**Overcoming adversity**

The difficult or adverse times in our lives help us appreciate when things go smoothly. Adversity is a part of our everyday lives. When we respond positively to challenges, our coping skills, strengths, character and perseverance emerge to get us through the tough times, move forward and move on. This takes practice.

Through this activity, you will explore adversity, gratitude and mindfulness as strategies for overcoming adversity and managing complex situations.

Duration: 60 minutes

**Focus of the learning**

* Recognise ways to overcome adversity and manage complex situations, including the use of gratitude and mindfulness.
* Build capacity to support others to seek help.

**What you need**

* access to the internet and laptop/tablet/phone
* online access to:
  1. [au.reachout.com/building-better-coping-skills](http://au.reachout.com/building-better-coping-skills)
  2. <http://au.reachout.com/all-about-gratitude#what>
  3. [education.com/worksheets/mandalas](http://www.education.com/worksheets/mandalas/)

## Activity

### Overcoming adversity

Answer the following questions.

* What is adversity?
* What are ways we overcome adversity or get through tough times?
* What strengths, skills and strategies can we use to overcome adversity?
* Access the [9 tips for coping with the hard stuff fact sheet](http://au.reachout.com/building-better-coping-skills) from ReachOut.com.
  + Identify three strategies a young person could use to overcome adversity or get through tough times.
  + Why are positive coping strategies useful?

Jigsaw: using gratitude as a coping skill

Students use the [How and why of practising gratitude fact sheet](https://au.reachout.com/articles/the-how-and-why-of-practising-gratitude) from ReachOut.com.

Answer the following questions.

* What does gratitude mean?
* What are the benefits of gratitude?
* How can individuals increase gratitude?
* What are the sorts of things you would be thankful for?
* Where do we see most gratitude at school or in the community?
* How is this gratitude expressed?
* What could be done from tomorrow to have more gratitude expressed at school or in the community?

Creating a hassle free zone through mindfulness

Getting away from noise and distractions and honing in on a little ‘me time’ is a great way for people to build up their personal toolkit for overcoming adversity. One method of creating a hassle free zone is using mindfulness strategies such as mindful colouring.

Research a range of mindfulness strategies. Consider their suitability to your lifestyle.

For example, (online) mindful colouring. Answer the following questions in regards to one mindfulness strategy.

* What is the mindfulness strategy, such as mindful colouring?
* How does it improve our coping skills or boost our resilience?
* What are some alternative strategies?

Ensure that you are feeling well and free from sickness before you engage in any type of physical activity. Participation should be isolated activities that can be performed within the home or if they have access to a back yard.

Choose one of the following activities to participate in three times this week (if possible).

##### Option 1: Mindfulness

Download the [Smiling Mind app](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app) and look in “All Programs” to navigate to one of the mindfulness sessions for your age group.

**Note**: It is fairly normal for minds to wander or be distracted during a mindfulness session. Your ability to engage in mindfulness will improve with regular practice. You might find your response to the session includes fidgeting or moving in your seat, giggling, keeping your eyes open, sitting quietly and listening with eyes open or fully immersing themselves in the mindfulness practice. Mindfulness is one of many strategies and may not be suitable for everyone.

##### Option 2: Yoga routine

Download the [Daily Yoga](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQ6NfFIr2jw&list=PLui6Eyny-UzzWwB4h9y7jAzLbeuCUczAl) or similar free app from iTunes or Android. Start off with a beginner routine or [Yoga for beginners’ playlist.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQ6NfFIr2jw&list=PLui6Eyny-UzzWwB4h9y7jAzLbeuCUczAl) Play the video routine and follow along.

##### Option 3: Connecting with nature

Access a natural environment. This could be your backyard, garden or a local beach, forest or bush area. Take a 30 minute mindful walk.

* Pay attention to each step.
* Stop and look at what is above and below you at different stages.
* Pause and listen to the soothing sounds of the outdoors.
* Touch and feel the contact of air against your skin.
* Smell the scents around you.

After you have completed the activity, record a reflection by answering the following questions.

* Why did you choose that activity?
* What were some of the immediate benefits for your mental and emotional health? How did it make you feel?
* Do you think that everyone will have the same mental and emotional benefits for the same activity? Explain your response.
* Do you think that you could participate in the activity in the future? Explain why and provide some long term benefits for your mental/ emotional health in your answer.