridging

   **Required materials:**
   - Box with question inside: *Do you think that someone or something is putting a feeling in you?* for Hot and Cold game
   - Hot and Cold game
   - Address previous session’s *What we’ve learnt* slide
   - Address previous session’s *What’s on your mind?* slide

2. Big idea

3. Activity: A piece of the puzzle is missing

   **Required materials:**
   - A ‘Piece of the puzzle is missing’ worksheet, with markers
   - Worksheet with 4 challenges.
   - X 4 sets of crayons representing colours of the rainbow
   - 2 questions on the activity
   - missing piece of the puzzle slide

4. Discussion: What makes you worry?

   **Required materials:**
   - Red paper with Q1 and Q2 for half the group
   - Green paper for Q3 and Q4 for half the group
   - Buzzer or timer
   - Hand out green and red papers face down to each student
   - Play think turn and snatch
   - Question slide
   - Write feedback on board
   - Worry and worry-less travelled slide

5. Activity: Jenga thinking towers

   **Required materials:**
   - Jenga blocks and accompanying iheart poster worksheet
   - Fill in iheart poster worksheet
   - Build Jenga towers on RHS of poster
   - Remove paper from underneath tower
   - Show Insight slide
6. Wrap up

5 mins

Required materials:
- What’s on your mind? worksheet

- What we have learnt slide
- What's on your mind? slide
1. Warm up and bridging (10 mins)

**Note**: Before students enter the room, hide a box with the question inside: Do you think someone or something is putting a feeling in you?

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**Warm up & bridging**

**Hot & cold game**

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1. As a quick recap of our compass, play a game of **Hot or Cold**. Choose a volunteer and tell them to leave the room (accompanied by an adult, if necessary). Inform the rest of the group where the object has been hidden. The volunteer will re-enter the room and begin looking for the object. The group will shout ‘cold’ when they are far from the object, ‘warm’ when they are getting closer and ‘hot’ when they are close. Finish the game when the object is found or after 5 minutes.

- Ask the student to read out what is written in the box. Explain that we now have a compass that helps us know if we are on track or off track, i.e. hot or cold. The question: **Do you think that someone or something is putting a feeling in you?** activates our compass, which in turn acts like Google Maps. It lets us know if we are following a logical or illogical thought/premise. Once we know that we are off track we can begin to self-correct. This is what we call insight.

- This is so helpful because in the same way that it still looks like the sun rises and sets, even though we know that it doesn’t, it will oftentimes look like our feelings are coming from people, places and things, even though we know that it doesn’t work that way.

**Note**: To emphasise the above point, and to reassure students that it is not wrong to be off track, share a short personal anecdote illustrating an example in your life where it still seems as if a particular person or that situation has the power to take away your wellbeing and put a feeling in you.
2. Show previous session’s **What we’ve learnt** slide.

### What have we learnt?

1. Most people feel worry or stress at times. Some people believe they are just born that way. This is not true.

2. Worry and anxious thinking happens when we believe that things have the power to take away our wellbeing. We then feel hopeless, fearful, demotivated, scared of trying and failing, and like we just can’t face stuff.

3. The question - “Do you think that someone or something is putting a feeling in you?” activates our compass. It lets us know when we are off track and re-directs us towards our wellbeing.

4. When worry doesn’t make sense, it falls off our minds. We instantly feel motivated and unafraid to try - even if we don’t succeed. We become natural learners.

3. Show previous session’s **What’s on your mind** slide. Give feedback on questions and concerns raised.

### What’s on your mind?

- **Tick if you agree.**  
- **Cross if you disagree.**  
- **Question mark if you are unsure.**

1. Everyone feels stressed at times.

2. Some people are just born anxious or worriers and will never change.

3. Some circumstances really do have the power to make us feel stressed, hopeless and like we can’t be bothered.

4. Nothing and no one has the power to take away our wellbeing as it is innate.

5. Everyone has the ability to reconnect with their wellbeing, their natural motivation and their ability to learn.

Other: ____________  Questions ? ____________  Comments ? ____________

*Let students know* that in the previous session we looked at stress and anxiety, and in this session, we’ll be focusing on worrying about the future.
Let students know that they'll be competing in teams to complete some challenges that have been set for them.

3. Activity: A piece of the puzzle is missing (10 mins)

Teaching point:

- A vital piece of the puzzle is knowing that no future event has the power to put a feeling in us. When this piece of the puzzle is missing, we will feel insecure, fearful, demotivated and spend time worrying about the future.

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Challenges activity

A piece of the puzzle is missing

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Direction:

1. Split the class into teams. Give each team a number, an activity sheet and nominate a team captain.

2. Explain that each team will have 5 minutes (timed!) to complete all 4 challenges. The first team to finish will be the winner.
3. Set the timer and start them off with a ready, steady, go....!

**Note:** Challenges 1 and 4 can be completed. But 2 and 3 cannot be completed because there is a piece that is missing. Don’t tell the class this!

