



ACTIVITY: 'HOW CAN I DEAL WITH THIS?'

TIME: 15+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups for class discussion
SPACE: No special requirements
RESOURCES: Pens, paper

The aim is for students to apply aspects of what they have learned about Sense of Control to life outside the classroom.

The result is that they should have the opportunity to enhance their own Sense of Control.

- Decide (bearing in mind time constraints) whether you want students to offer strategies for one or all three of the scenarios listed below.
- Consider the format in which you want your students to present their solution strategies. You may simply want them to brainstorm solutions and present them as part of a wider class discussion, or you may consider having them turn their solutions into a 'Tip Sheet' that encompasses helpful thinking and places where someone struggling with control might seek help. Role-play may also be beneficial (e.g. radio talkback or counselling session).
- When the work is done, come together as a class to discuss the scenarios and students' thoughts on how people in those situations might rely on, or regain, their Sense of Control.

SCENARIO 1

Lena had glandular fever earlier in the year and missed out, not only on a heap of school, but also on lots of social stuff. For a while, Lena's friends kept in touch by phone and Facebook, but soon they just seemed to stop thinking about her. It felt like she dropped off the Earth! Now she is better and back at school, but her friends seem to have become used to being without her; they treat her politely but like a stranger. So, because she has to do extra homework to catch up on subjects, she has no time to socialise even on the odd occasions her friends do ask her out! It's all too hard and she just wants to give up and become a hermit.

SCENARIO 2

Lukas is going for his driver's license in a few weeks. He used all his savings and bought an old car. He has been working on it every weekend, getting it roadworthy and ready for when he can legally drive. However, he started the car this morning and the engine made terrible noises and then a huge bang ... now it is as dead as a doornail. The big end bearing is shot, and who knows what else. There is no way Lukas can afford the parts, let alone find the time to fix it in time for his driving test. He just wants to take to the car with a hammer.

SCENARIO 3

Caitlyn's subject results haven't been brilliant lately, and she knows she needs to do better if she wants to get into Uni. She has decided to study hard over the coming holiday so she has the best chance of doing well in the important upcoming exams. However, she's just learned that her young step-brothers are coming to stay over the holidays – they are loud and sporty and always seem to want to disturb Caitlyn. She is already becoming bitter and anxious that her study holiday will be ruined.



DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What do you think the person in the scenario might be saying to him/herself? What feelings are likely to be resulting? How is this affecting the person's Sense of Control?
- What alternative modes of thinking/self-talk do you think might help reduce feelings that weaken the person's Sense of Control? Why would those assist?
- What specific thinking skills do you think this person could benefit from using (e.g. perspective-taking, problem-solving, seeking help)?
- Have you ever felt the way this person seems to be feeling? What made you feel that way? How did that affect your Sense of Control? What did you do to change the situation? Was there a good outcome? What might you have done differently? What thinking skills might have helped?