



Facts4Life

Mental Health Resource – KS3



Facts4Life: A health resilience programme for primary and secondary schools
Helping young people take ownership of their mental health

www.facts4life.org

SAMPLE



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These materials are to be used in conjunction with the Facts4life resources for primary and secondary schools. The Facts4life approach recognises the interconnectedness of physical and mental health. These on-line resources with a focus on mental health have been devised as a response to requests from teachers to provide further support in an area of growing need across the country. We encourage teachers to continue to highlight the interplay between symptoms of physical and mental ill health within their teaching.

Theme One

What is Mental Health? - Riding the Ups and Downs

- Establishing understanding of mental health
- Introducing the mental health continuum
- Exploring language associated with mental health and mental illness

Theme Two

When Might I Need Help? – Keeping Balanced

- Understanding the link between mental and physical health and how we keep in balance
- Making the distinction between low mood, normal levels of anxiety and the need for additional help

Theme Three

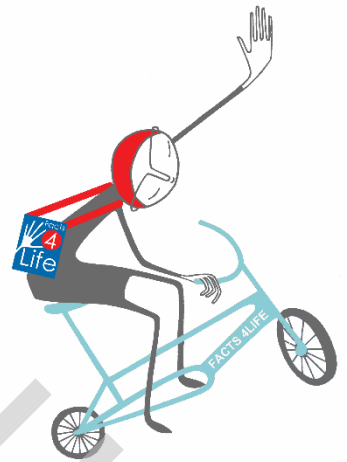
How Can I Better Support Myself? – Smoothing the Path

- Identifying what is helpful, including self-help as well as accessing professional support
- Practising listening skills and how to support friends who might be struggling

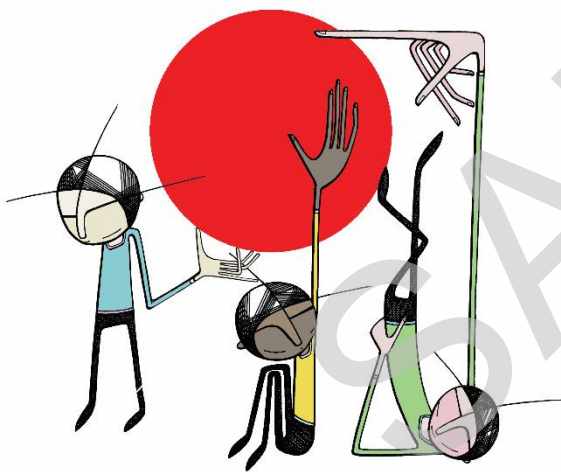
Using the metaphor of life as a journey, there are three key messages underpinning Facts4Life lessons:

1. Riding the Ups and Downs

How we are feeling is not static or fixed, it constantly changes. Sometimes this is in response to an event or our own experience and sometimes it is apparently for no reason at all. We all have different emotions and respond differently to our life – this is quite normal. The important thing to remember is that most feelings will pass whether they are good or quite bad. It is all part of the journey through life - it is not just what happens to us during this journey but how we respond that influences our wellbeing. This might mean learning to view a situation differently, choosing a new set of actions or accessing external support.



2. Keeping Balanced



Our minds and bodies are remarkably efficient at maintaining balance, they are really quite robust most of the time but it can be hard to see that when we are struggling with something. We can get knocked in varying ways and our sense of balance may wobble a bit. As there is such a close correlation between our minds and bodies - the experience affects both. An example of this is when a person feels stressed; it may make a physical condition such as asthma or eczema much worse. By the same token, if a bone is broken or someone must go through a surgical procedure, this can affect their emotional state of mind.

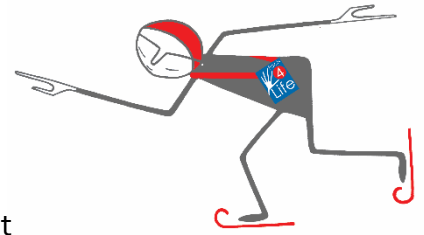
Conditions such as depression may be triggered by an episode of ill health – especially if it's prolonged or seems to have no end. Severe depression can lead to physical withdrawal and loss of appetite. Many of us return to a 'comfortable' state again although the time taken to achieve this will vary from one individual to another. Some however need a little more help.

"You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive."

