

MANAGING YOUR MIND

FOR TEACHERS

A toolkit for coping with **coronavirus** uncertainty

We are currently experiencing a time of great uncertainty. When we feel that our core human priorities are under threat – our personal safety, the safety of those we care about, our livelihoods – it can trigger high levels of stress and anxiety. Ironically, this stress and anxiety can then have a negative impact on our ability to respond and make the situation worse. But children and young people need us more than ever – their lives and daily routines have changed dramatically too – how can we help ourselves to support them through this?



positive.™

Why?

Although coping with uncertainty can be difficult, there are always things we can do. Teachers can play a significant role in mitigating the impact of uncertainty for themselves, and for children and young people. They can help each other to manage their stress and anxiety, and adopt a narrative that promotes a calm, positive, proactive response.

At Positive, we have over ten years of experience helping individuals and organisations to manage periods of stress, uncertainty and change. We know that many school leaders and teachers are currently looking for practical support in managing the effects of coronavirus.

We have therefore put together a short digital programme using our experience to help boost tolerance of uncertainty and enable teachers to navigate these new and developing challenges.

What is it?

'Managing Your Mind: for teachers' is a digital programme designed by Positive's team of experienced psychologists. Delivered in five easy-to-digest modules, it provides individuals with a foundation of knowledge and a simple toolkit to help them better manage uncertainty and its associated challenges. As with all Positive's work, the programme is grounded in science and designed to inform, support and empower both individuals and groups – so it's perfect for teachers and schools.

How is it delivered?

The programme is delivered entirely online. All modules are presented in an engaging, mixed-media format and can be accessed from a desktop or mobile device.

What's covered?

Module 1

Introduction: Taking control in unprecedented uncertainty

Humans are instinctively threatened by the unknown. However, whilst we are programmed to fear uncertainty, our minds are highly flexible and adaptive, and with the right knowledge and tools we can learn to tolerate ambiguity better and respond more proactively to change.

You will learn:

- How uncertainty activates our threat response and what impact this has
- The importance of normalising anxiety and stress
- How simple techniques and practical actions can provide an antidote to uncertainty

Module 2

Awareness: Emotional literacy as an antidote to uncertainty

For many of us, high levels of uncertainty can make us feel anxious and unsettled, causing us to fall into unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaving. Having the ability to recognise the role that emotions play in how we think and behave is key to effectively managing difficult situations.

You will learn:

- How your moodstate influences your thoughts, physiology and behaviour
- How maladaptive thinking, fuelled by unhelpful levels of anxiety, can lead to unhealthy behaviours
- How tracking your mood and regulating your emotional response can improve your tolerance of uncertainty

Module 3

Focus: Managing worries and intrusive thoughts

When we're worried about something it can be difficult to focus our attention. However, being able to manage our minds and deal with distractions (both internal and external) is key to protecting our wellbeing and responding effectively to the challenges we face.

You will learn:

- How threat can hijack your focus
- Techniques for managing your attention and productivity
- The importance of distinguishing between useful and useless worries
- How you can reduce intrusive thoughts and avoid catastrophic thinking

What's covered?

Module 4

Connection: The importance of social support

As remote work and isolation measures become increasingly widespread, individuals face new challenges in connecting with others. However, social interactions play a fundamental role in determining our wellbeing and resilience in the face of uncertainty, and finding ways to maintain connections now is more important than ever.

You will learn:

- The impact that human connection has on our physical and psychological health
- How kindness and altruism can positively impact our ability to handle challenges
- The role of emotional contagion in determining group wellbeing and performance
- Practical strategies for staying connected and supporting colleagues/family from a distance

Module 5

Mindset: Cultivating a positive, protective mindset

Even when things feel out of control, we can always change our mindset. This can have a huge impact on how well we're able to cope with a difficult situation.

You will learn:

- How your mindset can affect your ability to handle a challenge
- The benefit of channelling 'realistic optimism' combined with 'strategic pessimism'
- How simple tools and techniques can help you to authentically shift your mindset
- How you can work with others to also achieve a more positive group mindset

For more information:

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