

heads<sup>up</sup>

safe place  
to be yourself

# Teacher Activity Pack



**Lesson 1: We all have mental health**

**Key Stage: 3 + 4**

 **Introduction:**

This lesson introduces students to the idea of mental health being just like physical health; we all have it and it can get better and worse just like physical health can. Students will begin to understand some of the signs of worsening mental health, and learn that your GP is there to support you with all aspects of health, both mental and physical. In this lesson, students will begin to get comfortable talking openly about mental health, which will hopefully break down some of the stigma surrounding the issue.

 **Learning Objectives:**

- To understand the meaning of ‘mental health’ and that everyone has it
- To begin to recognise warning signs of worsening mental health and understand where and when to seek help
- To start the conversation on mental health among peers and become more comfortable discussing the topic

 **You will need:**

- Video 1: An introduction to mental health
- Resource 1.1 – Gingerbread person
- Sticky notes
- Resource 1.2 – Symptoms directory
- Beach ball (optional)
- Resource 1.3 – Mental health spectrum (one per group)
- Resource 1.4 – Young people’s snapshots
- Resource 1.5 – Mental health spectrum teacher notes

**Activity:**

Watch Video 1: An introduction to mental health and discuss

Gingerbread person activity

Pass it on

Mental health spectrum activity

**Timing:**

10 minutes

10 minutes

10 minutes

10 minutes

 **Keywords:**

- Mental health
- Symptoms
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stigma
- Helpline

 **Video:**



[Video 1: An introduction to mental health](#)

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**Activity 1 – Watch Video 1 and discuss - 10 minutes**

Watch Video 1: An introduction to mental health.

Afterwards, have a very brief discussion as a class about mental health and the stigma surrounding it, being sure to highlight that the young people in the video are just like any one of us. Everyone has mental health and we should all try and normalise conversations about it, just like the young people in the video.

**You will need:**

- Video 1: An introduction to mental health

**Activity 2 – Gingerbread Person - 10 minutes**

After watching the video, ask your students to write a symptom of mental health difficulties on a sticky note and to stick it onto the gingerbread person poster, on the appropriate body part. For example, butterflies would be stuck to the gingerbread's stomach.

Encourage the students to come up with more symptoms than just those listed in the video. Use the attached list of symptoms to coax some ideas if they are struggling.

When the class has exhausted their ideas, go through each sticky note explaining what kind of mental health difficulty each symptom could be associated with, highlighting the fact that many symptoms, eg fatigue, are present across a number of different mental health difficulties.

**You will need:**

- Resource 1.1 – Gingerbread person
- Sticky notes
- Resource 1.2 – Symptoms directory

**Activity 3 – Pass it on - 10 minutes**

Your class should be standing in a circle if there is space. If not appropriate then the class need to all be able to see each other.

As the teacher, you can start by describing someone you have seen showing the signs of a mental health difficulty. This can be yourself, a friend, family member, celebrity or television character. Explain these options to the class.

Examples: "Nicole Richie - extreme weight loss"

"My cousin stopped coming to family gatherings"

When you have given your example you will throw the beach ball, or an imaginary ball to another person in the circle. Shout their name to let them know they are next.

**You will need:**

- Beach ball (optional)

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**Activity 4 – Mental health spectrum - 10 minutes**

Students are to work in groups to place the descriptions of the young people's situation along the mental health continuum spectrum.

This is to show that there is not simply well and unwell, but that it is a sliding scale.

You should also use this task to demonstrate that not every symptom indicates a mental health difficulty. For example, a person could be tired because they are doing too much, or they haven't eaten enough. Another example could be that a friend doesn't attend social occasions for a couple of weeks because they have been very busy. It is important to highlight that these symptoms do not automatically indicate a mental health difficulty but should be monitored if they are persistent.

You may choose to cut up the young person snapshots and provide a set to each group, or alternatively you could display the worksheet on a board or read them out.

Students may have ideas differing to those on the teacher notes. If these ideas are well-justified and clearly thought through then they should be accepted.

**You will need:**

- Resource 1.3 – Mental health spectrum (one per group)
- Resource 1.4 – Young people's snapshots (cut up as 1 set per group, or displayed on a board)
- Resource 1.5 – Mental health spectrum teacher notes







**Homework:**

Visit: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/a-z-mental-health/>

Students are to choose a mental health difficulty to research. They should ensure this is a different difficulty to their peers. Students should create an awareness poster of their findings. Students will be required to read each other's over the coming lessons to ensure they have an understanding of a wide range of mental health difficulties.

**Support information:**

-  Childline 0800 11 11
-  Samaritans 116 123
-  HopeLineUK 0800 068 4141
-  Give us a shout - Text 'shout' to 85258