4. When the timer sounds, let the class settle down and then ask the following questions and discuss:

- What did you notice? 2 activities could be completed and 2 could not.
- What would you have done had you known that 2 of the challenges could not be completed? It would not make sense/it would be illogical to try and complete an activity when you know that a piece is missing.

5. Show the **summary of the missing piece of the puzzle slide**:

Let students know that understanding this fact can help them in their lives with the things they are worrying about.
4. Discussion: What makes you worry? (15 mins)

Teaching point:
- When you think about a future event, the most important piece of the puzzle is remembering that no future event has the power to give you/take away your wellbeing or put a feeling in you. When this piece of the puzzle is missing, you will feel insecure, fearful, and you will spend time worrying about the future.

Direction:

1. Before handing out the pieces of paper with the questions (in slide below), explain to students that:
   - They'll be given either a green or a red piece of paper which will be placed face down in front of them on their desks. All the green papers have the same 2 questions on them and the red papers have another 2 questions on them.
   - When the buzzer sounds, they should turn over their paper and write down as many answers that come to mind as possible. **NB: inform students that their answers will be seen by their peers so they should use their discretion in terms of what they choose to share.**

2. Sound the buzzer and let the game begin. After 60 seconds, sound the buzzer again. Tell them to stop writing and to quickly find someone with the same coloured paper to share/snatch any answers that resonate for them that they haven't yet thought of (pupils should write these down on their papers).

3. After another 40 - 60 seconds, the buzzer will be sounded again to indicate that they should find another person to share/snatch from.

4. Continue to share/snatch answers for up to 5 minutes.

**Note:** This is a suggested fun and interactive way of seeing what worries are on students’ minds. It can be done in other ways too.

5. Show the **Question** slide and take feedback from the two groups. Write students' worries and concerns on a board or flipchart. This should take 5 minutes so as to leave time for the final part of this activity.
Discussion

What makes you worry?

1. Do you play the ‘if ---- happens, then I’ll feel’ ----? Write down examples of things you think or worry about a lot, e.g. ‘If I fail my exam, then I’ll feel like a failure, if I look better then I’ll feel more confident’.

2. Which decisions do you find difficult or challenging (even paralysing), and why? e.g. which secondary school should I go to? Should I go to the party or stay home and study?

3. What expectations do people have of you that seem to make you feel pressured or worried? e.g. my parents thinking I need to get good results.

4. What worries do you have about things going wrong? e.g. someone getting sick or dying, parents separating or getting divorced, being burgled or attacked, illnesses and pandemics.

Note: To support listening skills, ask students to listen carefully to the feedback being given by their peers and tick off similar points on their own paper as they are said. This way, they are not repeating points already mentioned.

6. Show students the Worry and Worry-less Road slide and hand out the accompanying worksheet.

Note: In order to integrate the feedback mentioned by students, above, make sure you refer to their specific examples. Show how they will inevitably create a lot of worrisome thinking, feelings and behaviours as they’ve now attached their wellbeing to them.

- Explain that depending on which sign we follow, we will either land up on the Worry Road or the Worry-less Road.

- When we believe that future events, like the ones mentioned in point 5 above, have the ability to give or take away our wellbeing or put a feeling in us, then we will experience all the worrisome and difficult thinking written on the slide.

- As students will notice, we will have very different thoughts, feelings and behaviours depending on which road we are on.

- Point out the signposts alongside either road and ask students to circle the ones that feel familiar to them when they worry.

- Ask students to look at the list on the flipchart and choose something that they don’t usually worry about. Ask them to reflect on the kind of thinking they have in relation to that thing. It probably feels like they don’t have a lot of thinking about those things and feels very natural and normal. Ask for a volunteer to give their example of worry-less thinking and point out the signposts they experience when they think about that situation, e.g. secure, free, responsive, etc.
Reiterate that these signposts are going to be great clues for them as to which road they’re on/which logic they’re following.

**Note:** It is a good time to mention that we all have areas in our lives where we are ‘on track’, i.e. we are naturally secure and feel our wellbeing. And at the same time, there are many areas in our lives where we are ‘off track’ as a result of outsourcing our security and wellbeing. It’s important to learn about both these roads as we will find ourselves travelling along both.

Let students know that they’ll be doing an activity showing the false premise or false logic which leads to the creation of ‘misguided thinking towers’, and then they’ll see how these towers collapse.

5. **Activity: Jenga towers (10 mins)**

**Teaching points:**
- When we believe that a future event can put a feeling in us, we will inevitably overthink and create misguided thinking towers.
- The insight or realisation that no one and no thing can put a feeling in us, collapses our misguided thinking towers. We feel naturally motivated and free to think in a helpful, common-sensical and insightful way.

**Direction:**
1. Divide students into pairs. Give each pair the *iheart poster* worksheet with some Jenga bricks.
2. Using the *iheart poster* slide or a hard copy version, guide students step by step to fill in an example of a future event or events that they believe makes them feel stressed or worried. This should be done on the top line of the poster and in the psychological system on the RHS, e.g. upcoming exam results or an upcoming social event.
3. Explain to students that when they believe that their chosen example can put a feeling in them, this is an illogical thought or false premise, e.g. my upcoming exam results are making me worry, an upcoming social situation is putting a feeling of anxiety in me.

