

THE SUMMIT!

Adapting to change

Target competency	Manage one's emotions and stress effectively
Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct their identity Solve problems
General objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies to cope with stressful change Identify the factors that facilitate adaptation to changes and those that hinder it



REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

In the last workshop, we talked about your strengths and working as a team. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how it went.

* The challenge was to identify two personal strengths to be used in teamwork.

IN THE LIVES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

Charlie, Leo and the whole team worked very hard and finally made it to the top of the mountain. At the summit, there's a large, comfortable space where everyone can sit down to eat together after walking for hours.

Ms. Catherine says: "It's time for a look back. Soon you'll be going to high school. This is your last stretch together."

"I'd just like to say that I've learned a lot during my time at elementary school and at Camp OFF-TRAIL." says Charlie.

Ms. Catherine takes this opportunity to tell them: "All the things you've learned and experienced will be useful for the rest of your life. They've allowed you to fill your backpack with tools that you can reuse because your journey isn't over. Like today, there's still a long way to go, and that's what your starting high school represents. Throughout your life, you'll have to climb other mountains, either to achieve a goal or simply to overcome whatever comes your way."

Leo speaks up: "I have to say I feel a little nervous about next year, but at the same time I'm really looking forward to it."

Ms. Nathalie concludes: "There are certainly big changes ahead, and you'll have to adapt. But in all your years here, you've come to know yourself better and better, and to know a little more about what's good for you and what's bad for you. Remember how many times you've had to adapt and how you did it. You'll realize just how far you've come."

DID YOU KNOW?

For students, the transition from elementary to secondary school represents a major change that challenges their ability to adapt, and can arouse many emotions.

The ability to adapt is based on using the inner resources at one's disposal to deal with an unusual, stressful situation or a problem to be solved. For example, in this case, each student is going through a situation filled with unknowns that can generate stress.

Their ability to adapt adequately depends on their experience, the expectations they have (and that others have) of themselves, what they value, and the support they receive, among other things. This is why their reactions may differ from those of their peers. You can help the students by offering support, creating a climate of openness, discussing upcoming changes in advance, and formulating clear, realistic expectations.

Helping students to develop their ability to adapt promotes stress tolerance, autonomy and self-awareness. It's worth noting that the more the student trains this ability, the more resilient they will become over time.

(Families Change, 2019; Howatt, 2017)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before the students arrive, cut out enough squares from green and red Bristol board to distribute three of each colour to each student. On the board, draw a large circle with two large squares on either side: one red and one green. Prepare a box to collect the green squares at the end.
2. Hand out the cards and the *Adapting to change* handout. Take a moment to explain what adaptability is, using the information on the handout and supplementing it with your own experience, if necessary.
3. Ask the students to name examples of changes they anticipate in the coming year and how they feel about these changes. Mark them in the circle.
4. Form teams of two or of three students. Ask them to mark the green squares with factors or strategies that could help them adapt to these changes. Ask them to do the same with the red squares, but with factors that could hinder them. If the students lack inspiration, suggest broad themes for their squares, such as a person they like to talk to, an activity they enjoy doing, or a way they have of solving a problem.
5. Bring the students back into one group. Ask them to stick their green and red squares in the right place on the board.
6. Then read the answers and add strategies, if necessary, to share new ideas.
7. Discuss with the students the different strategies you've named or added. Here are some examples of questions to fuel discussion:
 - What strategies have been named that you're already using?
 - How do you feel after using one of these strategies?
 - Do you think everyone reacts the same way when there's a change?
 - Do you think all the strategies work for everyone in the class? Why?



COMPLETION ACTIVITY

Explain to the students that this was the last day of Camp OFF-TRAIL for Leo and Charlie. Tell them that, even though camp is over, you encourage them to continue using the strategies they've learned to take care of themselves and feel good. Ask the students how they enjoyed the activities, what they remember, and what they learned. Use the reminder posters to and the poster on the primary-secondary transition to support them or provide reminders as needed. The posters are available on the [OFF-TRAIL website](#), under Workshops and tools for students.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To encourage reinvestment, you can keep the green squares in a small box. When a student experiences a change that requires adaptation, you can suggest that he or she dip into this box for ideas on strategies to help.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Gravel, É. (2014). Jessie Elliot is a big chicken. Roaring Brook Press.



