

Introduction

This pack contains a range of activities suitable for students in secondary school to promote and support positive mental health and reduce stigma.

These can be used in PSHE lessons, tutor time, small group and individual sessions.

The pack includes a wide range of activities of varying lengths which can be used on their own or in combination with other activities, to provide flexibility. The young people involved in creating this resource have selected the topics and developed the activities in order to engage, challenge and educate their peers but also to equip them with the tools and information they need to deal with the difficulties they may face.

The activities are divided into sections by topic:

- **Introduction and challenging stigma** - This section is a good starting point, providing information about the subject generally but also giving a local context and increasing awareness of the impact of mental health stigma on young people.
- **Anxiety Disorders** - Activities help students empathise with those experiencing anxiety disorders and also provides some tips and tools on coping with anxiety and stress.
- **Eating Disorders and Body Image** - Activities raise awareness of the broader issue of body image and societal pressures and preoccupation with physical appearance. Activities also raise awareness of eating disorders.
- **Mood Disorders** - Activities broaden understanding of depression and other mood disorders
- **Self-Harm** - Myths and misconceptions around the topic are challenged. Students are also introduced to alternative coping mechanisms which help them consider other less damaging ways to deal with distress.
- **Getting Help** – Students are introduced to a range of support services and options (local and national), which are available to young people of different ages, in different
- **Looking after yourself** – Students are introduced to the 5 ways to wellbeing and encouraged to think and plan for their own wellbeing
- **Resources** – useful links

Learning Outcomes

- Young people are aware of a range of mental health issues and recognise that mental ill health can affect us all.
- They know how they can support and develop their own mental health.
- They know where to look for support when they need it and how to be a good friend to someone who is struggling with mental health issues.

Introducing the topic

It is important to acknowledge that mental health issues are not uncommon. Many of us will experience difficulties or will know someone close who is struggling. Therefore we need to make sure we deal with the subject in a sensitive way. If the difficulties are known it is useful to give students the chance to opt out of the session if they wish. It is also helpful to explain who young people can speak to if they need support.

It is certainly very important to establish Ground Rules. Ideally allow time for the students to develop their own agreement but make sure to include:

- Listening to each other
- Being kind
- Being sensitive, thinking about other people's feelings
- Not talking about very personal issues (but they can talk to the teacher or other named person after if they need to)