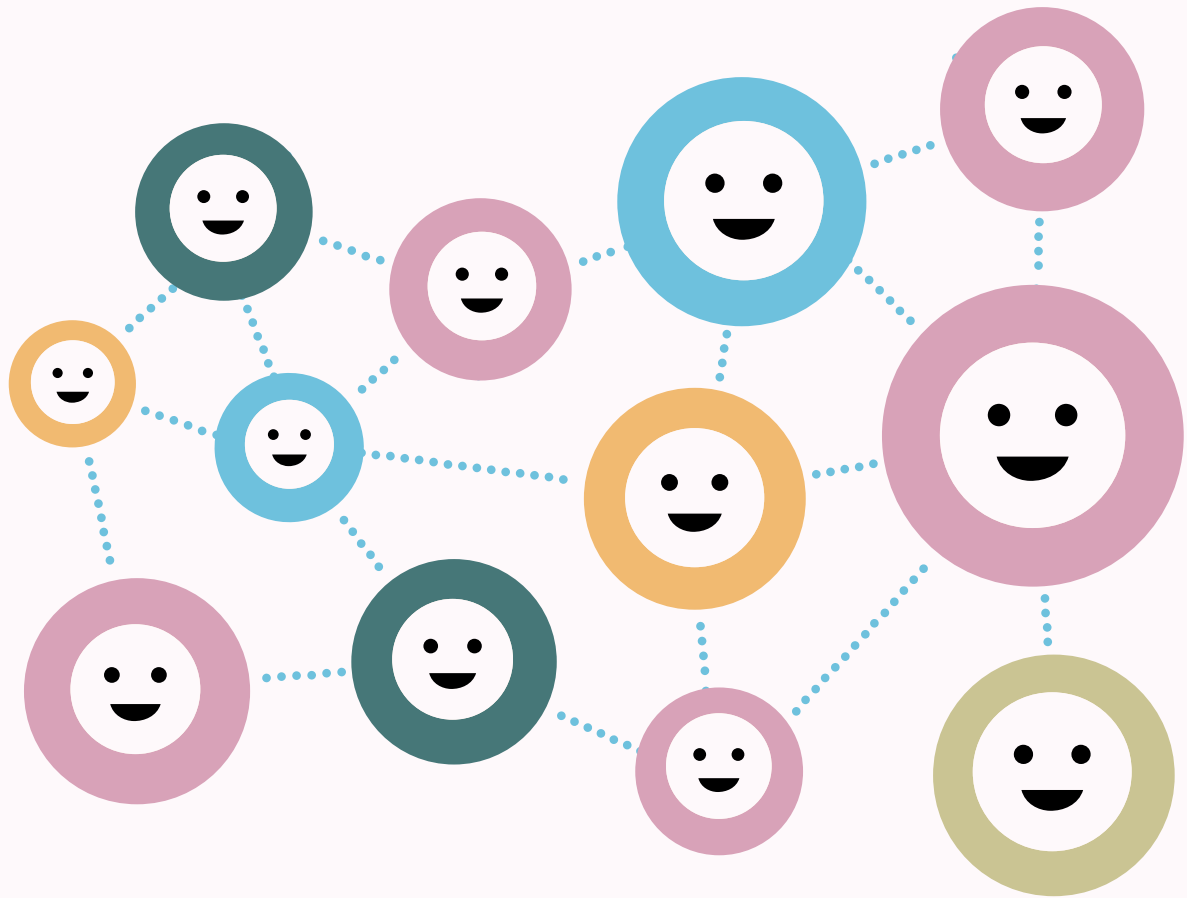




Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



Building our network of support

Lesson

Lesson plan:

- **Welcome**
Slides 1 & 2 7
- **Being in the moment**
Slide 3 9
- **Building connections**
Slide 4 10
- **Introducing the topic**
Slides 5 & 6 13
- **Learning through activity**
Slides 7 & 8 16
- **Reflecting on the learning**
Slides 9-13 19
- **Being in the moment**
Slide 14 22

