CONTENT STRAND: HEALTH, WELLBEING AND RELATIONSHIPS

TOPIC 2
Responding positively to life’s challenges

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Introduction

During life you will encounter many changes and challenges. Some of these may be quite overwhelming as you grow, establish relationships and try to make your own way in life. It is important for your safety, health and wellbeing that you meet and deal with these challenges in a positive manner. In this topic, you will investigate ways of doing this, as well as the importance of developing resilience and the ability to bounce back from negative situations.

As you progress towards adulthood, you will start to become more independent and new challenges such as applying for a job and moving out of home will arise. You will consider these changes and some positive strategies that you might adopt to help deal with them effectively and to seize opportunities that come your way.

Resources

- eLesson: Responding positively to life’s challenges (eles-2964)
- Digital doc: Key terms glossary (doc-29306)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do we turn challenges into opportunities and deal with issues or problems in a positive manner when things don’t turn out quite the way we expect?

SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

A student:
- assesses their own and others’ capacity to reflect on and respond positively to challenges (PD5-1)
- researches and appraises the effectiveness of health information and support services available in the community (PD5-2)
- assesses and applies self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations. (PD5-9)
2.2 Life’s challenges

All people experience challenges throughout their lives. These challenges are unique to each individual because everyone’s situation and circumstances are different. Wellbeing is enhanced when challenges are treated as opportunities rather than hurdles.

2.2.1 Challenges and positive life experiences

Young people may sometimes feel they are alone in dealing with the challenges of adolescence. The reality is that most people face a number of challenges during adolescence and throughout life. Sometimes we manage these well; sometimes we have to be content to learn from our mistakes! At other times, we may struggle to manage the challenges before us and need to seek help to work our way through them. Learning how to cope, effectively manage change and deal with challenges is essential to positive health and wellbeing.

Organisations such as Mission Australia work with young people who are struggling greatly to manage the changes in their lives. Use the Mission Australia Youth weblink in the Resources tab to learn about one young man’s journey. As a class, discuss the challenges he experienced and how he dealt with these to create a more positive existence.

As you have probably discovered, adolescence is a time of growth, change and challenge. It is a time when you think more deeply about who you are and your place in the world. It is a time when you become more in touch with your sense of self. Your journey through adolescence will present experiences that will not only challenge you, but also provide you with opportunities to grow and mature, and to learn more about yourself.

You are likely to experience some, if not all, of the following challenges during adolescence:

• finding your place in your peer group
• negotiating your independence from your parents
• managing conflict with parents or friends
• experiencing peer pressure to engage in activities that are risky
• finding a balance between the demands of study, work and leisure
• negotiating intimate relationships
• being different to gender stereotypes or others’ expectations
• changing relationships
• negotiating responsibilities in sexual relationships
• coming to terms with your sexual identity
• managing intense feelings and emotions, or new feelings
• managing greater levels of responsibility at home, school and in employment
• managing stress
• learning to take financial responsibility for yourself.
Most young people will, at various times, find themselves in situations where their values and beliefs are being challenged, or they have to manage heightened emotions, or their health and safety is being compromised. Having the confidence and skills to deal with these challenges effectively will ensure your needs are met, and that you and others remain safe.

Life will continue to provide challenges as you move from to early adulthood and as you go through the many life transitions that everyone experiences. Once you finish school there will be many changes that you will have to manage, including further study, making career choices, leaving friends as your peer group go off in different directions, and moving out of home. You will probably find these changes exciting, but they can also be difficult. Talking to your parents or other trusted people about how you are feeling and thinking can help you.

Challenges people may face as they move through life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Making decisions about further study or career choices</th>
<th>Living with others</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with colleagues in the workplace</td>
<td>Having children, balancing a career and a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding employment and starting a new job</td>
<td>Managing cultural and family expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starting university or TAFE</td>
<td>Losing someone close</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaving home</td>
<td>Managing negative or abusive relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing relationships and relationship breakdowns</td>
<td>Meeting new people and establishing new friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing finances — paying bills, rent, mortgage and other living expenses</td>
<td>Maintaining positive health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of life’s possible future challenges

2.2.2 Dealing with life’s challenges

Each challenge, whether it is now or in the future, will provide you with opportunities for personal growth. Consider your interactions with your family and peers now. Some of these relationships may be difficult because you have had disagreements, or the other person has done something that is hurtful or disrespectful. Consider how you managed the situation, if there was a positive outcome and what you learned from the situation. By analysing how you manage the challenges you face, you will be able to learn what was beneficial.
and what wasn’t, how you reacted emotionally and how best to manage your emotions, and also more about your own value system and needs. Talking to someone you trust can provide you with an objective perspective, and help you identify positive outcomes and things you could have done differently for a better outcome.

