

Activity 9 - Health and wellbeing

Students become aware that being supportive towards someone with a mental health concern is no different from being supportive towards someone with a physical health issue.



Aims

- To provide an icebreaker that encourages students to participate in an open discussion
- To demonstrate that everyone has mental health
- To demonstrate that mental health like physical health can be effectively treated

Materials needed:

Flipchart

Pens

Post-it notes - two colours

Step 1: Part one

- Divide the class into 2/4 groups
- It's important to emphasise that there are no wrong answers in this activity
- This exercise is all about opening up a discussion
- Tell participants that they don't have to agree with or believe in the ideas or names they offer/say
- Give each group a piece of flip chart paper with one/two of four terms written at the top: **Physical health/Mental health/Physical illness/Mental illness**
- Give the groups five minutes to 'thought shower' all the words that come to mind when they see the term
- After five minutes, ask groups to tape their sheets up on a wall for all groups to see
- Ask one student from each group to read out their list for the whole class
- Ask students what they notice about the type of words used on each sheet
- Discuss the similarities and differences in student responses to mental and physical aspects of people's health
- Ask students to suggest some reasons for these differences
- Look at the differences in the words used, both positive and negative, and discuss the impact of them
- Here are some examples for each of the headings above:
Physical health – Healthy, Keeping fit, Eating correctly
Mental health – Mind, Psychology, Thoughts, Feelings
Physical illness – Sickness, Conditions, Diseases, Bed rest, Doctors
Mental illness – Sick mind, Psychologists, Bad thoughts, Hospital



Step 2: Review

Which has more positive and negative comments?
Why do you think this is?
What could change this?
Did anything surprise you about this activity?



Step 3: Part two

- Allow the participants time to watch the Advice for Young People video
- Hand out post-its to the students and ask them to write down a message of support for someone with a physical health problem/concern (e.g. Diabetes, Asthma) and jot down some ideas of things they can do to help. Give them 5 minutes to do this.
- Hand out post-its to the students and ask them to write down a message of support for someone with a mental health problem/concern (e.g. Depression, Anxiety) and jot down some ideas of things they can do to help. Give them 5 minutes to do this.
- Once they have finished ask each student to read out their messages



Step 4: Review

Are the messages of support similar?
Are the types of support you could offer similar?
Did anything surprise you about this?