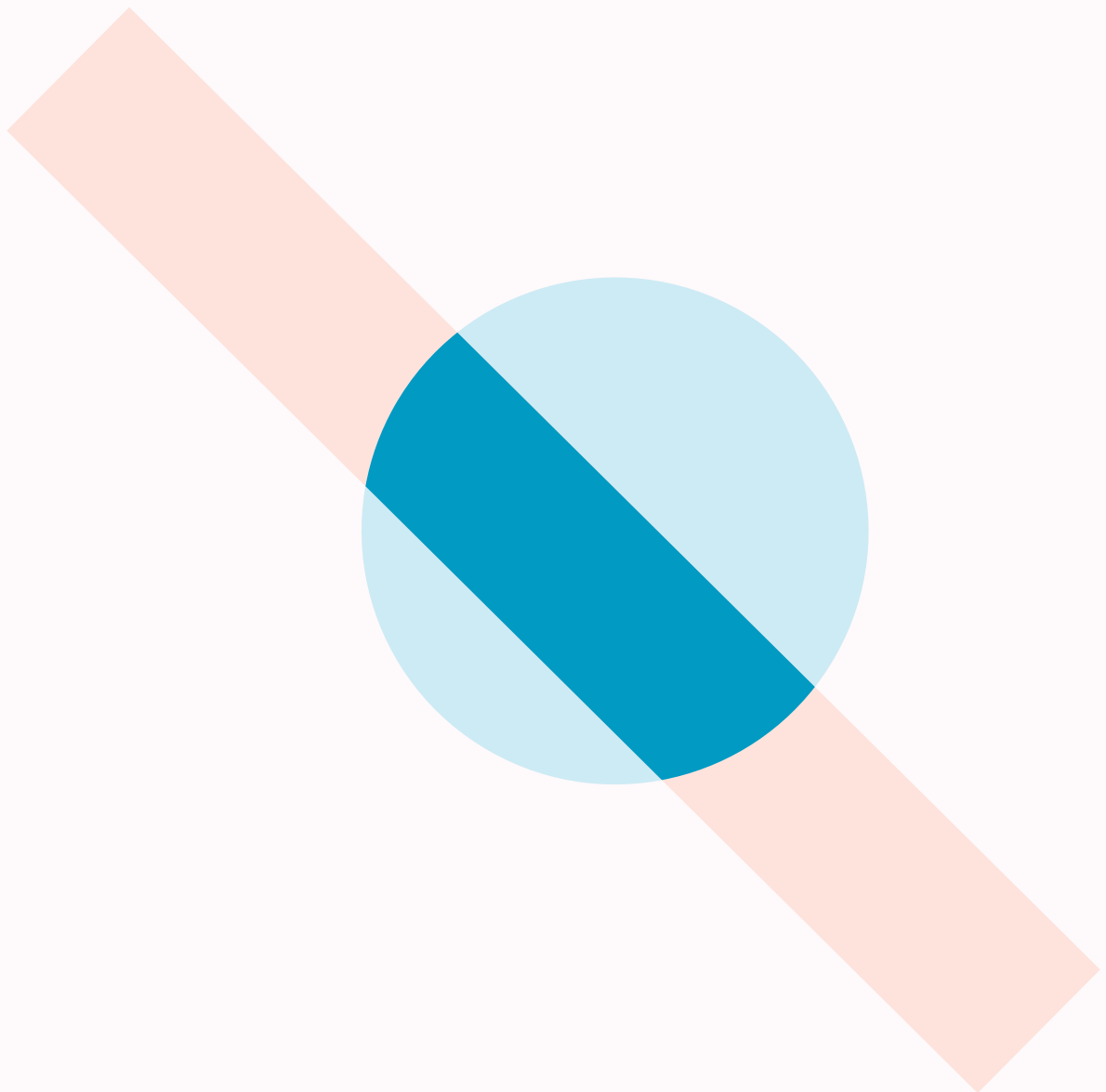
A L T E R N A T I V E A C T I V I T I E S