As you grow older, interactions and relationships will present new challenges, and you will learn from these experiences.

Talking to people you trust about the way you managed a situation can help you learn from it.

I COULD HAVE HANDLED THAT BETTER. I REALLY NEED TO LEARN TO LISTEN AND NOT DOMINATE CONVERSATIONS.

I THINK I NEED ADVICE ON A SITUATION AT SCHOOL.

DID YOU KNOW?
To succeed, you must first improve, to improve, you must first practise, to practise, you must first learn, to learn, you must first fail.

— Wesley Woo

For young people, the choices they make in challenging situations can be influenced by their peer group, the circumstances of the situation, gender stereotypes and a range of other factors. Young men, for example, are more likely to make decisions that put them at risk, such as drinking too much alcohol, driving powerful cars and driving too fast.

Statistics reveal that young males are involved in more fatal road accidents than young women. This can be attributed not only to their inexperience, but also to poor decision-making, which may be linked to a perceived need to ‘prove their masculinity’, as influenced by gender stereotypes.

2.2.3 Seeking help
When going through challenging times it is important to seek help and turn to people for support. Help may be sought from family and friends, school counsellors, teachers, coaches or websites and phone support services such as ReachOut and Kids Helpline. These forms of support may provide helpful advice to assist you in dealing with challenges or may simply be an understanding and reassuring shoulder to lean on.
Despite the importance of seeking help, there are various social and cultural influences that may deter some people from doing so. Social influences may include peer pressure and gender-stereotyped media messages, which suggest that individuals should be able to cope with whatever challenges come their way. These stereotyped messages may draw on the idea of males being strong, capable and dependable (and therefore not needing help), and more recently, ideas such as the ‘super mum’ or ‘super woman’, able to cope with an increasingly hectic and responsibility-filled life. It is important to challenge these stereotypes and influences in order to ensure that people can recognise their needs and feel comfortable in asking for help whatever their circumstances may be.

In the past, there has also been a degree of social stigma attached to mental illness and many people felt reluctant to admit they were struggling with mental health issues and did not feel empowered to seek help. Thankfully, this stigma is being broken down and there has been a significant shift in attitudes towards help-seeking in this area. The establishment of dedicated mental health agencies such as headspace and beyondblue and various media campaigns have helped to educate people and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. For example, ‘R U OK? Day’ is an awareness campaign to encourage people to seek help and to be there for others who are struggling.

An individual’s cultural background may also influence their help-seeking behaviours. For example, in some cultures the whole family may be involved in certain decisions rather than it simply being the particular individual’s decision; this may act in some cases as a deterrent and in other cases an incentive to seeking help. Some cultures may avoid talking about challenges and see seeking help and support as a sign of weakness. Conversely, some cultures may provide extensive support to help family members or friends through challenges.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Life’s challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they’re supposed to help you discover who you are.
— Bernice Johnson Reagon

### 2.2.4 Positive life experiences

Most young people will enjoy numerous positive experiences as they meet the changes and challenges of adolescence. Identifying these positive experiences can help support your sense of identity and can contribute to positive relationships. Positive life experiences include:

- **family experiences** — camping trips or holidays, celebrations, quality time with each other or being taught a new skill by a family member
- **personal experiences** — learning a skill or sport such as skiing, winning a competition, achieving a personal best, regularly exercising, maintaining a healthy weight range or making a new friend
- **peer experiences** — being accepted in a peer group, having a friend help you or having fun with your friends
- **work experiences** — being successful at a job interview, having your hard work recognised by your boss or getting a promotion.

For most people, positive life experiences result in a better understanding of themselves. Learning to respond positively to challenges increases the likelihood of a positive outcome. The feelings of self-worth and sense of connectedness that these experiences offer support personal growth and a positive sense of identity.
2.2 Activities
Challenges and opportunities
1. Think of a recent experience that you found challenging and complete the following:
   (a) Explain why it was challenging.
   (b) Describe what you felt and how you managed the challenge.
   (c) Explain what you learned from the experience and the things you would do differently, if any.
   (d) Share your experience with a partner and discuss other ways you could have managed the challenge.
   (e) With your partner, brainstorm a list of future life challenges, how you might manage them and the opportunities they present for you to learn and grow.

Positive life experiences
2. Identify positive life experiences you have had, how they made you feel or how they impacted on your relationships with others.
3. (a) Identify a challenge you have encountered during adolescence (such as applying for a job, a relationship breakdown, helping a friend in need or trying to resolve a disagreement). Did this challenge result in a positive experience for you? Explain why or why not.
   (b) What did you learn from this experience?
4. Why is it important to focus on positive life experiences?

Seeking help
5. Identify the social and cultural influences that may affect seeking help for the following:
   • anxiety
   • stress at school
   • bullying
   • friendship issues.

