



What can I control?



To identify ways to look positively at challenging situations and minimise the negative effects of them



20 minutes



- Two balls of string
- Two pieces of A4 paper
- Pens
- Sticky notes
- Bean bag or lump of sticky tack



What to do

- With the two balls of string, make one big circle on the floor of around 360cm circumference and a smaller one of around 150cm. This makes a target (a circle inside another circle) out of the two pieces of string. You'll need to expand the inner circle later.
- Use the paper to make two signs for each of the circles. Label the inner circle "What I can control" and the outer circle "What I can't control".



To help build our resilience, we should try to look positively at difficult or challenging things that are happening in our lives. While sometimes there are things we can't control, there are often steps we can take to reduce the impact of these challenging situations on our lives."

- Give the following examples as some of the day-to-day challenges that they might experience:
 - The weather
 - How much homework I have to do
 - Someone is spreading rumours about you
 - The train is delayed and you're late for an important appointment
- Ask the group to come up with more examples, and as they share their ideas, write each challenge on a new sticky note. Then go through the challenges, asking the group whether the sticky notes should be stuck in the 'What I can control' circle or the 'What I can't control' circle. For some of the more complicated challenges, you can question those they do have some control over by asking "Who is in control of that?" Continue this until you've arranged all the challenges in the two circles.



It's hard to deal with these tough issues when we feel like we have very little control over them, but we can often take some positive and proactive steps to make those issues feel less stressful. By coming up with solutions that will help you manage these situations, you can change the way you react to the day-to-day things in your life which might get you down or frustrate you."

- Ask the group to stand in a ring around the target on the floor. Using a bean bag or lump of sticky tack, get one volunteer at a time to aim for one of the sticky notes in the outer 'What I can't control' circle. They should read out the challenging situation closest to where it lands.



Can you think of an action you could take to make this challenge feel less stressful? You don't need to solve the whole problem, just think of ways you can improve the situation or take the first steps towards a solution."

Examples of solutions from the above scenarios:

- What you cannot control: *the weather*
- What you can control: *bringing an umbrella*
- What you cannot control: *How much homework I have to do*
- What you can control: *What other commitments you have on that time*
- What you cannot control: *Someone is spreading rumours about you*
- What you can control: *How you react to those rumours*
- What you cannot control: *I have to do exams*
- What you can control: *How much revision I do/joining a study group/getting a revision guide.*

- Encourage the group to come up multiple different potential solutions together. Once the group has come up with some ideas, move the sticky to the smaller 'What I can control' circle. As you add more sticky notes, you'll need to make the inner circle bigger by moving the string.
- Repeat until you have read out all the sticky notes and as many as possible are now inside the 'circle of control'.



We can't always control every situation we find ourselves in, but in taking small steps we can always do something to help ourselves manage the situation. By taking positive action on the things you can control, you minimise the impact of things you can't control."