- **Taking action**
Slide 16 25
- **Challenging thinking**
Slides 17-20 27
- **Resources**
Web of connections worksheet 31
Reflection worksheet 32



This lesson has been developed from the Mental Health Foundation's Peer Education Project (PEP) - a secondary school-based, educational programme that aims to give young people the skills and knowledge they need to safeguard their mental health and that of their peers. PEP is a carefully researched, effective approach to mental health education whereby older pupils within school or college deliver mental health lessons to younger pupils.

For more information about PEP and how your school can get involved, [click here](#).





Lesson aims:

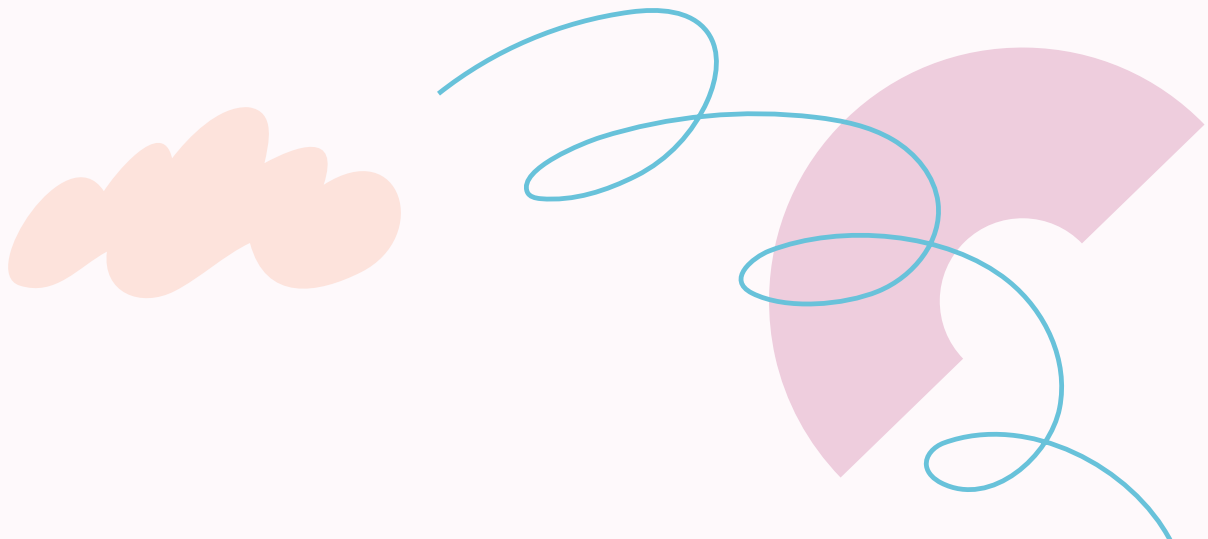
- To understand how important supportive relationships are to our mental health.
- To think about what support we want from our peers and how to help others friends look after their mental health.

Resources checklist:

- PowerPoint slides
- Pens and paper
- OPTIONAL: Web of connections worksheet
- OPTIONAL: Reflection worksheet

Preparation checklist:

- Plan two 'Being in the moment' activities, referring to the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).
- Plan a 'Building connections' activity, referring to the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).



How to use the lesson plan:

This lesson plan is designed to be delivered by pupils aged 15 and upwards (known as Peer Educators) to pupils aged 11 to 14 (known as Peer Learners).

The recommended lesson plan is primarily suited for pupils aged 11 or 12 and can be delivered as a 50-minute lesson or two 30-minute lessons.

The revised lesson plan offers alternative activities related to taking social action or challenging mental health information. The revised lesson plan provides pupils, particularly those who are older or who already have basic mental health awareness, an opportunity to explore the topics in more depth.

Recommended lesson plan 50 Minutes	Recommended lesson structure 2x 30 Minutes		Revised lesson plan 50 Minutes
	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	
Welcome 5 Minutes	Welcome 5 Minutes		Welcome 5 Minutes
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes
Building connections 5 Minutes	Building connections 5 Minutes		Select either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 'Taking action' section; or • the 'Challenging thinking' section. 25 Minutes
Introducing the topic 10 Minutes	Introducing the topic 10 Minutes		
Learning through activity 10 Minutes		Learning through activity 10 Minutes	Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes
Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes		Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes	
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes

If the lesson is being delivered by Peer Educators, as per the Peer Education Project model, each activity is recommended to be delivered either by Peer Educators or School Staff.

How to do it:

The instructions for each activity are split into these steps:



Actions required such as presenting slides or handing resources out.

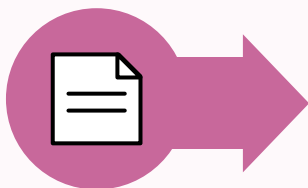


Key messages and activity instructions to be said.



Questions to be asked to extend the discussion or gauge understanding.

Notes and troubleshooting:



There is additional information to support lesson delivery such as activity adaptations, considerations for classroom management, and key preparations for the lesson.

It's not a script:

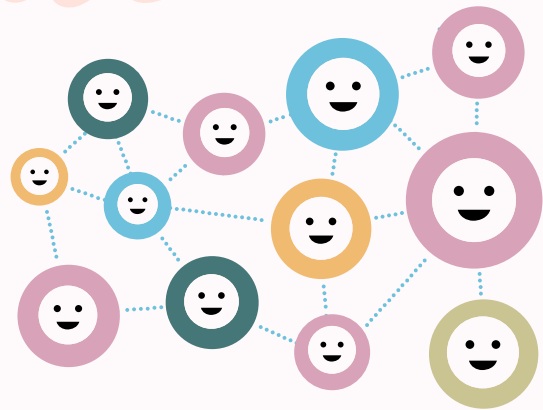
The lesson plan is not a word-for-word script. Prior to delivery, preparation time should be allocated to make key notes and plan how each activity will run.

Welcome 5 mins

Resources needed: • Slides 1 & 2



Slide 1



Building our network of support



Lesson



Present Slide 1.

Welcome the class and the Peer Educators to the lesson. Explain that the Peer Educators will be leading some of the activities during the lesson – an opportunity for Peer Learners to get to know them and learn from those who are similar in age.



"In this lesson, we are going to explore our support network and how we can support each other when we are not feeling our best."



Ways of working



SLIDE 2

We will:

1. Respect and listen to each other, giving space for everyone to be heard.
2. Value everyone's opinion, even if it's different to yours.
3. Ask questions, especially if you are unsure about the information or activities.
4. Be kind to yourself and others, reaching out for support if you need it.

Any others? _____

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 2.



Say:

"It is important for us all to feel safe and confident to share our thoughts, ideas and questions in this lesson."



Do:

Read out the slide and ask the Peer Learners and the Peer Educators for any other points they would like to add. Write them directly on the slide.



Notes and troubleshooting

Variations: It can be useful to have the 'Ways of Working' list visible throughout the lesson. You could write these on a board or poster paper to display in each lesson.



Being in the moment 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 3
• A mindfulness activity

Slide 3

Being in the moment



SLIDE 3



Do: Present Slide 3.



Say: "We're going to start with a short exercise to bring our focus to this lesson."



Do: Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#). You may want to explain what mindfulness is to the pupils.



Building connections 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 4 • An ice breaker activity
• Wool / string

Slide 4

Building connections



SLIDE 4

CONNECTIONS



Recommended ice breaker



Do:

Present Slide 4



Say:

"Today's welcome exercise is designed to get us reflecting on the connections we have with those around us."