2.2 Check and challenge
Explain
1. Explain why adolescence is a challenging time for young people.
2. Explain why people approach life challenges differently.

Elaborate
3. Describe three positive experiences in life.
4. Your friend appears overwhelmed as she prepares to leave her school and relocate to another state. Use the Developing coping strategies weblink in the Resources tab to research support sites and create a mind map with information to help your friend cope with the experience.

Evaluate
5. Evaluate strategies you could undertake now to better prepare yourself for a future career.

Resources
- Digital doc: Worksheet 2.1 Planning to be safe (doc-29301)
- Weblink: Developing coping strategies
2.3 Life’s opportunities

With challenge comes opportunity. The way you use your skills and experiences is important in helping you to grasp opportunities, many of which may never come again. The ability to harness and build on the positive experiences and to learn from the more challenging experiences you have will shape your future and determine your pathway through life.

2.3.1 Responding to life’s challenges

While it is important to respond to challenges positively, we also need to cope when things do not go as planned. There are many ways of doing this. Planning for the future is essential and requires a realistic evaluation of our abilities and a good understanding of goal-setting procedures.

By responding to challenges positively we can inspire others to do the same. Think of a positive life experience that you have had, and use the Inspirational quotes weblink in the Resources tab to create a quote to inspire others to respond to their challenges positively.

We all deal with change and challenges in different ways and for many reasons, including:
- past experience
- personality
- personal skill level — for example, problem-solving and communication skills
- the support network available to us
- the circumstances of the situation (for example, being under the influence of alcohol)
- your understanding of the problem or situation
- cultural and family influences
- peer pressure
- gender stereotypes.

For some young people, life’s challenges can seem overwhelming. These young people may find it difficult to cope and, as a result, may take risks with their health and safety to escape the problem. For others, challenges are an opportunity to learn more about themselves. Learning effective ways to cope and developing the skills to manage and find solutions to problems can help you turn a challenge into a positive life experience.

The diagram on the right shows the skills needed to effectively respond to life challenges. These skills take time to develop, however, situations arise daily where their development can be fostered — for example, being prepared to negotiate a conflict rather than taking the easiest way out.
HEALTH FACT
There are many events that can be categorised as stressful. These may include ending a relationship, moving house, losing someone you are close to, or suffering from abuse. Stressful events can lead to feelings of uncertainty, sadness, anxiety and fear. Support in dealing with these situations and feelings is available from a range of services such as Kids HelpLine and ReachOut.

Coping refers to the thoughts, feelings and actions we use to manage concerns and problems. Young people use a variety of coping strategies to deal with stress and problems. Some of these strategies are positive and some not so positive. You can develop your ability to cope in stressful situations by monitoring yourself, being conscious of how you react and altering your thinking and actions when you realise they are destructive. You can also learn from past experience and by observing the ways in which other people cope.

Table 2.1 shows a range of strategies — some positive and some negative — that are used by people to cope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1</th>
<th>Positive and negative coping strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practising positive self-talk</td>
<td>• Ignoring the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working harder</td>
<td>• Avoiding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asking others for advice</td>
<td>• Asking others to solve the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imagining successfully dealing with the problem</td>
<td>• Not talking to others about feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialising or playing sport with friends</td>
<td>• Being withdrawn</td>
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</tbody>
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Coping with stress
Although we all feel stressed and angry at times, it is important not to let these emotions adversely affect our wellbeing. There are many ways we can learn to cope with stress and diffuse anger before they can begin to cause us problems. What positive strategies do you have for dealing with your stress?

When you feel stressed, there are some relatively easy strategies that you can use to help relieve the feelings of being overwhelmed that stress can cause. These include getting sufficient sleep and rest, keeping fit by doing regular physical activity, eating a nutritious balanced diet, talking to a friend and employing other positive stress management strategies that help to calm you. Examples of these strategies include:
• yoga
• relaxation techniques
• listening to music
• meditation
• physical activity
• reading a book.
DID YOU KNOW?
Work, debt, loneliness, moving house and relationship problems are considered some of the most challenging experiences or situations for people. How you deal with these challenges shapes the person you become and allows you to learn about yourself.

Coping with loss and grief
There may be times during our lives where we experience loss; for example, when we lose a family member or friend. The feeling of loss means that something of importance to you is either taken away or no longer accessible to you. Grief is the way you deal with and express your emotion about the loss. There are some things that can make the grieving process a little easier:
- taking time to go through the process of grief
- connecting to support networks
- talking to someone; for example, a close family member or friend, school counsellor or Kids Helpline
- physical activity and exercise
- writing in a journal
- meditation
- participating in a favourite hobby.

