

MENTAL  
HEALTH

IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS

PHYSICAL  
HEALTH

# PSHCE Bulletin

## Being Optimistic

Welcome to your PSHCE Bulletin, Monday 15th June, 2020.

This week I am returning to a topic that we started our school year with, but with a small addition. In the first PSHCE lesson of the year, I asked you to focus on Optimism. At that time we were starting a new school year and thinking about how we could make the most of the year ahead, be resilient and stay kind to ourselves and others. We had no idea about where we would be now. And no idea just how much we would need the messages of that lesson.

It may well have been that some of you were thinking about other things that day, back in September. You may not have thought that the lesson was relevant to you. Or maybe you thought that you knew it already. We didn't know that we would be put to the test 6 months later. So I have included part of that lesson again for you this week. This is partly to reflect on where we have been and how we have used the mental resources that we have to help us navigate new and choppy waters. But there are also two other reasons that I have come back to it.

The first is to add to the conversation a little. The first part of the PSHCE session that I have sent you this week takes us back to that first lesson of the school year. However, the majority focuses on a strategy we can use to help us to overcome negative thinking. It is called 'reframing'. Things happen that we can't change. But we can change how we respond to them and what we do in our lives as a result of those experiences. Reframing is not about pretending that everything is great and it's not just about positive thinking (although it often is quite positive...). Reframing is about finding balance in our thinking, so that we don't believe that everything is hopeless or too difficult to cope with.

The second is to remind ourselves that, at Tallis, we talk about some particular character traits that ought to help us throughout our lives. Something like optimism is a valuable tool to have at our disposal when things get tough. It doesn't mean that things will always be happy or easy, but it does mean that we have reason to be hopeful. For any of you who are fans of superhero films you might recognise this quote from Justice League, where Lois Lane says. *"The world has grown dark, and while we have reasons to fear we have the strength not to. There are heroes among us, to remind us that only from fear, comes courage. That only from the darkness, can we truly feel the light."* The heroes among us are you and me.

When things are tough it can be hard to find any good. Look around you this week and try to see things that you are grateful for or focus on the things that make you happy. I wish you a very good week.

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### Useful Links and Contacts

Psychology Today - find out a bit more about optimism <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/optimism>

Have a look at the suggestions at the end of this article for training yourself to be more optimistic

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/health/how-train-your-brain-be-more-optimistic-ncna795231>

Childline - [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) Phone: 0800 1111

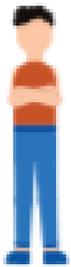
Kooth - free, safe and anonymous online support for young people <https://www.kooth.com/>

There is also a huge range of resources on the school website, from activities to careers and maintaining good mental and physical health - <https://www.thomastallisschool.com/schoolclosureresources.html>

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Consider some of the things below. Have you ever fallen into any of these thinking traps? How could you see the things below in different ways? Try the PSHCE lesson this week to learn how to re-frame some of these. At Tallis, we might think of this re-framing as Optimism.

# Thinking Traps: Short List



## All-or-Nothing Thinking

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Sometimes called 'black and white thinking', this kind of thinking operates in extremes and doesn't leave room for anything in the middle.

*Examples: I can't get all of my homework done so I'm not doing any of it! I can't believe I got a B! I'm a failure.*



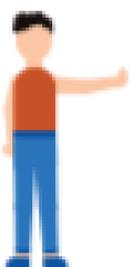
## Jumping to Conclusions

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Forming an opinion without enough evidence. Sometimes called "assuming the worst," there are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- Mind reading (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- Fortune telling (predicting the future)

*Examples: They didn't say hi to me! They must hate me; If I mess up my presentation everyone will laugh at me!*

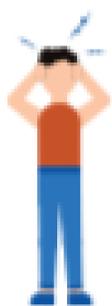


## Ignoring the good

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Discounting or ignoring the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another, thinking that good things "don't count." Paying attention to only certain types of evidence by noticing our failures but not our successes.

*Examples: I never have fun. This person can't come to my party! I don't have any friends.*



## Magnification (Catastrophizing)

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Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), sometimes called "making mountains out of mole hills"

*Examples: My friend didn't want to hang out this weekend. We probably won't be friends for much longer!; If I get a low grade on this test, I won't be able to become a doctor!*



## Should Statements

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Focusing on the past, attempting to redo history with our thoughts, thinking that we could have known things we couldn't have known. Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed. If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration.

*Examples: I shouldn't have worn this outfit!; I should have known the answer to that question.*