Do:

Ask pupils to arrange themselves in a circle.

Choose something you like or enjoy doing (e.g. going swimming, eating pizza). Ask the Peer Learners to put their hand up if they like it too. Pass the ball of wool to one Peer Learner who puts their hand up, keeping hold of the other end of the wool.

Continued...



Building connections (continued)



Do:

Ask the Peer Learner currently holding the ball of wool to name something they like or enjoy doing and pass the ball of wool to someone else who likes that, keeping hold of a piece of wool.

Continue these steps. The ball of wool is gradually passed across and around the room, forming a web. Once everyone is connected in the web, find something that the first and last person have in common to join up the web.



Ask:

- “Were you surprised by how many people liked the same things as you?”
- “Did it get hard to think of things as the activity went on?”



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: This recommended ice breaker activity is directly relevant to the lesson content. However, you can select an alternative activity from the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).

Classroom management: Don't worry if it gets noisy during this activity but do make sure that everyone is sitting quietly before you start the next section.

Variations: This can be done sitting down. If sitting down, you might need to be more active in passing the wool from person-to-person and ensure that Peer Learners hold it above their heads.

Continued...



Building connections (continued)



After the lesson: You could re-use the wool to make a display board showing the web of connections to other pupils. On the web you could display information of where to seek support or have the Peer Learners write down some of the things they had in common with one another that made them feel connected.

Alternatively, each pupil could get to keep a bit of the wool and have it as a bracelet or keychain to remind them of the connections they have to others.



Introducing the topic 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 5 & 6 • Web of connections
• Pens and paper worksheet (optional)

Slide 5

Introducing the topic

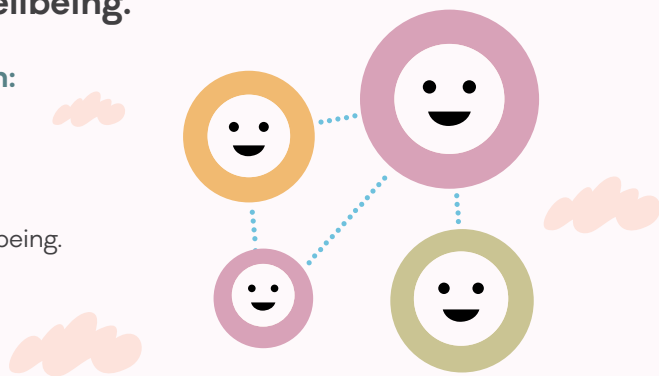


SLIDE 5

Connecting with others is an important way to support our mental health and wellbeing.

A positive support system can:

- provide a sense of belonging.
- reduce stress.
- Improve overall health and wellbeing.
- Provide emotional support.
- Improve self-esteem.



"Connecting with others is an important way to support our mental health and wellbeing. Through the experiences we have and the interactions with others, we begin to build our support network. A person's support network will be individual to them.

A positive support system can:

- provide a sense of belonging,
- reduce stress,
- improve overall health and wellbeing,
- provide emotional support; and
- improve self-esteem."





Do:

Present Slide 6.

Hand out plain paper and pens.

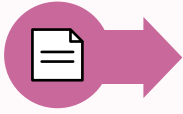
Ask pupils to draw themselves or write their name in the middle.

Ask the Peer Learners to think about the positive relationships in their life. Write their names or draw some of those people in the circles around their name and draw lines connecting the people to them. Pupils can add how they connect with those people on the lines linking themselves and the other people.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.

Continued...

Introducing the topic (continued)



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: If using the worksheet instead of plain paper, print copies ahead of the lesson and hand out to Peer Learners for this activity.

Classroom management: Provide examples of the relationships the pupils may have in their support system. Remind them, supportive relationships can be with people who they wouldn't label as 'friends' such as a form tutor or sports coach.