Responding to challenging and unsafe situations
Throughout our lives we may deal with potentially challenging and unsafe situations, such as bullying, abuse and violence. These situations can affect our safety, health and wellbeing in a negative manner. It is important that we recognise the warning signs and deal appropriately with these situations if and when they arise.

Some external warning signs of an unsafe situation may include the following:
- controlling behaviour from a family member, friend or partner
- physical abuse; for example, violent behaviour such as hitting
- verbal abuse such as yelling, screaming and swearing.

Our bodies also have a way of letting us know when a situation feels unsafe, through physical and emotional signals. These are outlined in table 2.2, along with some social indicators to be aware of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.2 Indicators of unsafe situations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased heart rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterflies in tummy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling shaky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If we see any of the external warning signs or notice any of the table 2.2 indicators, whether in relation to ourselves or someone we care about, it is important that we seek help from a trusted family member, friend or external support such as a counsellor, the police or Kids Helpline.

There are skills you can learn to manage challenging and unsafe situations, such as refusal skills, emergency plans, risk assessment and the ‘talk, trust, take control’ strategy. These are outlined below.

- **Refusal skills:** These include the ability to say no and stand up for your needs and what you believe in. Your values and beliefs are important when making decisions. If you feel a situation is unsafe, refusing to be involved is important to protect your safety, health and wellbeing.

- **Emergency plans:** These may include strategies to remove yourself from an unsafe situation. For example, having an emergency evacuation plan if there is a fire or having an emergency contact list of trusted people to call if you are feeling unsafe and need help.

- **Risk assessment:** A risk assessment is important when determining the safety of a particular activity. For example, if going on a bushwalk or a bike ride, there may be certain risks involved such as getting lost or injured. Being aware of these risks can help in determining what safety strategies are needed and in deciding whether the activity is safe to participate in.

- **‘Talk, trust, take control’ strategy:** This strategy involves:
  - being able to talk to someone about challenges you may be experiencing, for example, talking to a family member or friend when needing support
  - acknowledging and trusting your feelings and knowing when to seek help
  - taking control of a situation in order to keep yourself safe. It is important to acknowledge and take action to ensure your safety, health and wellbeing are maintained.

Examples of taking control may include seeking help from an external source such as a counsellor, Kids Helpline or the police.

Your safety, health and wellbeing are important and need to be a priority. When dealing with challenging and unsafe situations, it’s important to make the right decisions to keep yourself and others safe.

### 2.3.2 The choices you make

The choices you make now can impact on your future. Making good choices about your health, your relationships, your study and your career will provide a good basis for working towards a positive future. Part of this planning process is working out what is important to you and what you want to achieve in your life. Most achievements — whether achieving good grades at school, being accepted to do further study, gaining an apprenticeship or maintaining a healthy, fit body — take work.

Some young people find it difficult to think about and plan a positive future because their lives so far have been difficult, and they have been given little family or other support. Some have been given too much support and have not needed to plan for themselves. Some young people may be limited by their culture, family beliefs, gender, financial situation or others’ expectations. In some cultures, for example, there are clear expectations that the role of a young woman is to marry and maintain a home and family.

For young people who live in poverty, it may be difficult to see beyond their present circumstances and believe that things can change. Believing in your abilities, developing skills, setting goals, concentrating on the positives and planning for your future can help you to build a positive life.
Family expectations can be a challenge for some young people when planning their future.

2.3 Activities
Responding to the challenges of adolescence
1. In groups of four, discuss how you would feel in each of the following situations and how you would most likely respond.
   (a) Your best friend is being bullied by a group of your peers on the way home from school because she comes from a different culture.
   (b) Your partner has just ended your relationship.
   (c) You start going out with someone who pressures you to have sex.
   (d) You find out that you or your partner is pregnant.
   (e) Your parents have just told you they are separating.
   (f) Your friends are pressuring you to smoke marijuana with them at a party.
2. As a group, write a dialogue that a young person could use to assertively express their needs in one of the above situations. Role-play it for the class.

Coping strategies
3. In groups of three, complete the following tasks:
   (a) Complete the Positive and negative strategies interactivity in the Resources tab by grouping the coping strategies listed into positive, neutral or negative.
   (b) Identify and discuss the coping strategies that high school students would most likely use.
4. As a class, discuss the following questions:
   (a) Why might boys and girls use different strategies to cope in stressful situations?
   (b) Which group is least likely to seek help? Why?
   (c) What needs to happen to change the negative ways in which boys and girls cope?

Factors that can influence your future plans
5. Read the cartoon about family expectations in section 2.3.2 and answer the following questions.
   (a) Identify the barriers that the young person is facing in planning for the future.
   (b) Describe strategies that the young person could use to address the problems. Justify your choice of strategies.

Resources

Interactivity: Positive and negative strategies (int-2384)
2.3 Check and challenge

Explain
1. Explain why it is important to plan for the future.
2. Explain factors that influence the way we respond to life’s challenges.

Elaborate
3. Describe skills necessary to effectively respond to challenges.

Evaluate
4. Evaluate the identified coping strategies for boys and girls from question 3b in the activities, in terms of whether they are positive or negative.

2.4 Bouncing back

You are likely aware that not everything in life goes to plan. In fact, you may often feel that what happens to you is completely unfair. Regardless of this, life goes on. By developing particular skills, you can become more resilient, enabling you to enjoy life rather than be constrained by its difficulties.

2.4.1 Developing the ability to bounce back

Some people, when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, are able to manage these challenges and remain positive about their life and their future. Such people are resilient. This means they have the ability to ‘bounce back’ when things get tough, and usually remain fairly positive about life.

It is important for us to be resilient. We are not born with resilience but rather learn skills that help buffer hardship or difficulty. Adolescence is the key time to learn resilience skills and develop protective factors for life’s stresses. What coping skills can we learn that will more effectively assist us in dealing with the ups and downs of life with which we are so often confronted?

Use the Images of resilience weblink in the Resources tab to read some statements by children regarding resilience, then try creating your own statement about resilience. Discuss what resilience means to you with the person beside you.

on Resources

Weblink: Images of resilience
2.4.2 Characteristics of resilient people

There are various characteristics that people who are resilient show. These include determination, positive thinking and being supportive. It is important to be aware of these characteristics and practise developing them in order to build and strengthen your resilience.

Having a sense of belonging to family and a peer group can help young people manage life’s challenges.

HEALTH FACT

Social and emotional skills significantly affect the performance of young people at school. Often, greater emphasis is placed on intellectual development as an avenue to success in our lives. It is important to have a well-rounded education involving all three areas — social, emotional and intellectual — for enhanced performance both at school and later in life.

2.4.3 Skills that enhance resilience and wellbeing

There are a number of measures you can take to improve your resilience. Initially, you can improve the way you deal with change and challenge in your life. To do this, you must work at developing the skills needed to deal with change, and be conscious of your abilities and responses to situations. The following five factors can enhance your ability to cope with and manage challenging situations, and ‘bounce back’ in difficult times.

1. Developing skills — Skills such as problem-solving and positive communication help you to manage situations. When faced with a challenge, think about what you can do to manage it. Talk to people who have experience in similar situations, whom you trust and who can help you find ways to solve problems.

2. Self-monitoring — This is an important skill to help you be aware of your feelings and emotions. Knowing when you are feeling worried or nervous about a challenging situation can help you address these emotions in a positive manner before they get out of control. By self-monitoring, you can become aware of these feelings and take action to enhance your resilience.

3. Self-regulation — This involves taking action, thinking and doing things that help to enhance your resilience. For example, thinking positive thoughts, meditation, physical activity or talking to someone.

4. Maintaining a realistic perspective — This is important as sometimes we can overanalyse situations, making something into a bigger issue than it actually is. For example, we worry about something that may not happen. Being realistic can help us to keep an open mind and stay calm about certain situations.

5. Attitudes to change — During our lives, we will experience many changes, some of which may be positive, such as getting a new job, moving out of home or moving overseas; others may be negative, such as breaking up with a partner or losing a job.
It is important when experiencing various changes that you keep an open mind and try to think positively, accepting that while some changes may be difficult, some may bring about positive outcomes. Through having a positive attitude, we can manage these changes in a more effective manner.

2.4.4 Overcoming adversity

There are many individuals who have had to overcome adversity, such as illness, injury, disability or financial hardship, in pursuit of their dreams. Some of these are well-known individuals such as Anh Do, Jessica Mauboy and Kurt Fearnley.

These individuals show various characteristics and qualities which have assisted them in overcoming their challenges. These include:

- determination
- positive thinking
- a willingness to accept help from others
- grit and a hard work ethic
- never giving up
- keeping their dreams alive.

These characteristics enable individuals to persist in the face of challenges and continue to work towards their goals.

2.4 Activities

Dealing with change

1. Use the [7 tips for dealing with change](#) weblink in the Resources tab to answer the following:
   (a) Identify the seven tips for dealing with change.
   (b) Explain why these tips are effective when dealing with change.
   (c) How could you use these when dealing with changes in your life? Provide examples.

Case studies

2. Each of the following individuals has experienced challenges and overcome adversity to achieve their dreams.
   - Jessica Mauboy
   - Anh Do
   - Kurt Fearnley

   Choose one of these people and use the associated weblink in the Resources tab to learn about their experiences and answer the following questions.
   (a) What is the individual famous for?
   (b) What challenges have they had to overcome?
   (c) What characteristics and qualities of resilience have they shown?
   (d) Who has helped them overcome some of their challenges?
   (e) What have they achieved?

