

Wellbeing: Managing your Stress Facilitator Guide

Overview and Purpose

This lesson explores how we all experience stress, getting pupils to consider factors that affect their stress levels and how they might better manage them. This session involves the use of the online quiz platform “Kahoot”.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand what we mean by the term “Mental Health”
- Have an understanding of the different ways we can cope with stress
- Understand the different ways we can remain mentally healthy

Vocabulary

- Mental Health - Includes our emotional, psychological and social well being. It affects how we think feel and act. It also influences how we deal with stressful situations, make healthy decisions and relate to others.
- Stress - A state of tension or worry induced by difficult or challenging situations

Preparation / Materials Needed

- Chart Paper / Post It Notes
- Marker pens
- Download the session PowerPoint
- Optional:** Kahoot Quiz “Mental Health Awareness Quick Quiz” - <https://create.kahoot.it/share/share/mh-awareness-quick-quiz-short/057e1f22-4290-4a6c-a1f2-d879de7e9708>
- For virtual delivery, students can make their own notes (on paper or on a device) and can download their own copy of the activities pack.

Agenda

Understanding mental health (5 min)

- What does mental health mean?
- Can students think of any examples of a time when they felt worried, stressed or anxious?

Coping with stress and remaining healthy (10 mins)

- Understanding the difference between the healthy and unhealthy ways we can cope with stress
- Understanding how to keep mentally healthy

Wrap-up & Reflection (5 mins)

- Reflection on the session and its learning objectives

Wellbeing: Managing your Stress Teacher Notes

Getting Started / Warm Up (5 mins)

“What does Mental Health mean to you?” Quick discussion here, try and tease out difference between emotions (sadness, feeling anxious etc) and mental health challenges (depression, anxiety disorder). **Impact** and **duration** are key.

Main Activity (10 mins)

Show slide 3. Please read the notes below. Keep it brief but the main focus is on recognising that MH health is not fixed for all time. **Most people are well** and people who are unwell can and do recover. Stress is normal, but when it is overwhelming or chronic it can lead to a MH condition.

By the term **Mental Health**, we refer to people’s **ability to cope with the normal stresses of everyday life** and realise their own potential. This is an extract of a longer World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of MH. **We all have mental health and it is linked with our physical health.**

As you will see on the chart, we all sit somewhere on a mental health spectrum. Where we sit depends on a variety of factors including our genetics, our brain chemistry, our previous life experiences and what is happening in our lives now.

You will see on the chart 'Flourishing' MH is at the far right. This represents a state of MH at its most positive. Someone here may for example be applying mindfulness to further enhance their strong MH and really stay in the moment. Then we have 'Mental Wellness' where most people reside. The grey area shows 'Languishing MH.' If you were to go to the doctors for example and describe the signs and symptoms of depression for a few days, they are most likely to suggest you come back in a couple of weeks as typically this is the time period a continued experience of these symptoms will need to trigger a diagnosis of depression.

You will see the left hand side 'Mental disorders'. These can range from stress, anxiety and depression to less common such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia etc. All mental ill-health and stress related conditions sit at the Languishing to Mental Disorders end of the MH Spectrum.

To conclude... **MH is rarely an absolute state**, it is dynamic and changes over time and as a result of things that happen in our lives.

Show slide 4. Suggest students keep their thoughts private about what flows into their bucket. There is the option here for a “physical exercise”, two different sized containers to represent different sized buckets, students write 2 things that “stress” them out roll up into a ball and put 1 in each container, the small container will obviously overflow first. Open up to more general discussion about what coping mechanisms do they employ to stop bucket from overflowing :

- Healthy examples? Exercising, socialising, reading, meditation and so on
- Unhealthy? Smoking (nicotine is a stimulant so actually does the opposite of calming you down!).

Post slide 5 up on board and open up Kahoot Quiz (hyperlink within the slide - <https://create.kahoot.it/share/share/mh-awareness-quick-quiz-short/057e1f22-4290-4a6c-a1f2-d879de7e9708>).

Teaching Tip: Stress and feeling anxious are normal and are NOT mental health conditions in themselves. Remind students that a bit of stress can make people perform at their best, top athletes use stress to their advantage. It is normal to feel stressed before an exam and can improve performance.

Summary / Wrap Up (5 mins)

To repeat again that MH is a continuum, we all have it and can move up and down that continuum. The important thing here is to develop our coping strategies for managing the daily stresses that we will experience and cannot avoid completely.