Maya Angelou

3. Smoothing the Path

We are all different and how we respond to the challenges life throws at us will vary. This all depends on many factors which include previous experience and factors such as genetics, the environment and levels of resilience. The good news is that coping skills may be taught and learned to enable us to feel better. For example, we can learn to talk about feelings and worries. To learn a language to describe our mental and emotional wellbeing will increase awareness and understanding of our experience and help us to manage it. There are other actions we can take to support both our mental and physical health that relate to sleep, healthy eating, exercise and other coping strategies.



Ground Rules

Explain that the next series of lessons will focus on matters of mental health which can be a personal and sensitive issue. We therefore need to establish an agreed set of rules for how we all support each other.

Example:

The following are suggested rules although it is more meaningful for the group to establish their own.

1. Be responsible for your own learning
2. Respect others' opinions, accept that views and experiences will differ
3. Only one person speaking at a time
4. You have the right to pass
5. Listen to who is speaking
6. Talk about yourself and let other people talk for themselves
7. Observe confidentiality
8. Be thoughtful, considerate and non-judgmental always

Additional rules may be added or existing ones adapted to ensure the groups achieve ownership of the ground rules.

It is advisable to revisit the ground rules at the start of every lesson to enable pupils to feel safe and therefore able to contribute to discussions and activities and gain more from the sessions.

It is very important to consider the timing of sessions as they may raise issues that need addressing afterwards. Also, the teacher may require some support as they may feel distressed or concerned and need to share their reaction, especially if safeguarding is an issue.

Theme One: Riding the Ups and Downs - What is Mental Health?

Quiz on Mental Health

This activity can be used in tutor time or as a starter activity within a session to establish current thinking within the group. You may wish to omit Question 6 with a younger cohort.

1. Mental health may be described as
.....
.....
2. People with mental health issues recover?
 - Always
 - Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
3. Medication helps mental illness?
 - Always
 - Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
4. People with mental health issues benefit from
 - Exercise
 - Having someone to talk to
 - Enough sleep
 - All of the above
5. How many children aged between 5 and 15 years are affected by mental illness?
 - 1 in 4
 - 1 in 10
 - 1 in 20
 - Don't know
6. Self Harm is about.....
 - Expressing emotional pain
 - Gaining some control
 - Managing feelings
 - A way of coping



Theme One: Riding the Ups and Downs - What is Mental Health?

Mental Health Continuum

Introduce the idea of the continuum of mental health and explain that all of us are located somewhere on it and that this position may change depending on a number of factors. The question is where in terms of our vulnerability or resilience. For younger children this would mean whether we get easily upset or are able to laugh off a setback. Encourage the students to consider what might place them in a particular position on the continuum. Set up a line which represents the continuum, with personal emergency at one end and feeling terrific at the other – the vast majority of us exist somewhere in the middle and always will and this is a very healthy position to occupy! Examples of life events can be given and students place themselves along the line, depending on how they think they may react.

Examples might include:

1. Death of a pet.
2. Going swimming after school
3. Joining a new club
4. Visiting Grandma
5. Having favourite dinner
6. Having a deep bubble bath
7. Playing on a new game
8. Watching a favourite programme
9. Reading a new book
10. Doing some colouring in
11. Listening to music
12. Seeing a photo of yourself on social media
13. Riding your bike
14. Learning some new spellings
15. Being told off
16. Having an argument
17. Falling out with your friend
18. Sitting an exam
19. Not being picked for a team
20. Falling over and hurting yourself
21. Feeling embarrassed
22. Being laughed at
23. Having your hard work recognised
24. Being praised for helping outthe group can create their own ideas to add to the list and decide where this would place them



Emphasise at the end how our lives are full of both positive and negative experiences. We are all different and for some, going swimming might be an enjoyable activity. For others, it might be a source of anxiety. That's completely normal. We can learn to manage the challenging situations more easily.

Theme Three: Smoothing the Path - How Can I Better Support Myself?


Identifying Strengths & Giving Positive Affirmations

The aim of this session is to introduce positive psychology and focus upon strengths.

Either the strength cards below could be used or the group could design some of their own. The group is then asked to give the card to another student/pupil and explain how the recipient demonstrates that strength.

Consider when these strengths have particular importance e.g. if you were stuck in the woods, if a friend was recently bereaved etc.

Choose a strength that you would like to develop further and think about how you might do that.



good sense of humour	creative	good listener
patient	generous	caring
logical thinker	organised	optimistic
practical	sensitive	compassionate
helpful	determined	friendly
curious	intelligent	adventurous

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