4. Instruct students to build a tower with the Jenga bricks over the cloud on the RHS of paper in the psychological system.

**Note:** this structure MUST be built on stilts.

5. When they have finished, ask them to describe the thinking represented by their Jenga tower, e.g. will people like me, I hate these social events, I wish I didn’t have to go, people are so mean, what’s wrong with me?

6. Make sure they write down on the feeling lines provided, the feelings they will be feeling as a result of all this thinking, e.g. overwhelmed, insecure, panicky, hopeless, stuck.

7. Draw students to the question at the bottom of the poster: **What have you attached your wellbeing to?** Using the same example, explain that if we have attached our wellbeing/ self-worth to people liking us, then it is understandable, even logical, that we will think that a social situation (which is attended by many people) has the power to take away our wellbeing and make us feel uncomfortable. This one illogical thought or false premise, i.e. the upcoming social situation can make me feel anxious, will predictably begin to create thought towers. Our thinking will be creative and will try to help us, but it will be working from a faulty foundation. It will quickly multiply and form towers of stories, beliefs and judgments.

8. Now ask students to carefully knock off a few blocks from the top of their towers. They should then slide the paper from underneath the tower and see what happens.
9. Students will witness their ‘misguided thinking’ towers collapse. Explain that when we realise that we don’t need people to like us in order to feel good about ourselves, it will look less and less feasible/possible that social events can put a feeling in us or take away our wellbeing. As a result, these thought towers will slow down, a few bricks will fall off and they will gradually or in some cases instantly collapse.

10. End the activity by showing students the insight slide.

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**Jenga Activity**

Insight, a sight from within, collapses our misguided thinking and reconnects us with our innate wellbeing. We will feel naturally resilient, motivated and hopeful.

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6. Wrap up (5 mins)

1. Show the What we’ve learnt slide.

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**What we’ve learnt**

Think about one thing you worry about... A LOT! Write it in the question and point your compass in the direction of the Yes or No answer.

Do you think that someone or something is putting a feeling in you?

This is logic...

This is how you...

When we let our minds travel into the future it can look like a horror movie and so we begin to worry!

The game changer is knowing where your wellbeing, security, peace of mind and wisdom are to be found!
2. Hand out the **What’s on your mind?** feedback sheets for completion.

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Session 6
Worksheet

Challenges
Activity sheet

Instruction: You will have 5 minutes to complete as many of the challenges as you can. As soon as you have completed them, your team must sit down with their arms folded to indicate that you have completed the tasks.

Challenge 1:
Colour in the rainbow with the markers supplied

Challenge 2:
Complete this maths problem
Mary works 5 days a week at the bakery. She never misses a day. How much does she get paid at the end of the month?

Challenge 3:
Unjumble the words to find out what music Cal likes listening to: ____________

Challenge 4:
Follow the balloon strings to see which balloon string MC is holding:
Do you think someone or something e.g. _____ is putting a feeling in you?

No = Logic

1. Someone or something cannot put a feeling in me.

Emotionally free / Secure / Connected / Wise thinking / Quieter mind / Naturally motivated / Not attached / Not conditional

2. Someone or something can put a feeling in me.

Stuck / Insecure / Limited / Overthinking / Repetitive / Judgement / Vulnerable / Attached / Conditional

Yes = False Logic

1. Someone or something can put a feeling in me.

2. Someone or something cannot put a feeling in me.

What have you attached your wellbeing to?
When you think about a future event, do you believe that it can put a feeling in you (give you/take away your wellbeing)?
Session 6  
Worksheet

Do you play the ‘If ---- happens, then I’ll feel’ ----?  
Write down examples of things you think or worry about a lot,  
e.g.  
‘If I fail my exam, then I’ll feel like a failure; If I look better then I’ll  
feel more confident’.  
If ___________________ then ________________  
If ___________________ then ________________  
If ___________________ then ________________  
If ___________________ then ________________

Which decisions do you find difficult or challenging (even paralysing), and why?  
e.g. which secondary school should I go to? Should I go to the  
party or stay home and study?
Session 6  
Worksheet

**q3**  
What expectations do people have of you that seem to make you feel pressured or worried? e.g. my parents thinking I need to get good results.

**q4**  
What worries do you have about things going wrong? e.g. someone getting sick or dying, parents separating or getting divorced, being burgled or attacked, illnesses and pandemics.
Session 6

Feedback

What’s on your mind?

- Tick if you agree
- Cross if you disagree
- Question mark if you are unsure.

1. This session could help me worry less about the future.
2. If someone is a worrier, they will be a worrier for life.
3. Insight is a power I have that can collapse my misguided thinking towers.
4. The iheart question: ‘Do you think someone or something is putting a feeling in you?’ will help me know if I am on or off track.
5. When anxiety, stress and worry falls off my mind, I will feel naturally motivated and unafraid to try - even if I don’t succeed!

Questions:

Comments: