

Are You Feeling Lost or Overwhelmed About Your Future?

Objective

To create a visual roadmap of your journey that includes strategies to manage challenges.

What to Know

Graduating from high school or college marks a pivotal moment, symbolizing both an end and a beginning. It's characterized by significant transitions, where feelings of pride and accomplishment often coexist with doubts and fears about the next steps. You might experience excitement about the opportunities ahead yet feel overwhelmed by many choices and responsibilities. Uncertainty about which path to take, worries about job prospects, or the pressure to succeed can all weigh heavily, making this an emotionally charged time.

If you feel confused, depressed, or anxious about the future, you're not alone. Many teens experience similar feelings, a natural response to life's big changes. While challenging, these emotions are manageable and can be navigated with the right tools and strategies.

Feeling confused, depressed, or anxious about the future after graduation is normal. You can address your feelings, find ways to manage stress, and develop goals. Remember, each small step you take is progress, and asking for help along the way is okay.

This worksheet is designed to assist you in identifying your feelings about the future and offer a way to clear the mental clutter and reduce the anxiety associated with major life transitions. By completing the activity, you will gain better insight into your desires, set achievable goals, and develop coping mechanisms that align with your needs. This tool empowers you to set a positive course for your future, ensuring you move forward confidently.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

What specific thoughts or concerns come up when you think about your future?

Describe how you feel physically when you think about your future (e.g., tense, tired, restless).

What are three emotions you frequently feel when considering your post-graduation plans?

Next, you will engage in a relaxation technique. Follow these steps:

1. Practice taking slow, deep breaths to feel calm.
2. As you continue to take deep, slow breaths in and out, tense and then relax each muscle group, starting from your toes and moving up to your head.
3. Focus on your breath and the sensations you feel in this moment.

After you feel completely calm and relaxed, write down three small, achievable goals for the next few months. Examples might include updating your resume, applying for a job or internship, or learning a new skill.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Imagine where you'd like to be in five years. Break down your bigger goals into smaller, more manageable steps. Describe below.

Talking about your feelings can lighten your burden and clarify your thoughts. Who can you talk to about your future plans? Write down at least three people you can talk to and how you will contact them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Next, you will design “The Roadmap to Your Future” on the next page.

Materials Needed:

- Markers, pens, colored pencils, or other writing instruments
- Stickers
- Post-it notes for removable ideas

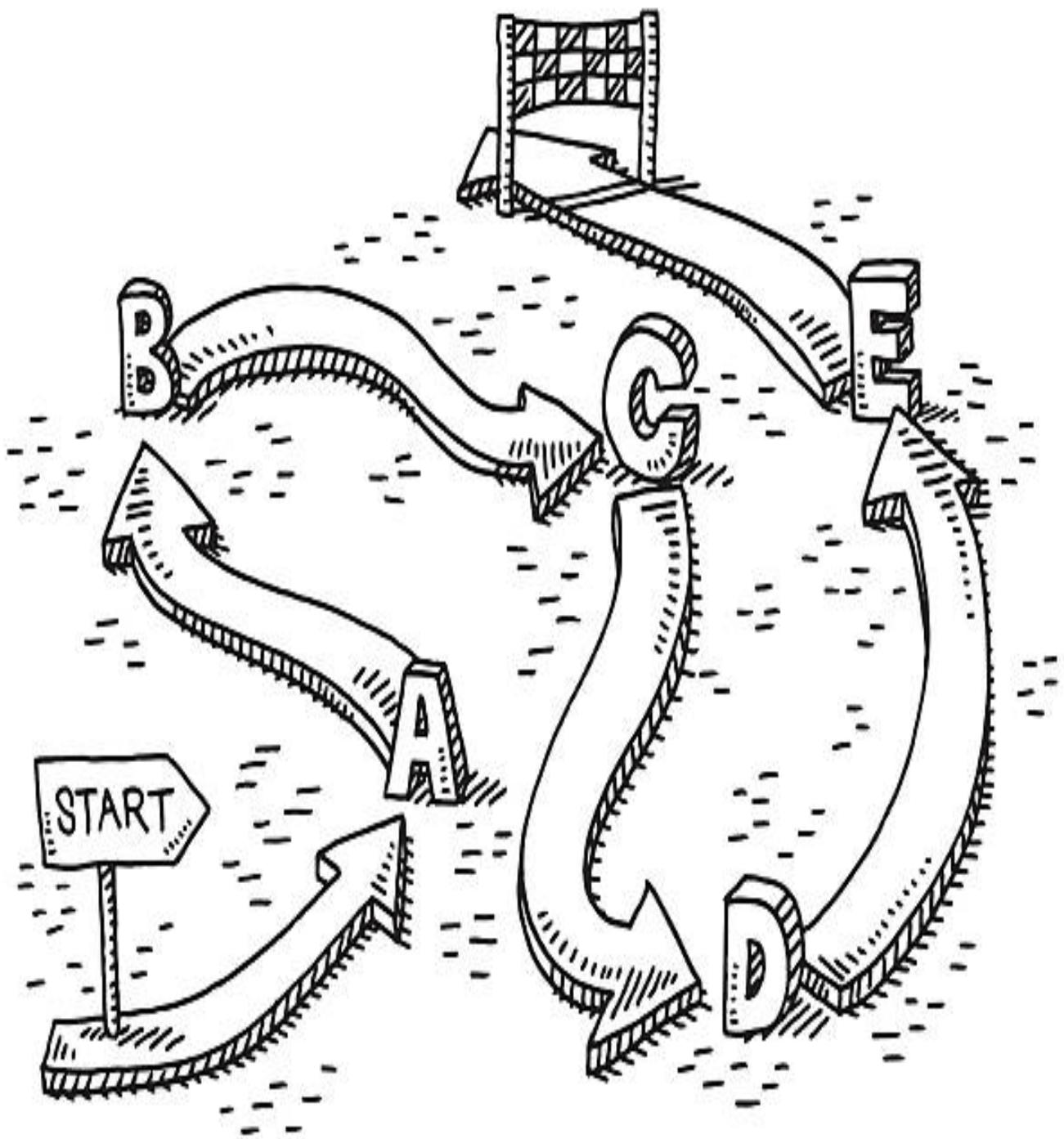
The path represents your journey. Next to the “Start” sign, write down your graduation date.

As you move along the path, add milestones that represent your short-term and long-term goals. Use different colors or stickers for your goals (e.g., education, career, relationship, health).

At points along the path, note potential obstacles or fears. In the available space, write down any other helpful information – resources, tools, etc. – that can assist you on your journey.

This exercise can help you visualize a structured path forward and overcome the overwhelming feeling of starting a new chapter.

The Roadmap to Your Future



Strategies that can help you overcome obstacles and challenges:

Once your roadmap is complete, consider the path ahead. How do you feel?

What areas excite you the most?

Where do you feel most uncertain?

Is there anything that makes you feel “stuck”? If yes, describe.

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