Connectedness and belonging

3. In small groups, discuss the following:
   (a) What makes young people feel connected to their family, school and peer group?
   (b) How would it feel to be excluded from a group?
   (c) How can young people make others feel included?
   (d) Some young people really want to fit in with their peer group but are scared they might be rejected. Do you think this might influence young people to make inappropriate decisions to fit in? Explain.
(e) Why is having a sense of belonging to a group important for young people's resilience?
(f) Brainstorm a list of things that you can do or say to help others feel included.
(g) In your group, role-play one or more of the following scenarios:
   • welcoming someone to your group
   • meeting your partner or friend's family for the first time
   • welcoming a new class member who comes from another country.

**Resources**
- Weblink: 7 tips for dealing with change
- Weblink: Anh’s Brush with fame — Jessica Mauboy
- Weblink: Kurt Fearnley
- Weblink: Anh Do

### 2.4 Check and challenge

**Explain**
1. Explain why resilience is important.

**Elaborate**
2. Melbourne Cup-winning jockey Michelle Payne has had to overcome significant challenges in life. Use the [Michelle Payne](#) weblink in the Resources tab to listen to her story. What is your opinion of Michelle as a resilient person? Discuss ways in which you think she is resilient and the importance of the people who supported her.

**Evaluate**
3. Use two or three examples from your own life to evaluate your ability to ‘bounce back’ in hard times.

**Resources**
- Digital doc: Worksheet 2.2 Being resilient (doc-29302)
- Weblink: Michelle Payne

### 2.5 Towards independence

Becoming independent is a change that all adolescents will go through as they approach adulthood. Along the way you will encounter many changes and transitions; it’s important to learn and develop the skills you need in order to manage these changes effectively and in a positive manner.

**2.5.1 Managing change and transition**

There are many changes and transitions during adolescence on the path towards independence, and these will continue throughout adulthood. It’s important to develop the **self-management** skills that will enable you to become more independent and to manage the demands of adult life. In this section, we will look at some of the challenges you will encounter, such as moving out of home, completing a tax return and obtaining a Medicare card.
Moving out of home

Moving out of the family home is a big change for many young adults. This change is one of the key steps towards independence and can create many feelings of excitement and happiness along with nervousness and worry. Reasons for moving out of home include moving location for university or work, or moving out to share a home with friends or a partner.

Completing a tax return

A tax return is a form that declares your earnings and enables the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to determine how much, if any, income tax you are liable to pay. If you are an Australian resident and earn less than $18,200 a year, you are exempt from paying income tax. This is known as the tax-free threshold. If you earn above this amount, you will be required to pay tax. Tax is generally deducted from your wages by your employer and paid to the ATO in instalments over the course of the financial year. If you have a part-time job and are earning an income, it is important to be aware of whether you have had tax deducted and whether you are required to complete a tax return. You may be entitled to a tax refund if the amount of tax deducted exceeds the amount of tax you were actually required to pay. You can obtain this refund by lodging a tax return. The ATO website provides extensive information about your rights and responsibilities as a taxpayer. Use the ATO weblink in the Resources tab to learn more.

Obtaining a Medicare card

Looking after your health is important and at times you will need to access health services such as a doctor or dentist. A Medicare card allows you to receive free or cheaper health services as well as receiving cheaper medicines if your prescriptions are covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

You can apply for your own Medicare card at 15 years of age, however, you may still choose to use your parents’ card until you become more independent. See the Obtaining a Medicare card weblink in the Resources tab for more information.

2.5.2 Finding the right job

One of the changes during adolescence when heading towards independence includes obtaining a job. This may be a part-time job while you are still at school or university, followed by full-time employment after you have graduated. However, some adolescents may choose full-time employment after school instead of going to university or TAFE, depending on their interests and work desires.

It is important, however, to think about your future career as well as part-time job opportunities. Your part-time jobs and future career should follow a path that matches your interests and skills. You can secure your dream job by learning how to apply for a job and how to prepare for an interview.
To prepare for future employment it is necessary to:

• work hard at school to reach your full potential
• take opportunities to gain experience that is valued by a future employer
• identify and practise the skills required to apply for a job.

The skills required to apply for a job include:

• developing a résumé
• seeking and analysing job advertisements
• completing a job application
• investigating and practising interview techniques.

There are many opportunities available to students to gain experience and develop their skills, such as public speaking, student leadership, work experience placements, practical subjects that relate to the type of employment you are seeking, and vocational education training at school or through TAFE.

Finding a job takes planning, and it starts while you are at school. You need to identify the skills and subjects that will best prepare you for the career you have chosen or are considering. If you are interested in motor mechanics, for example, choosing practical subjects at school will develop skills that may be useful in this job. It will also be helpful to talk to your careers adviser or look through the employment section of newspapers, job websites or company websites to develop your understanding of the requirements for roles that interest you.

