

What Is Mental Health?



LO: To learn about mental health; what it means and how we can take care of it

In your PSHE books, write down all the words, feelings and emotions you think are associated with mental health.

This is just a starter activity to assess your initial understanding of what mental health is.

Before we start with the lessons, there are some ground rules we need to be aware of.

This is because talking about mental health may make you think about yourselves or people that you know who are experiencing a difficult time with their feelings or emotions.

You can talk to any adult in school if you are concerned or become concerned about anything at this time.

Ground rules

Be open and honest, but not discuss directly our own or others' personal lives. We will discuss general situations as examples but will not use names or descriptions which could identify anyone. We will not put anyone 'on the spot'

Keep the conversation within the room and know that our teacher will not repeat what is said in the classroom unless they are concerned someone is at risk, in which case they will follow the school's safeguarding policy.

It is okay for us to disagree with another person's point of view but we will not judge anyone, make fun of anyone, or put anyone down. We will 'challenge the opinion not the person'.

Taking part is important. However, we have the right to pass on answering a question or participating in an activity.

We will not make assumptions about people's values, attitudes, behaviours, life experiences or feelings.

We will listen to the other person's point of view and expect to be listened to.



Ground rules

We will use the correct terms for the things we will be discussing rather than the slang terms, as they can be offensive. If we are not sure what the correct term is we will ask our teacher.

We know that no question is a stupid question. We will not ask questions that deliberately seek to embarrass anyone else. There is a question box for anonymous questions.

If we need further help or advice, we know how and where to seek it confidentially, both in school and in the community. We will encourage friends to seek help if we think they need it.

Mental health means being happy all the time.

Mental health is about feelings and emotions; knowing how to take care of ourselves so that we can cope with things that happen to us.

Mental health means there is something wrong with a person and they might behave in a strange way.

Mental health means that you often feel worried, anxious or depressed.

Mental health is a bit like a continuum — people can move along it and feel better or worse at different times, just like with physical health.

Which of these do you think best describes what we mean when we talk about mental health? - explain and justify your ideas.

In the same way as everyone has physical health (which is about their body), everyone also has mental health – both children and adults – which is about their mind, their emotions and feelings.

It can include how we feel about ourselves, our relationships and how we deal with challenges and difficulties.

Physical and mental health are connected. Being fit and well physically helps us to be fit and well mentally and vice versa.

What Is Mental Health?

‘A person’s condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being.’

The World Health Organisation describes mental health as being:
‘A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.’

NHS England describes it as:
‘How we think, feel and behave.’

Mental health problems can affect how a person feels, thinks and behaves. Around one in four people in Britain and about one in ten children and young people suffer from mental health problems (that’s about three in every classroom).

Our mental health can be thought of as being on a scale that can move up or down, a bit like a thermometer. Mental health can move anywhere up or down the thermometer, between being healthy or unwell. We can all move along the scale at any time, but there are things that we can do to support us to stay in the health and coping areas.

Sometimes, we may go in to the struggling or unwell areas. To support us with our mental health, we can put things in place to help us feel better and move out of the struggling or unwell areas.

<http://www.beem.org.uk/Page/16930>



TASK

Sort the activities for health cards under headings:

things we should do

‘everyday’; ‘sometimes’; ‘if there is a problem’; ‘rarely or not at all’.

Write whether the activity relates to mental health in black or **physical health in green** (HINT: some will relate to both).

Justify two of your ideas – think about why you chose to sort it in that way.

Can You Think of Any Mental Health Problems?

Here are just a small selection of problems that people may experience:

anger

anxiety
and panic
attacks

depression

eating
problems

Click on a mental health problem to learn more about it.



Anger



Have you ever felt angry?

Anger is a natural emotion that everyone feels. It becomes a problem when it is harmful to others or yourself.

