



Transitions

Safe and Secure Return to School

Psychology & Wellbeing Team

‘The comeback is always stronger than the setback’

Dr Jill Murray (2018)



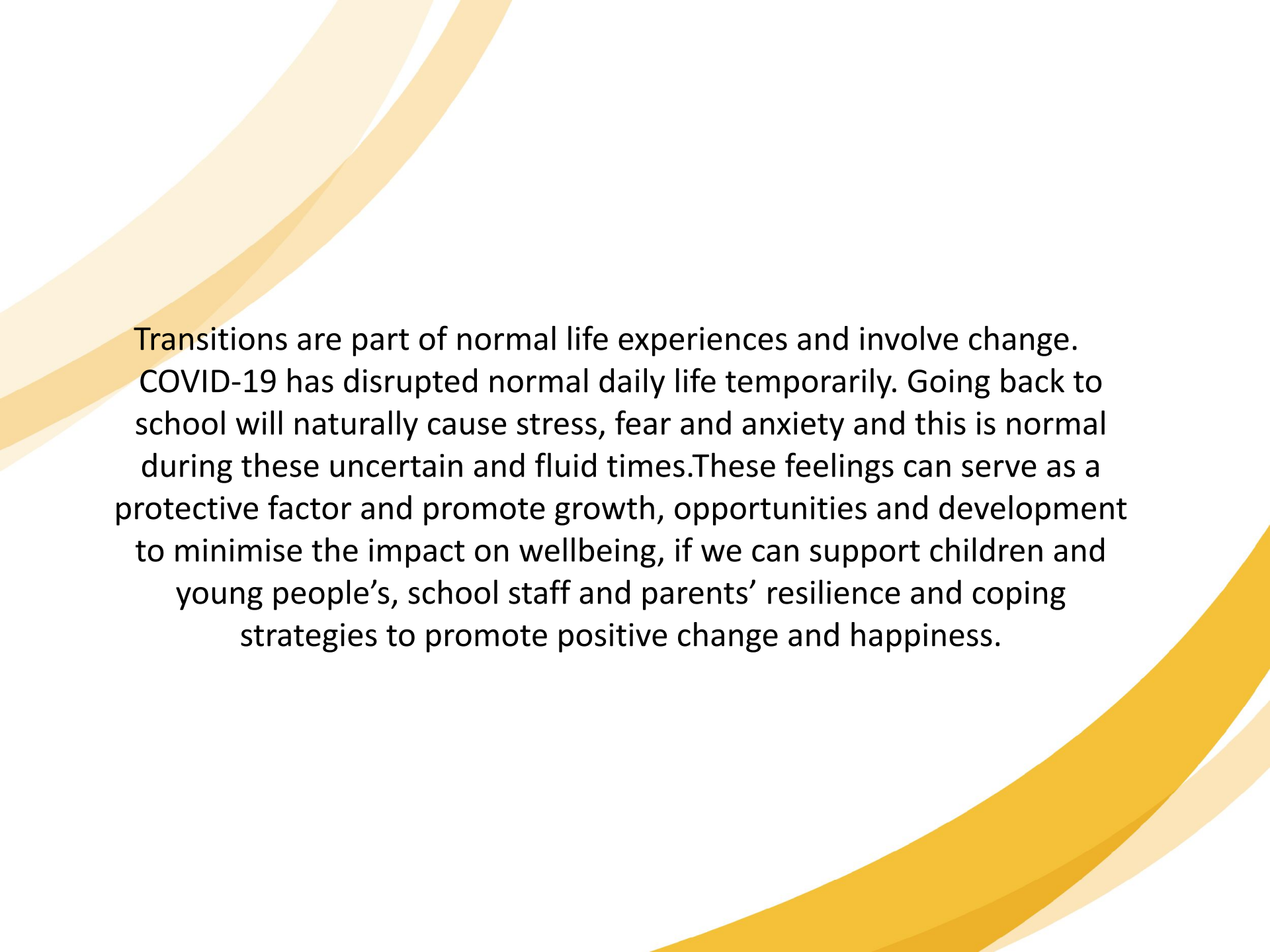
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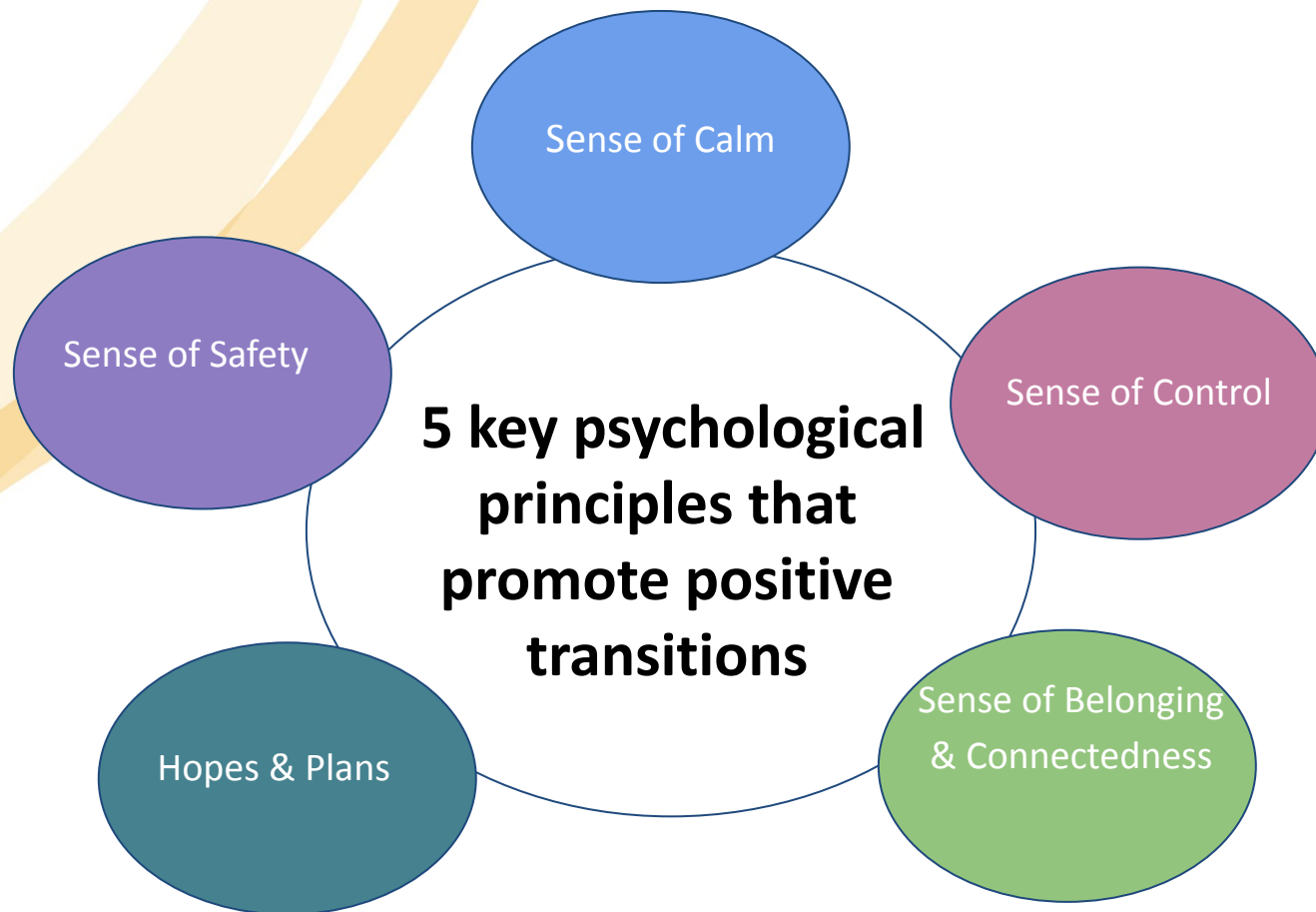