Progressing to the interview stage for a job also takes planning. You will need to find reliable sources of employment advertisements and identify the type of job you are interested in. You will need to prepare your résumé, identify people who are willing to be your referees and write an application, including a covering letter that addresses the criteria of the job outlined in the advertisement.

To help you think about a career you would like to follow, it may be useful to brainstorm a list of your interests, strengths, skills and abilities. This list can help you to determine the types of job to which you may be suited and that may interest you.

2.5.3 Preparing for an interview

Following a job application, you may be asked to go to an interview. While this might make you anxious, there are a number of things you can do to turn it into a positive experience. Prior to the interview, find out as much as you can about the work that will be required of you. Make a list of your skills and be sure to be aware of your strong points. Try to anticipate questions and role-play answers with a friend or family member. Be sure to have your travel organised and plan to arrive well ahead of time. Ensure you are appropriately dressed for the occasion.

At the interview, do your best to be calm, friendly and confident. Introduce yourself and shake hands with the people who will be interviewing you. Answer questions as best you can and do not be afraid to ask for clarification if there is anything you do not understand. It is important to take your time in responding to questions. At the conclusion, thank the interviewers for the opportunity to meet with them. We often think we did badly at interviews, particularly our first. However, we need to look at the positives, and consider what we can learn from the experience. Even if you don’t get the job, you will have gained valuable experience that you can use to help you prepare for your next interview. Reflect on what went well and what you think you could have done differently; write down some notes that you can refer to in the future. In this way, you can build your interview skills and increase your chances of landing the next job you apply for!
Preparing yourself for an interview is the first step in attaining a job.

- Look professional — choose appropriate clothes.
- Plan to arrive early at the interview.
- Prepare your résumé.
- Ask any previous employers for references.
- Prepare for the interview by:
  - finding out about the company
  - rehearsing what you will say about your skills and abilities.

2.5.4 Employment for life

Employment is a very important part of a person’s life. It not only provides a source of income to pay for the things we need and want in life, it also provides us with the opportunity to learn new skills, improve our knowledge, meet new people and develop interpersonal skills. For some people, employment also offers other opportunities, such as working to improve the lives of others, travel, expression of artistic talents or the development of a public profile.

Being employed gives people a sense of belonging to either a group or a culture. People who are employed have a greater sense of purpose in life as they feel they have something meaningful to do each day, and they have a place where they can meet other people. For some people, their job means more than just a source of income — it is a way of supporting others and advocating for social justice. This can provide a sense of community spirit and self-fulfilment.

People who are unemployed are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives and experience feelings of boredom and worthlessness. For young people, engaging in further study or getting a job when they leave school is important in promoting feelings of self-worth, supporting a sense of self and giving meaning to their lives.

Once you have embarked on your plans for the future, it is essential that you keep things in check; this means balancing your commitments. By over-extending yourself and taking on too much, you can become stressed, and this can have a negative effect on your health. Remember to be realistic and keep things achievable. If you are not coping with challenges, seek help from your family, friends, teachers, boss or other people you trust and who are in a position to support and help you. By doing this, you can enjoy the many positive benefits of being employed and continue to grow and develop the self-management skills that will help you respond to life’s challenges and seize its opportunities whenever they arise.
2.5 Activities

Moving out of home

1. Use the **Moving out of home tips** weblink in the Resources tab to help you complete the following questions.
   (a) What are some reasons for moving out of home?
   (b) What are some issues to consider?
   (c) What are some helpful tips?
   (d) What should you do if you are not supported during this change?

2. Prepare a budget for living out of home. Have your teacher set a weekly amount, or use the **Centrelink** weblink in the Resources tab to search for a payment amount from Centrelink. You will need to do the following:
   - find somewhere to live and work out the weekly rent
   - pay for bills such as water, gas, electricity
   - pay for transport
   - pay for food
   - find out what other expenses might be involved.

Preparing for employment

3. An important aspect of working towards gaining employment is learning the skills to apply for a job. In your workbook, complete the following tasks:
   (a) Use the **Seek** weblink in the Resources tab to find three examples of advertisements for jobs that interest you. For each of the jobs, identify:
      - the skills needed for the job
      - the qualifications required
      - the experience required
      - any other requirements.
   (b) Choose one of the advertisements and prepare an application for the role. Include a covering letter and your résumé.
   (c) Share your covering letter and résumé with a partner and provide feedback for each other on the following aspects:
      i. Does the résumé provide a clear picture of the applicant?
      ii. How could the résumé be improved?
      iii. Do the covering letter and résumé address the job requirements detailed in the advertisement and clearly outline previous work experience?
      iv. How could the covering letter be improved?

