In this exercise, you’ll tell a story about an issue that’s relevant to your students, such as peer pressure, before suddenly shifting the focus to the Float to Live message.

1. Ask the class to imagine the story you’re about to tell.
2. Pick a subject that’s an issue of concern for the students, like peer pressure, social media, or relationships.
3. Tell a story to make them think it’s another lesson about that topic. For peer pressure, it might be something like this:
   One evening, Shaun and his group of friends were hanging out on the pier. The strong wind meant that they had the whole thing to themselves – there wasn’t a soul in sight. Shaun had always felt like a bit of an outsider in the group. He’d only joined the school a few months ago, and was keen to make friends. The ringleader of the group, Joe, climbed over the fence on the edge of the pier. He summoned Shaun and a few others to do the same. With the sun setting in the background, this would make an epic profile picture. Shaun was reluctant, but once three of the boys were over, he thought ‘why not?’. If people saw him in the photo, they might think he was a big part of the group.
4. Give the story a sudden twist – Shaun has nearly climbed back over the fence, when he loses his footing and falls into the sea. Sound your alarm or buzzer, and ask students to quickly write down what they think Shaun should do next.
5. Ask the class to reveal their answers – how would they feel if they were in Shaun’s position, what would they do next? For most, their natural reaction would be to swim hard and fight against the water, but the best thing to do is stay calm and float for 60-90 seconds. This would allow the effects of cold water shock to pass before they attempt to swim to safety or call for help.

Now watch our short film at RNLI.org/educationrtw

GROUP DISCUSSION

Here are some things you could chat to your students about after the film.

**What is cold water shock?**
Describe the body’s response to being suddenly immersed in cold water – gasping for air, rapid breathing, a feeling of panic, and increasing blood pressure that can cause a heart attack. You can find out more about cold water shock at RNLI.org/safety/know-the-risks/cold-water-shock
Staying safe around cold water
Talk about where’s safest to enter the water at a beach, or near open water, and the importance of telling people where you are. Here are a couple of stats that might prove handy:

- Around half of the people who die at the British and Irish coasts each year don’t even mean to go into the water, a lot of people accidentally slip, trip or fall.
- The average temperature of British and Irish coastal waters is 12-15ºC, cold enough to cause cold water shock.

How to float
Take them through these simple steps:

- Fight your instinct to swim hard.
- Lean back in the water.
- Push your stomach up, extending your arms and legs.
- Gently move your hands and feet to help you float until you’ve controlled your breathing.
- Swim to safety or call for help.

Find out how many pupils think they can float and how many can’t. Discuss why some people may be able to float easier than others, and advise your students to practise in their local pool.

Seeing someone else struggling in the water
It’s simple – they just need to dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard. Remember, they should never put themselves at risk by entering the water.

Pass it on
Encourage your students to share this life-saving advice with their friends and family. Could they present the film in an assembly or show it to a youth group outside school?

To find out more go to RespectTheWater.com to see our cinema ad and discover more about floating.