

People bouncing back

KEY MESSAGES

Bouncing back!

When talking to young students about overcoming a setback, it is best to talk about how to 'bounce back'. However, the coping statements taught to this age group use the simpler BOUNCE! acronym. Use a bouncing ball as an analogy: when a ball drops to the ground, it doesn't stay there squashed. It bounces back up. When people have an unhappy, worrying or sad time in their lives, it is important to know they will feel better again. They will bounce back.

Bad feelings always go away again. Things nearly always get better but not always straight away. (Unit 5: Looking on the bright side also addresses this message.)

Other people can help you feel better if you talk to them. When you have a problem, feel unhappy or are worried, talk to someone who cares about you. They can help you to check if you have got things right. Nothing is so bad that you can't talk about it to someone you trust. It's brave to talk to someone about your troubles.

Unhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset. Think again. How you think about things affects how you feel about them. If you use helpful thinking, you will have happier feelings and feel better. This involves checking your facts and not believing the worst picture. (Unit 6: Emotions also addresses this message.)

Nobody is perfect – not you and not others. We're all just trying to do our best. Sometimes we get things wrong, find things difficult to do, or we feel lonely and left out. This is normal.

Concentrate on the things that are still good when things go wrong. Try to look for any small good things in a not-so-good situation or when something goes wrong. This will help you feel stronger and more hopeful that things will get better. (Unit 5: Looking on the bright side addresses this message.)

Everybody has unhappy times sometimes, not just you. You're not the only person who has things that go wrong in their life. You're not the only person who sometimes feels left out, sad or worried. Everyone feels these things sometimes, even if they don't talk about it.

Having a laugh can sometimes help you to feel better.

Try to find any part of a not-so-good situation that is even a little bit funny. This can help you to relax and feel more hopeful that things will get better. Laughing is good for you. (Unit 8: Humour addresses this message.)

Change happens a lot in everyone's life. It's normal.

We all experience many changes in our life and some changes that happen to us can be difficult or challenging. Examples of changes that most people experience are:

- growing up
- starting primary school
- changing friends.

Other kinds of changes include: being unwell, moving house, changing school, losing a pet or family member, having a friend or someone we care about move away, or parents separating.

Sometimes there is nothing you can do to change a situation and you just have to learn to live with it.

Sometimes you have to just accept something if you can't do anything about it. But try to see if there's anything you can do about it first. Sometimes that means just not worrying so much about the change.

Why do bad things happen?

When things go wrong in your life, think about how much is due to what you said or did, how much is a result of what others said or did, and how much is just bad luck.

? Learning objectives

In this unit, students will learn:

- how to cope with challenges, difficult times and setbacks
- that having changes in their lives is normal.

Resources list



A complete list of resources including references for core and additional books, films, video clips, poems, songs and websites is available.

Everyone can bounce back

Resources



◆ Picture books

Banjo Bounces Back

Banjo the horse loves playing 'hoofball' but one day he has a tumble and has to stop playing for six weeks. He becomes bored, unfit and gloomy so decides to quit hoofball. When his friend Bella is admitted to 'horspital', he realises that he has let himself, the team and Bella down.

Willy and the Cloud

On the way to the park, Willy notices a very dark cloud that follows him. He feels sad and angry. Then it rains. And very soon the sun comes out and he feels happy again.



◆ Song

'Bounce Back'



Circle Time or classroom discussion

Begin by playing the 'Bounce Back' song through once, then play the song again with all students singing along. Then read one of the books and ask students what they thought the book was about. Record their answers on the board. For example, with *Banjo Bounces Back*, you could explore:

Discussion questions

- What kind of hoofball player is Banjo at the beginning of the story? (A star)
- What happens when he has a 'terrible tumble'? How does he feel?
- What happens next? How do his feelings affect how he thinks and how he acts?
- What does bouncing back mean? How does Banjo bounce back? What helps Banjo to bounce back?
- How does Banjo help himself to feel better? (Sets a goal, exercises, works hard and puts in lots of effort to get stronger and feel stronger.)
- How important was Bella's friendship to Banjo? How did this friendship help?
- In what ways did Banjo and Bella support each other? Is that what good friends do?



Activities

BOUNCE! acronym



Use *Banjo Bounces Back* to introduce the BOUNCE! acronym. Use the **BOUNCE e-tool** and/or **BLM BOUNCE!** (see Handbook Chapter 5) to explain that the letters of BOUNCE stand for six statements that tell people how to bounce back. It's important that the BOUNCE statements are revisited many times to help students to remember them, so they can 'bounce back' more quickly when they have a setback, make a mistake, hurt themselves or feel sad, worried or unhappy. Explore the statements in relation to a book. For example:

Bad feelings always go away again. Did Banjo’s bad feelings and unhappy time go away again?

