

## A hero's journey

**Explanation:** Framing our experiences as a story in which we are the hero is a powerful way to help us through difficult experiences. In any good story there are chapters where our hero faces really difficult challenges and manages to overcome them. By looking at our own experiences in this way we can take control of where we want the story to go next.

**How to do it:** Ask the young person to think about what has happened as though it were a chapter in a story. It's important to remember that the central character (the young person) is the hero – we like them; we are on their side; we have faith in them. Remind them that they are still near the beginning of the book – there are lots of chapters still to come. Explore the different ways in which the next chapter may be written, finding as many ways as you can that lead to a positive outcome. Encourage reflection on all the different resources and strengths that our hero has – what can they do to overcome their challenges? What different ways will they find to recover from their experiences? Peek ahead to ten chapters, or twenty chapters further down the book – what is happening now? What skills and qualities does our hero have? How are they using these skills to create a life that works for them?

**When it's useful:** This is an effective way to put distance between a traumatic event and the person who has experienced it. When we feel stuck or defined by a situation it can be useful to see it as simply a chapter in a much longer narrative. It shapes the story but only as much as the author wants it to. This is about empowering people to move forward into recovery.

