



nd time
the things;
interest me

I can solve
problems

YEAR 7 ACTIVITY

I am helped to
understand how
other people
might be feeling

I get enough
sleep

I have enough
money to live

I can manage
my money



Things to consider before starting

1. These are sensitive issues

When delivering lessons on the topics of mental health, resilience and emotional wellbeing you might trigger feelings in children that they find difficult to cope with. They may struggle to engage with activities or they may describe negative coping mechanisms. Different children may respond very differently to the same content. It's really important that every activity is well planned and you have carefully considered how any child may be affected and how these individuals might be best supported.

Regardless of how well we plan, it is not always possible to prevent children from becoming upset in the session. Ensure that there is an adult that the child can talk to if they are finding the session too difficult. This might be you or it might be a different adult in the room. Identify a space away from the group where the child can talk and ensure that some time is spent exploring how the child is feeling. As ever, explain the confines of confidentiality and follow up any safeguarding concerns and make sure that the child knows who you are going to talk to and what will happen next.

Sessions such as this can be difficult for all children. During the plenary, check how everyone is and tell them where they can go if they want to talk a bit more.

2. Setting up groundrules for session

For children to engage it is important to feel safe, contained and validated throughout the session.

You can foster this environment by getting the children to decide and agree upon a set of rules for the group. These should include listening to one another, keeping things confidential within the space, not sharing more than they want to, respecting what everyone says, not judging each other, being allowed to sit things out and reminding them that the safe space (somewhere else) can be used.

For the facilitator, this is about knowing the group of children and preparing them for having these discussions. Different groups may come up with different groundrules.

3. Safeguarding

After setting up the groundrules with a group or class, it is really important to adhere to the normal safeguarding procedures of the school you are working in. Your school will have a Designated Safeguarding Lead and clear procedures to follow if you are worried about the safety of a child in your care. If you are in any doubt as to whether a child is safe, you should seek advice from appropriate members of staff.

4. Staff considerations

Sessions such as this can also trigger feelings in staff. Ensure that staff are confident in running the session and that they also know where they can go to access support.

Activity:

Feelings overflow

Learning Outcome:

To recognise that emotions can build up and become overwhelming. To explore techniques for proactively managing emotions.

Context:

One of the things we can do to build our capacity to cope with change is to pay attention to our emotions. Being aware of what affects us can help us feel less overwhelmed.

Activity:

Start the session with groundrules, to ensure that children feel safe to speak and only share what they don't mind others knowing.

- This activity can be done in small groups or as a class.
- Set out a jug/bucket in the middle of the table, with newspaper or a towel around or underneath it. Put cups full of water around the jug/bucket. The cups represent our emotions.
- Give each child in the group a turn to come forward and pour some water into the bucket to represent the emotion they are thinking about.
- Tell pupils that they are free to share what they are thinking about with the group, but only if they want to.
- Keep going around until the bucket fills up and begins to spill over.
- Go along with it and encourage a few more to continue to pour their 'emotion' in and make it overflow even more.
- Explain to the class just like the jug, our minds sometimes get so full of the different emotions we are feeling that we struggle to keep control of them. We might cry or shout or scream or we might actually go a bit quiet when our emotions get too much. How do you react when your feelings get too much?
- Ask pupils to think of times when they have felt their emotions were overflowing. Would anyone like to share what they are thinking of?
- As pupils share their examples, you can get them thinking about the connection between body and mind.

Time:

30 mins



Resources:

- Cups
- Jug/bucket
- Water
- Flipchart

Could use polystyrene balls or macaroni instead of water

Thing to consider:

Recognise that one person's coping strategy may not work for everyone, highlight the fact that we are all different and need to respect each other's ideas and approaches.

Extension activity:

Using role play in groups think of a situation that makes us angry, upset or frustrated and act out the problem and also the strategy that helped them calm down.

Ask the group - How did the emotions make you feel physically? Were you feeling tired as well? Did that make things worse? Were you hungry at the time? Explain that we should do something before our emotions overflow.

- Hand around plastic cups and explain that each one is something they can do to manage their emotions and make their minds and bodies feel better. Give them a short time to think of an action that would help them.
- Ask each student in turn to take some water out of the jug with their cup, explaining what their action is as they do it. Effective things that they could do include: talking to a trusted adult, doing some exercise, getting more sleep, eating more healthily.
- Continue to do this until the bucket is no longer overflowing.
- Write up some of the key coping strategies and display in class.

Other resources

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