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Learning through activity 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 7 & 8

Slide 7

Introducing the topic



SLIDE 7

Supportive actions:

- Offers you a hug.
- Talks about other topics to distract you.
- Offers their advice.
- Leaves you alone.
- Encourages you to speak to an adult.
- Listens to you and what is going on.
- Brings you something of comfort, like your favourite snack.



Say:

“The type of support people need varies person-to-person and in different situations. Therefore, it is important to be able to express our needs and ask how to best support someone else.”



Do:

Present Slide 7.

Split the class into small groups and ask them to read through the series of actions that someone could take when their friend isn't feeling their best and rank them. Encourage the pupils to think of their own actions.

Continued...



Learning through activity (continued)



Do:

Pupils should rank the statements in order – from what they would want most, to what they would want least. They can score these personally, and then agree on their top three as a group.



Say:

“We all need different kinds of support, but there will likely be some things that we all find helpful.”



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Introducing the topic



SLIDE 8

Top 3 actions:

1

2

3



Do:

Present Slide 8.

Invite each group to share their top three actions, any key points from their discussion, and write their ideas on the slide.



Say:

"Although we may need different support when we are struggling, as you can see from our discussion, there are types of support we would all find helpful."



Notes and troubleshooting

Classroom management: Remember to emphasise to the Peer Learners that we can support our friends with some things that are happening in their lives, but other things will require help from a trusted adult – a caregiver or teacher. If they are worried about a friend, they could support them to talk to a trusted adult.



Reflecting on the learning 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 9-13 • Pens and paper (optional)
• Reflection worksheet (optional)

Slide 9

Reflecting on the learning



SLIDE 9

One thing I have learned.

One thing I will do differently.

One question I would like an answer to.



Do:

Present Slide 9.



Say:

"Spend two minutes thinking about these reflection statements:

- One thing I have learned.
- One thing I will do differently.
- One question I would like an answer to."



Do:

Invite pupils to share their reflections with the class for each statement. Write their responses on Slides 10-12.

Continued...



Reflecting on the learning (continued)



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: If using the worksheet, print copies ahead of the lesson and hand out to Peer Learners for this activity.

Classroom management: Their comment, question or thought doesn't have to be about mental health – it can be about the lesson itself, the activities, how it went, etc. If using the worksheet, ask pupils to write down their responses to the reflection statements.

Follow-up: Collate any questions that weren't answered, and share follow-up responses with the pupils.



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Reflecting on the learning (continued)

Slide 13

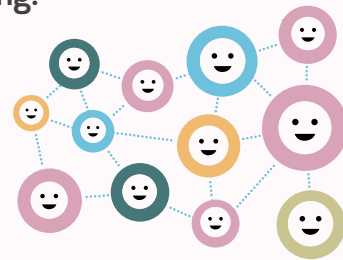
Lesson summary



SLIDE 13

Connecting with others is an important way to support our mental health and wellbeing.

Through the experiences we have and the interactions with others, we begin to build our support network.



A person's support network will be individual to them, and can provide many benefits including improving self-esteem and providing a sense of belonging.



Do:

Present Slide 13.

Read out the lesson summary.