Other people can help you feel better if you talk to them. Who helped Banjo to feel better again? Who do you talk to when you are feeling sad or worried? Why is it good to talk to someone?

Unhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset. Think again. What was Banjo thinking when he stopped playing hoofball? What did he do that showed his thinking wasn’t helpful?

Nobody is perfect – not you and not others. Banjo was the star player – was he perfect? Is anyone ever perfect? What could happen if you always try to be perfect? (You get very disappointed or angry or sad when you have a setback, you don’t easily bounce back.)

Concentrate on the things that are still good when things go wrong. Were there any small good things that happened when Banjo hurt himself? How could Banjo have helped himself if he paid more attention to the good things that happened?

Everybody has unhappy times sometimes, not just you. Is this true?

Go around the circle and ask each student to share one time when they hurt themselves, got sick or were disappointed about something. How does it help us to understand that everyone is unhappy sometimes? (It helps us to see that setbacks are normal and then helps us to ‘bounce back’ more quickly.)

Make a bounce-backer

Every student will enjoy having their own bounce-backer with their photo or drawing on it (see pages 93–4). The toy prompt reminds students that when they are struggling with a learning or social problem, they can ‘bounce back’. Discuss what makes the bounce-backer bounce back. (Gravity gives it the energy to roll back.) What happens if there is no weight in the bottom of the bounce-backer? What happens if the head is too heavy?

Make the link between how the bounce-backer bounces back and returns to where it started, even after being pushed over, and how we can ‘bounce back’ after we have had an experience that ‘knocks’ us over. This is a great activity to pair up older and younger students. It’s best if the teacher sets the plaster of Paris in the base with the craft stick and then lets each student to personalise their own toy.

? Teacher reflection

Which BOUNCE statement would you find most helpful to consider when you have a setback? Make your own bounce-backer for your desk, including a photo of yourself. It can serve as a useful visual prompt for you too, and it will encourage students to use their own bounce-backer as a prompt for coping. When you have a setback, show the class how you try to push it over but can’t because it always ‘bounces back’.

Word play

The author of *Banjo Bounces Back* does a few different things with words to make the story more interesting and fun. What words does the author ‘play’ with? What ‘real’ words are they based on? What effect does the word play have on your enjoyment of the story?

Alliteration

Refer to *Banjo Bounces Back* as an example of alliteration or when words begin with similar sounding letters. Ask each student to use a describing word that starts with the same letter of the alphabet as their name (it can be a made-up word, or they can use the same sounding letter), e.g. terrific Tom, cool Kate, zappy Zahara. Alternatively, take turns making up a sentence about the person sitting on their right, e.g. ‘Jake likes jelly’, ‘Olivia likes oranges’, etc.

Class book or display: Our class can bounce back

Ask each student to draw a situation in which they bounced back. They could write, ‘Everybody has unhappy times sometimes, not just me’ and put their name on their drawing. Display the drawings in the classroom or create a digital class book using the drawings.

Embed it

The BOUNCE BACK! acronym can become the language of resilience across the school. Teachers on yard duty could take a BOUNCE (or BOUNCE BACK) card containing the acronym as a focus for discussing playground issues that arise. Use the BOUNCE statements when students experience setbacks to help them cope. Use the *Bounce Back!* literature prompts on page 87 to discuss classroom situations, books, videos, events, etc.

Take-home task

Give students the BOUNCE statements to take home. Encourage them to talk to their families about what the statements mean and how they can help everyone to bounce back when they make a mistake or feel unhappy.

Bouncing back from being sick or injured

Resources



◆ Picture book

Banjo Bounces Back

(see page 135)



Circle Time or classroom discussion

Read or refer back to *Banjo Bounces Back* or another book of your choice. Then ask students to talk about any injuries that they or members of their family have had. Make the link between bouncing back emotionally and other kinds of ‘bouncing back’, such as physically recovering from an illness or injury.

Discussion questions

- What happened (e.g. when Banjo got injured)? Did he bounce back?
- Can you think about a time when you got sick and you bounced back?
- How do we bounce back after we have been sick or injured?
- What do we do that helps us bounce back?
- Who helps us bounce back?

Note: A student in the class may have a health issue or have someone in their family who will not recover from injury or illness – if so, you can talk about how people mostly bounce back, but not always.



Activities

Getting better

Students draw a simple flow chart in four frames showing how they recovered from an accident, injury or illness. The chart flows from the time they were injured or ill to the time when they had recovered. They write underneath: ‘Our bodies can bounce back’.

Get well card

Students make a get well card on the computer or by hand and give it to someone who is sick or injured. Talk about why kind actions, such as giving a card, can help someone to bounce back and feel better again.