Preparing for an interview

4. Use the **Interview techniques** weblink in the Resources tab and read the tips provided. Divide into groups of six. Appoint one person as the employer, two as interviewers, two as job seekers and one as an observer. The role of the employer is to name a position and establish qualities, skills and knowledge requirements. The interviewers will set three questions each, decide criteria for hiring and conduct the interview. The job seekers will present for their interviews, one at a time. The observer will evaluate each job seeker in terms of presentation, ability to answer questions, clarity, listening skills, asking questions and non-verbal communication. Rotate roles and conduct as many interviews as possible. When finished, allow time for the observers to report on their observations.

Resources

- eLesson: Careers counsellor (eles-0231)
- Digital doc: Worksheet 2.3 Preparing a résumé (doc-29303)
- Weblink: Moving out of home tips
- Weblink: Seek
- Weblink: Interview techniques
- Weblink: Centrelink
2.5 Check and challenge

Explain
1. Describe opportunities (such as good subject choices) that might assist you in developing skills necessary for work.
2. Describe your skills, interests and other attributes that might be valuable to an employer.
3. Describe ways of turning an interview into a positive experience.
4. Outline opportunities that might be offered by employment.
5. Explain how employment can contribute to better health.

Elaborate
6. Use the Interview techniques weblink in the Resources tab to read more on interview techniques. Suggest five points that you consider to be important in making for a better interview.

2.6 Review

2.6.1 Summary
- Young people will face many challenges, along with opportunities to grow and learn.
- There are many positive experiences in life, including family, personal, peer and work experiences.
- Some of life’s challenging situations include leaving home, finding employment, meeting new people, relationships, finances, family and health.
- Choices made in challenging situations are often influenced by our peer group and the particular circumstances of the situation.
- Skills needed to respond to challenges include positive communication, assertiveness, conflict resolution, planning and goal setting.
- Coping refers to the thoughts, feelings and actions we use to manage concerns and problems. Young people need to develop a range of positive coping strategies.
- Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity. Resilient people are better prepared to cope with difficulties or misfortunes that might be encountered on life’s journey.
- People can become more resilient through developing skills, being realistic, self-monitoring, developing a sense of connectedness and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Planning for the future requires a realistic estimate of ability, good choices and effective goal setting.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How do we turn challenges into opportunities and deal with issues or problems in a positive manner when things don’t turn out quite the way we expect?

Evaluate your initial response to the essential question after having studied this topic.
### 2.6.2 Key terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adversity</td>
<td>misfortune or difficulty</td>
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<tr>
<td>coping</td>
<td>the thoughts, feelings and actions we use to manage concerns and problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>determination</td>
<td>the quality that you show when you have decided to do something and you will not let anything stop you</td>
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<tr>
<td>interview</td>
<td>a formal meeting in which an applicant is asked questions to determine their suitability for a particular job</td>
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<tr>
<td>personal growth</td>
<td>the growth and enhancement of all aspects of an individual</td>
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<td>Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)</td>
<td>a program of the Australian Government that provides subsidised prescription drugs to residents of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>protective factors</td>
<td>things that prevent or reduce the chances of something we don’t want happening to us</td>
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<tr>
<td>referee</td>
<td>a person willing to testify verbally or in writing about the character or ability of someone, especially an applicant for a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resilience</td>
<td>the ability to learn from difficulties and bounce back following misfortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>résumé</td>
<td>formal presentation of a job applicant’s education, skills, and work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>risk assessment</td>
<td>the process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in an activity or undertaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-management</td>
<td>the taking of responsibility for one’s own behaviour and well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-monitoring</td>
<td>observing and regulating one’s own behavior in a social context</td>
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### 2.6 Check and challenge

To answer questions online and to receive immediate feedback and sample responses for every question, go to your learnON title at www.jacplus.com.au Note: Question numbers may vary slightly.

#### Key terms quiz

#### Multiple choice quiz

#### Check your understanding

1. Outline five immediate challenges that face young people.
2. Identify five future challenges for young people.
3. Explain what is meant by ‘gender stereotypes’.
4. Explain why peer friendship is usually a positive life experience.
5. Define the word ‘resilience’ and suggest why it is a positive attribute.
6. Outline ways of increasing your level of resilience.
7. Identify ways of enhancing your prospects when preparing for a job interview.
8. Use the [Dealing with changes and challenges weblink](#) in the Resources tab to watch the clip and think about how you can deal with challenges that you are facing now, or challenges that you may experience in the future.

### Resources

- Digital doc: Worksheet 2.4 Key terms quiz (doc-29304)
- Digital doc: Worksheet 2.5 Multiple choice quiz (doc-29305)
- Digital doc: Key terms glossary (doc-29306)
- Weblink: [Dealing with changes and challenges](#)