Ways of dealing with anger:

counselling/psychotherapy/cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

anger management programmes through NHS/online/private courses

conversations with your GP

talk to the Respect Phoneline

take a course run by the Freedom Programme



Anxiety and Panic Attacks



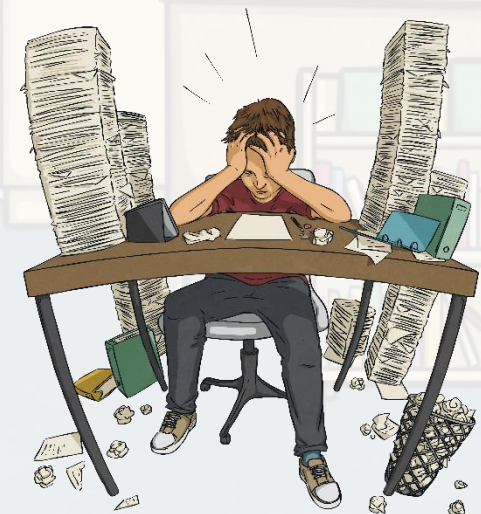
What do you think it feels like to feel anxious?

Fight or flight response – This is a response we experience to protect ourselves from danger by preparing the body to either **fight** the danger or **flee** it. This can turn into a panic attack. Your heart rate may quicken and you may begin to sweat, feel faint or feel sick.

Can you think of some situations that could make you feel anxious in today's society?

- Have a test/exam
- Starting a new school/job
- Having an argument with a loved one
- Moving away from home
- Getting married or divorced

Anxiety and Panic Attacks continued...



Anxiety and Panic Attacks



When does it become a problem?

As it is a natural response, we will probably all have experienced this anxious or panicked feeling. However, when it becomes a regular occurrence in day to day life, it may become an issue.

Ways of dealing with anxiety and panic attacks:



breathing
meditation
yoga

positive
thinking

'talking'
treatments

medication

Depression



How do you think depression is different from feeling 'low'?

Like the other mental health problems discussed, depression becomes an issue when it begins to affect your daily life. Some people will struggle to do daily tasks and may even have suicidal thoughts.

Listen [here](#) to a group of people talking about their experiences with mental health.



Depression continued...

Depression



Ways of dealing with depression:

counselling/psychotherapy/cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

NHS/online/private courses

yoga/meditation/mindfulness

medication



Eating Problems



Food is a very important part of our lives and sometimes, due to how we are feeling, our relationship with food may change. This may be because of feeling stressed or anxious, or a conscious decision to watch what you eat, however if you are not eating a balanced diet it can be very dangerous.

Many eating disorders are started as a way of controlling something else that has become stressful in your life.

Ways of dealing with eating problems:



counselling/psychotherapy/cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

visiting a clinic/talking to a dietician/psychotherapist

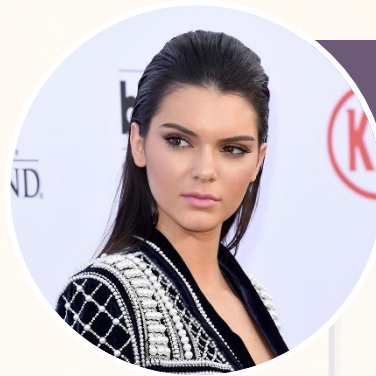
medication

Celebrities

Anyone can experience mental health problems. Here are just a handful of celebrities who have spoken out about their experiences:



Justin Bieber
depression



Kendall Jenner
anxiety



Lady Gaga
post-traumatic
stress disorder



Dwayne Johnson
depression

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"Lady Gaga" by ana_lora is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

"Kendall Jenner" by Walt Disney Television is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

"Selena Gomez" by SGForeverC7 is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Celebrities



Brad Pitt
depression



Prince Harry
living with the
grief after his
mother's death



Jade Thirlwell
anorexia

Positive Mental Health

Discuss some of the ways you can deal with a mental health problem.

Have a go at one of the following activities and after, discuss how it made you feel while you did it.

- [Mindfulness Colouring Sheets](#)
- [When I am Feeling Activity Sheet](#)
- [Anger Map Activity Sheet](#)
- [Colour Your Feelings Activity Sheet](#)



Plenary

Who could you go to if you feel worried about mental health?

