

What is Mental Health?

30 mins

KS 2

A sorting activity which helps children understand mental health symptoms. It aims to show children that we need a variety of things in our lives to maintain our mental & physical health and to recognise that good mental health is as important as good physical health.

This is a good introductory activity.

What you will need

Definition of mental health

2 hula hoops

Sorting cards

Method

- The children should be arranged in a circle for this activity
- Choose which sorting cards are suitable for your class
- Begin by asking 'What do you think we mean by mental health?' Write what the children say up on the board. This is a good way to gauge how much your class is already aware of.
- Explain what we mean by mental health using the definition
- Lay the 2 hula hoops on the floor overlapping a little – label them “**Mental health**” and “**Physical health**” with the overlap area relating to both.
- Place the cards in the middle and ask the children to take it in turns to pick a card, read it out and then place it where they think it should go – ask them to explain their choice if appropriate.
- Discuss the interaction between the two - often mental health issues are manifested in physical ways e.g. a headache because you are really worried about something.

Definition of Mental Health

- Mental health affects how we think, feel & behave. It affects how we feel about ourselves and other people and it affects our day-to-day lives.
- When you have good mental health you are able to cope with the ups and downs of life. You will enjoy spending time with friends and have hobbies and interests you like. We sometimes call good mental health mental well-being.
- A mental health problem also affects how you think, feel and behave. You might find that the things you used to enjoy doing aren't fun anymore. It can affect your mood, your sleep, how you get along with other people and generally make it more difficult to get on with life. In a similar way when you have a physical health problem e.g. flu you might feel weak, not well enough to go out and play. Both physical health problems and mental health problems may be minor or more serious. They may last for a short time or carry on for a long time.
- People with mental health problems can recover and live normal lives if they get the right support or treatment.

Mental Health	Physical Health
Enjoys life	Headaches
Happy	Energetic
Can have fun/good sense of fun	Sleeps well
Can laugh at themselves	Eats well
Gets on well with others	Itchy rash
Full of worries	Loss of appetite
Grumpy all the time	High temperature
Sleeps badly	No energy
Keeps getting in fights at school	Can't concentrate

