



Strand 4 | Emotional Wellbeing

Learning Outcome 4.4:	Students should be able to discuss ways to support themselves and others in challenging times and where/how/when to seek support, if needed.
Pre-learning:	Before addressing Learning Outcome 4.4 students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, including learning about the fluid nature of wellbeing (4.1) , recognizing the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviours (4.2) and considering the impact of stress (4.3) .

The focus of learning

The focus of learning in Strand 4 is on building young people's social and emotional skills so that they can manage the normal day-to-day challenges encountered in adolescence. Learning Outcome 4.4 provides an opportunity to revisit and consolidate these skills, particularly their coping and self-regulation skills. It is also an opportunity to make it clear to students that they are not expected to deal with significant stress or anxiety on their own. Nor are they expected to be the main source of support for another young person who might be dealing with serious emotional or mental health issues.

This learning outcome is an opportunity to discuss emotional boundaries and what kind of emotional support is reasonable to expect from different people. While affirming the importance of having good friends in our lives who listen when we are feeling low, students need to know that part of being a good friend is knowing when adult help is needed. It is also important to recognise when someone else's problems are creating upset for you and reach out for support. A key message is the importance of talking to a trusted adult if a young person feels that they or a friend cannot cope. Learning Outcome 4.4 is also a good opportunity to talk about the student support structures in the school, such as the student support team and the guidance counsellor, and how students can access these supports as well as wider supports and services that are available in the community and online.

Approaches to consider:

- The most commonly used strategies identified by adolescents for coping when things are difficult were friends, sports/exercise and music (*My World Survey*). Discuss with your students which of these (or other strategies) they find helpful? In small groups, compare and discuss different coping strategies that they have found useful. Reminding them of the **Five Ways to Wellbeing**, might help prompt this conversation. (For further suggestions see Resources section of the Toolkit)
- In small groups, ask students to appraise the usefulness of a variety of websites aimed at supporting young people's emotional wellbeing. Ask each group to pick three pieces of information, advice or strategies that they think would help support young people's emotional wellbeing. Then each group can share a strategy, and why they chose it. (See **Health Literacy explained**)
- Discuss the importance of seeking help in times of difficulty, and support students in researching relevant and reliable contacts and weblinks.

Possible follow-on learning outcome: 4.9 – how to access and appraise appropriate and trustworthy information and services aimed at supporting young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health

Go to the 2023 SPHE Toolkit for teaching resources linked to LO 4.4