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Transitions are part of normal life experiences and involve change. COVID-19 has disrupted normal daily life temporarily. Going back to school will naturally cause stress, fear and anxiety and this is normal during these uncertain and fluid times. These feelings can serve as a protective factor and promote growth, opportunities and development to minimise the impact on wellbeing, if we can support children and young people's, school staff and parents' resilience and coping strategies to promote positive change and happiness.



These principles are interconnected and should be applied as a holistic approach and adapted to the individual needs of the CYP, school or 'hub' (classroom hub).

Vulnerable CYP may require additional support during these continued times of uncertainty.

SENSE OF SAFETY

Child and young people, parents and school staff to feel emotionally and physically safe, secure, protected and understood.

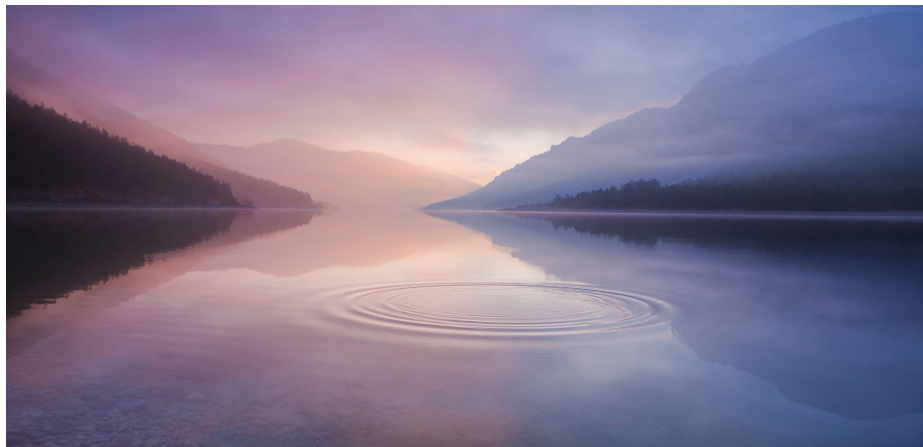


Promoting a sense of *safety*

- ❖ Clear guidance and expectations in line with government and local authority advice on safety and hygiene protocols to keep all children and young people (CYP), staff and parents safe within school or their designated 'hub'.
- ❖ Adjustment time embedded within school timetable and routines for all.
- ❖ Elicit the voices of the CYP to understand what they need to feel safe (e.g. back to school story).
- ❖ Acknowledge and validate CYP's feelings to regulate their emotions to build on their own coping strategies and resilience.
- ❖ Observation of unusual behaviours as a sign to explore further the feelings and worries of the CYP.

SENSE OF CALM

To feel emotionally and physically regulated enables the ability to focus and attend in the here and now to ongoing demands of experience, promotes learning and have flexibility to manage and modulate emotions.



Promoting a sense of *calm*

Preparation for CYP returning to school:

- ❖ Offer CYP a virtual tour of their school.
- ❖ Communicate reassurance and returning to school plans via home-school check-in with the class teacher.
- ❖ Explore with CYP and their parents arrangements for peer/friendship connection within their class.
- ❖ Signpost parents/carers to resources which they can use to manage CYP's anxieties.

Promoting a sense of *calm*

Return to school:

- ❖ Hold a class welcome and offer reassurance and clear guidance with regards to their safety and the support available to them.
- ❖ Use emotional regulation techniques within the classroom e.g. calming stations, time out.
- ❖ Whole class sessions to practise emotional regulation e.g. mindfulness, breathing techniques.
- ❖ Offer additional emotional support as appropriate, such as access to a trusted, key adult or buddy within their class.
- ❖ Regular home-school communication arrangements.
- ❖ Structured timetables to support predictability. For example, visual 'Now/Next' boards for Key Stage 1.

SENSE OF CONTROL

To feel and believe in your skills and ability to cope with changes, challenge and emotions to have control over the outcomes of events in our lives.



Promoting a sense of *control*

- ❖ Co-construct targets and goals and review with the CYP.
- ❖ Give responsibilities to CYP, such as specific roles (e.g. form captain) or tasks within their class.
- ❖ Where possible, allow them to inform decisions made within school, such as classroom display boards.
- ❖ Reflect on and celebrate CYP's achievements and good news.
- ❖ Directly teach problem solving skills to help them overcome problems.
- ❖ Offer choice where possible within the school day.

SENSE OF BELONGING & CONNECTEDNESS

Feeling connected and a sense of belonging is a fundamental source of human motivation and psychological need. Secure attachment, acknowledgement, acceptance and feeling understood profoundly benefit mental health and wellbeing.



Promoting a sense of *belonging* & *connectedness*

- ❖ Explore with CYP and their parents arrangements for safe peer/friendship connection within their class and outside of school.
- ❖ Encourage appropriate paired relationships with the use of buddy systems.
- ❖ Allow time for rebuilding relationships with key adults to allow trust and a warm rapport to develop.
- ❖ Build in class check-in time.
- ❖ Consider school community celebrations to mark key transitions in the school year.
- ❖ Encourage CYP to engage in extracurricular activities to help facilitate safe connections with peers and school staff.
- ❖ Provide a map of the school and classroom.

HOPES & PLANS

Hope is a positive psychology construct. Hope and planning, serve and support the development of thinking, perceived life purpose and goal attainment. It improves life satisfaction and self-worth.



Instil *hope* & create *plans*

- ❖ Build the CYP's resiliency to enable them to be hopeful about their future by using resiliency programmes or the Local Authority 'Embracing Change' booklet.
- ❖ Use person-centred planning to ensure that the CYP and their parents' views, wishes and feelings, are considered when creating the CYP's targets and support plans.
- ❖ Celebrate the CYP's successes either with them personally or within their class.
- ❖ Class and personal check in and check out plan.
- ❖ Create a personal passport of strengths, interests, social network and aspirations.

Thankyou



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