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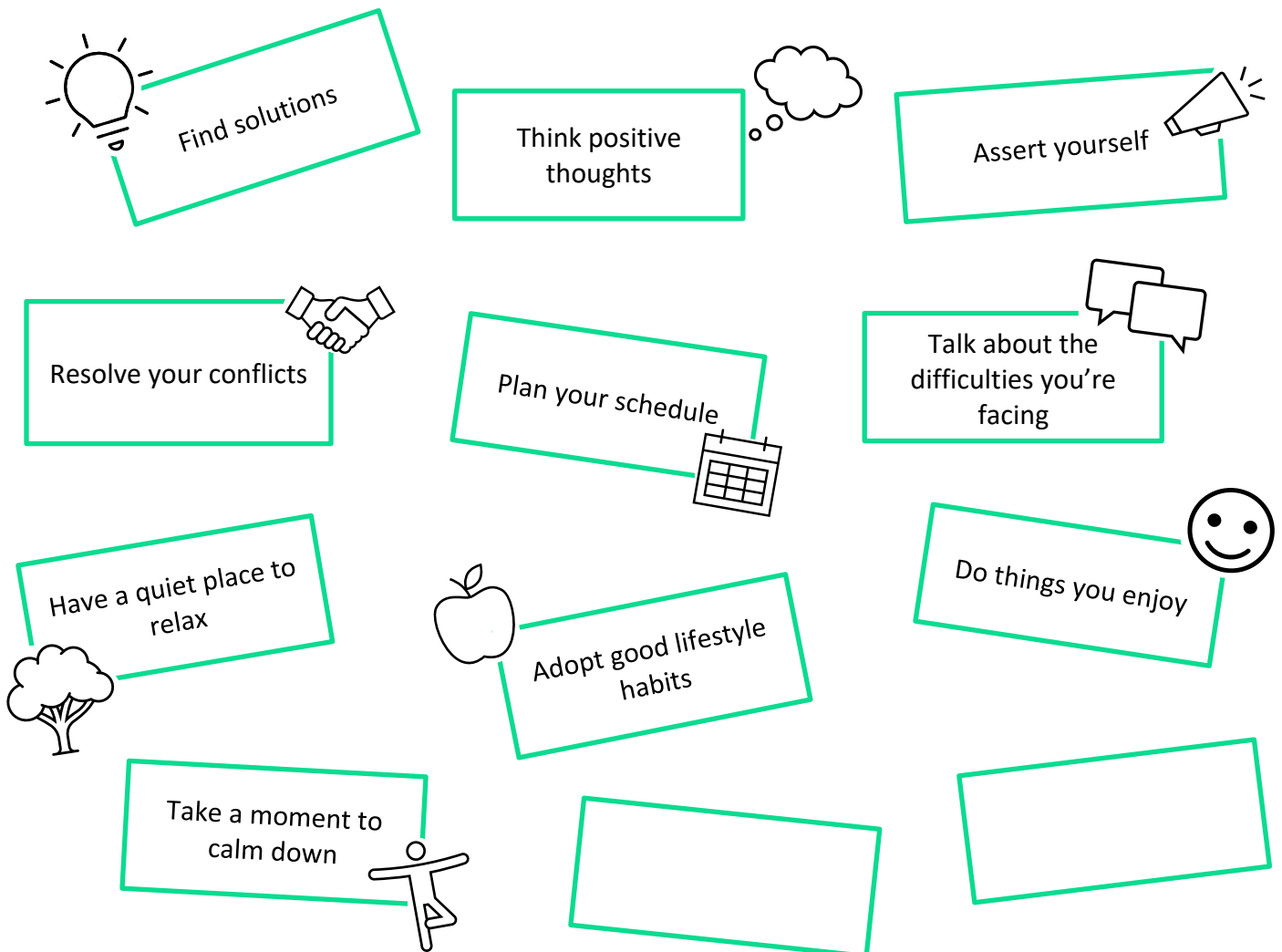
HANDOUT TO PRINT

Adapting to change

What happens when you experience a stressful change? Have you ever heard of the ability to adapt (adaptability)? It's the way your body and brain respond to change, using your mental resources. Your what? Your mental resources are tools or skills you possess that can help you cope with change, such as your determination, self-esteem, kindness, stress management techniques¹. Changes happen all the time, and even if they're small, they can be emotional and stressful. We can't always foresee them, but we can train ourselves to deal with them better... It's a bit like sports, the more you practice, the easier it gets!

Remember that everyone experiences change differently. It's up to you to find out what helps you cope, and what hinders your adaptation. The more tools you accumulate to help you, and the more you experiment with them, the greater your chances of coping well with change. Here are some examples of strategies you can use:

Coping strategies



¹ Greater Good Science Center, 2018