Helpful or unhelpful? Managing change

Year: Y6

Subjects and Issues

Conflict resolution Feelings Support networks
Change Responsibility Emotions
Managing change

NB: please be aware of and sensitive to events that have occurred in the children's lives and modify content if necessary.

Introduction

Begin by describing a recent change for you, for example a new piece of technology; a new colleague; a recent promotion or change of responsibility...

Can the children describe things that have changed for them since last year?

Draw out that sometimes changes are chosen and that these are often positive changes, for example, when we get something new, such as a new electronic device.

However, some changes can be more challenging and are sometimes changes we do not choose, but happen anyway such as: we move to a different area; someone we know dies; a new brother or sister is born; a friend leaves school; parents split up; a parent has a new partner...

Children talk with a partner about how they felt when they got something new [e.g. an electronic device, or a special present.]

Then they share responses with the whole class [excited, happy, felt more grown up etc.]

Talk with a partner about how they felt when something happened that wasn't their choice [e.g. moved house/changed school.]

Share their thoughts and reflections.

Activity - Sophie's story

Read the story with the pupils then ask:

1. How do you think Sophie feels when she overhears them talking?
2. Why does she wait out in the hall?
3. Why do you think the grown-ups hadn't shared the conversation with her?
4. What positives may come of a move to Carl's house for Sophie? [e.g. new friends, a bigger house, a good school, a step-dad and a family home...]
5. What anxieties do you think she may have about a move to Carl's house? [Leaving friends, losing what she is familiar with is a possible disruption to her studies at school.]

Next, working in pairs, children read and discuss the *Helpful or unhelpful?* Activity sheet. Give them a few minutes to decide their responses to this - helpful or unhelpful. As well as a tick in the appropriate columns they could also write down their ideas here.

As a class, go through the possible response to the move and ask them whether they think these would help or not help Sophie.

Take each response one at a time and allow explanation/discussion.

Praise thoughtful contributions and explore the range of different ways people might deal with their feelings.

Next, in groups of three, children role-play a conversation between Sophie, her mum and Carl.

Choose one of the conversations to show to the class. Invite the class to suggest ideas for improvement.

Another child could take a role as the conversation is replayed, with improvements added. Further suggestions could be invited and another child could take a role.

What can help someone to make a change more easily?

Summing up

Changes happen all through our lives. Many changes we don't notice as they can be quite small and happen slowly. Bigger changes or changes that happen suddenly can be easier to manage if we have people who support us.

Who can help support us with changes?

How can we support others?

Adapting lessons for learners with additional needs

Our additional Signposting and Support page provides further guidance on adapting SCARF lessons to meet the needs of learners with additional needs.

Version History

Tue, 12 Aug 2025

- Reference to phone replaced with new piece of technology to reduce the normalisation of young children having phones

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Recognise some of the changes they have experienced and their emotional responses to those changes;
- Suggest positive strategies for dealing with change;
- Identify people who can support someone who is dealing with a challenging time of change.

Key Vocabulary

change
support
conversation
discuss

Activity sheet

SCARF

Helpful or unhelpful?

Action	Tick if you think this might help	Tick if you think it might not help
She shuts herself in her room and refuses to talk to either her mum of Carl.		
Sophie keeps in touch with her old friends via social media.		
She talks to her friends about how she felt when her mum's boyfriend moved in.		
Sophie argues continually with her mother and blames her for everything that doesn't go smoothly.		
Sophie tells her mother that she is pleased that she is happy with Carl and talks with her about the exciting new opportunities moving will bring.		
She pretends to be okay about the move and keeps her anxieties to herself.		
She talks about the situation and her anxieties with her dad.		

Helpful or unhelpful? - Activity sheet - enough for one between two

Story sheet

Sophie's story

SCARF

Sophie lived with her mum. On alternate weekends she stayed at her dad's place. It had been like that for as long as Sophie could remember. However, her mum had a new boyfriend – Carl. Carl was okay. He worked as a PE teacher and was really quite fun to be around.

One evening, Sophie was playing a game on her computer when she suddenly became aware of the conversation between her mum and Carl...

They were discussing the pros and cons of living in Sophie's mum's house.

"Your house is smaller than mine. We would have much more space if you move into my place," said Carl.

"Yes, but Sophie would have to change schools. That would be really difficult at this point in her life," her mum replied.

"But the school near my house is a really good one. She is a friendly girl and would quickly settle in I am sure," Carl continued.

Sophie crept down and listened from the hallway.

"Sophie has lived here all her life. I am not sure moving would be a good idea," her mum added.

Sophie couldn't remain outside any longer. She wanted to know more.

"What's going on?" she asked. It was clear from her mum's and Carl's expressions that they hadn't realized she had heard their conversation.

They sat together and talked into the evening. It became clear that a move to Carl's was becoming more and more likely....

Sophie's story - Story sheet - 1 copy for teacher to read out, or enough copies for children to read along with teacher (whichever is preferred).

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- Relationships Education Families and people who care for me 2. The characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- Relationships Education Families and people who care for me 6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Mental wellbeing 2. That there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Mental wellbeing 4. How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Mental wellbeing 6. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.
- Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education) Mental wellbeing 9. Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements (2025)

- Families and people who care for me 2. The characteristics of safe and happy family life, such as commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives.
- Families and people who care for me 6. How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed.
- General wellbeing 1. The benefits of physical activity, time outdoors, and helping others for health, wellbeing and happiness. Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family, as well as hobbies, interests and community participation.
- General wellbeing 3. The range and scale of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) that they might experience in different situations. Pupils should understand that worrying and feeling down are normal, affect everyone at different times, and are not in themselves a sign of a mental health condition.
- General wellbeing 5. How to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.

- General wellbeing 9. Where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including who in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- Respectful, kind relationships 8. The importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. Pupils should have opportunities to think about how they foster their own self-esteem and build a strong sense of their own identity, including through developing skills and interests.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- H15 . That mental health, just like physical health, is part of daily life; the importance of taking care of mental health.
- H18 . About everyday things that affect feelings and the importance of expressing feelings.
- H19 . A varied vocabulary to use when talking about feelings; about how to express feelings in different ways.
- H20 . Strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings; how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations.
- H23 . About change and loss, including death, and how these can affect feelings; ways of expressing and managing grief and bereavement.
- H36 . Strategies to manage transitions between classes and key stages.
- R7 . To recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure (including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents); that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability.
- R8 . To recognise other shared characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, spending time together; being there for each other in times of difficulty.

- R9 . How to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice.