



MILIFE C19

**DISCOVER 4: Does it Have to Be This Way?
Teaching Resources for Secondary Age Students**



MiLife C19 RESOURCE OVERVIEW

MiLife C19 includes ten sessions that are designed to be used in a classroom setting or through home learning platforms. Sessions can last from 30-60 minutes depending on how much of the material is covered and/or whether the 'Do Next' activity happens during the contact time or as homework.

There are six sessions in the **Discover** section which cover an overview of emotional wellbeing issues commonly associated with traumatic experiences or global incidents like COVID19 and how young people can effectively respond to them in order to achieve positive mental health outcomes. Each session is split into five elements:

Outcomes	Way In	New Ideas	Landing It	Do Next
 Setting learning objectives	 Introduction/ice breaker activity	 Communicating new information	 Discussion and reflection	 Practical application tasks

There are additionally four **Explore** sessions included that are more focussed on practical activities that young people could engage in to benefit their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Explore sessions might be set as homework/home learning activities or completed within education settings but may require additional resources or larger spaces than usually available in a standard classroom. They can work well when deployed in between the third and fourth Discover sessions.

All resources referenced in this leaders guide (videos, presentations, etc.) are downloadable from www.milife.org.uk in the Teachers area. The member of the EFDC team who introduced you to the resources will be able to provide you with any passwords required.



DISCOVER 4: DOES IT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY?



Outcomes: Taking Control

After completing this session, students should be able to:

- ⇒ Explain why positive thinking is an important tool in responding to challenging situations
- ⇒ Identify a positive action that they could take in response to the situation they find themselves in



Way In: Fake News

Complete the quiz in the session presentation.

“Were there any of the answers to the quiz that particularly surprised you...?”

This is a fairly light-hearted quiz that explores things that people often accept as common knowledge but that actually have no basis in fact. We often believe we think we know more than we do (about COVID19 and all sorts of other topics relating to our world) and we need to ensure that our information is based in fact and not hearsay.

Discuss or think about...

- ⇒ Would you consider yourself to be an optimist (thinking things will turn out well) or a pessimist (thinking things will likely be a disaster)?
- ⇒ When you face a difficult problem that you need to deal with or hear about an incident going on in the wider world, how do you respond?

Talk about whether they are the sort of people who like to find out as much as possible about an issue before making a decision, whether they just ‘go with their gut’, if they pretend nothing is wrong and try and distract themselves, etc.



New Ideas: Its Normal to Feel This Way

Watch the video content **“Worst Case Scenario”**

“Worst Case Scenario”...

1. *Explores the common human trait of thinking about the ‘worst case’ when evaluating different situations and how, while that is a survival mechanism, it is also something we need to view critically and challenge the narratives that we create.*
2. *Encourages students to approach large issues step by step rather than all at once.*



Landing It: Stopping the Spiral

Discuss or think about:

- ⇒ Do you often dwell on the worst case scenario when you think about what might happen in a particular situation?
- ⇒ What kinds of emotions or feelings do you associate with thinking about the 'worst case'?

Discuss some specific examples to stimulate conversation starting with something more light-hearted, e.g., if you are thinking about the worst thing that could happen if you ask someone on a date, what feelings do you associate with that?

Counterpoint this with thinking about the effects that COVID19 might have on their personal future. What feelings does that conversation draw out in them?

- ⇒ How can we internally take control of the feelings that thinking about the 'worst case' bring up in us?

Encourage the group to make use of two key strategies when thinking about the 'worst case' ...

- ◇ *When they are 'spiralling' - thinking about all the things they cannot do or do not know - they can insert the phrase 'yet' or 'as yet' into their thought sequence to diffuse the spiral. For example, instead of "I have no idea how to pass this test" they say to themselves "I have no idea how to pass this test **yet**." This will often diffuse the spiral as it causes us to start to think about how to overcome that issue rather than continuing to a conclusion.*
- ◇ *Halting at each individual step on the way to the worst case and breaking down the challenge into individual steps, concentrating on each individual one. "I have a test tomorrow I am really unprepared for" seems insurmountable, but our response can be broken down into—"First, I need to get out of bed. Second, I need to eat a decent breakfast so I have some energy, etc."*

- ⇒ How can we practically take control of the feelings that thinking about the 'worst case' bring up in us?

The most positive way to take control is by taking an action that disrupts the first stage in the 'spiral' that leads to the worst case.

As a group, you could work through the practical actions we can take to respond to a worst case that many people have considered at the moment—"COVID is going to destroy my future and might kill people I love"...

ACTION ONE: Follow government guidance to protect myself and others. Wash hands, cover face, make space in all situations.

ACTION TWO: Speak to a teacher about what steps I can take to help me not fall behind because of the school I'm missing/have missed, etc.



Do Next: Take Action

“Did you find it easy or difficult to think of positive actions you could take in response to COVID19? Sometimes the issues which have the greatest potential consequences (the very worst ‘worst case scenarios’...) can seem the most overwhelming, but they are also the issues we need to work even harder to find practical ways to respond to.”

“Have a look at some of the suggested practical responses we can take to COVID19 or other issues where there is a ‘worst case scenario’ that we might feel anxious about and choose one you will try out during the week ahead.”

Tackling Fake News	Helping Others	Positivity Albums
<p>Misinformation and ‘fake news’ can cause many people’s mental health to suffer.</p> <p>Can you help yourself and others by proactively reporting and blocking misinformation on your social media feeds and encouraging others to do the same?</p>	<p>Helping others is a great way of helping our own mental health as it can rapidly improve our mood. In what ways could you intentionally set out to support other people you know with things you are aware that they find difficult or challenging?</p>	<p>Worst case scenarios often grow out of the feeling that we cannot do anything right or achieve anything positive. Start keeping a book or document where you jot down every time something goes well or you receive praise that you can refer back to in future.</p>

Volunteering	Upskilling	Campaigning
<p>Throughout the COVID19 crisis, young people and adults alike have been allowed to engage in volunteering from their home or in community facilities no matter what the lockdown rules. How could you avoid loneliness by volunteering through a local network?</p>	<p>One of the most common responses to traumatic incidents is “I wish I could have done more”. What skills could you develop so you would be able to help in a future crisis? Could you sign up for a first aid course? Learn about money management? Explore how to cook on a budget?</p>	<p>Young people’s voices have historically been essential to bringing about changes. How could you make use of your own voice and networks to campaign for changes around the issue that you are struggling with? Who could you write to or contact to make your point?</p>