Being in the moment 5 mins



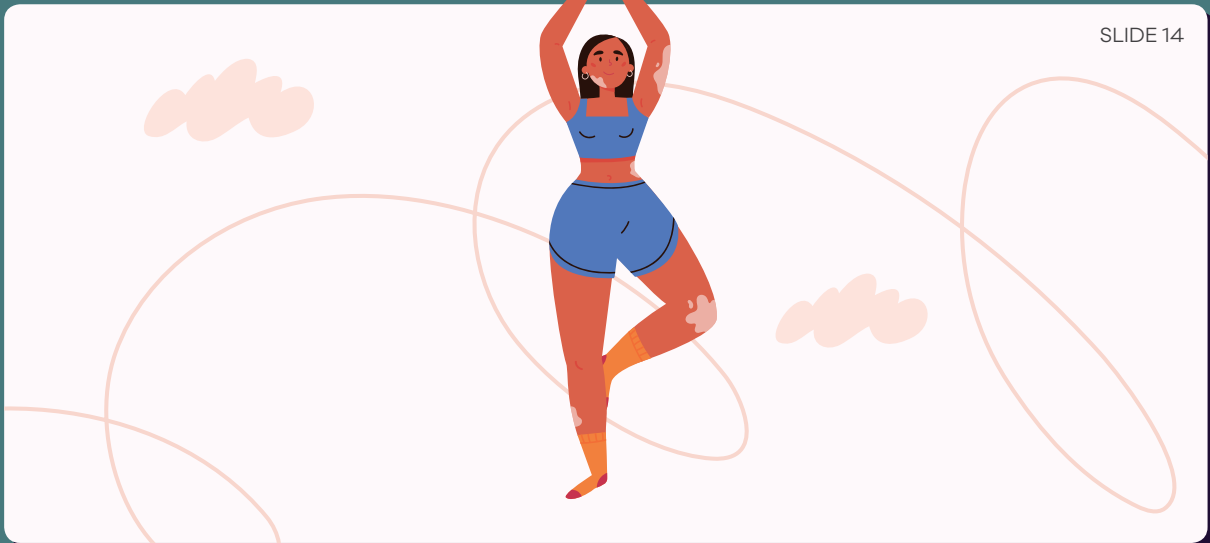
Resources needed: • Slide 14
• A mindfulness activity

Slide 14

Being in the moment



SLIDE 14



Do:

Present Slide 14.



Say:

"We'll finish the lesson with another short mindfulness exercise."



Do:

Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



Say:

"That's the end of the lesson. Thank you everyone for your contributions."



Being in the moment (continued)



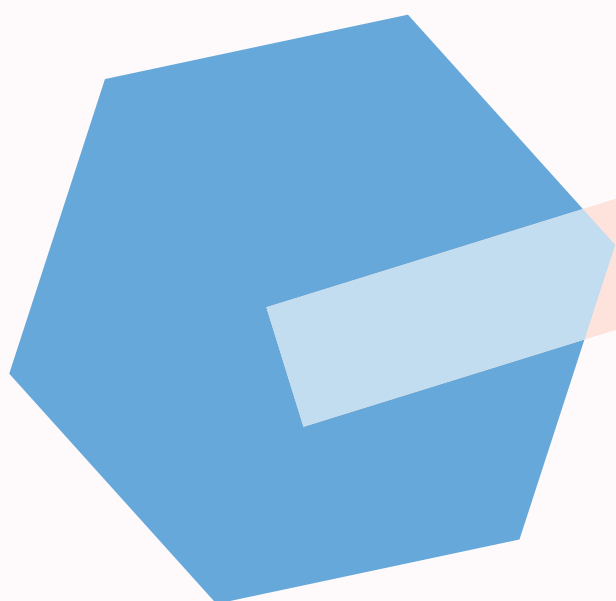
Notes and troubleshooting:

Prepare: Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).





Alternative activities



Taking action 25 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 16
• Pens and paper

Slide 16

Taking action



SLIDE 16

- What can you say or do to support someone in the moment?
- What can you say or do over a longer period?
- How can you look after yourself when supporting a peer?
- When is support from a trusted adult needed?



"Building positive relationships with others, is an important way to support not only our own mental health and wellbeing, but theirs too.

However, when we are not feeling our best, the type of support needed will vary person-to-person and in different situations. Therefore, as well as understanding how we feel and expressing what we need in a situation, we also need to ask and adapt the support we give to someone else based on what they need in the moment."



Present Slide 16.



Taking action (continued)



Do:

Ask pupils to discuss in small groups the ways to support a peer if their mental health and wellbeing is not at its best, using the prompts on the slide.

Then, ask pupils to create a resource to share this information with other pupils. Let each group decide how they best want to share this information – a poster, a social media post, a bookmark.

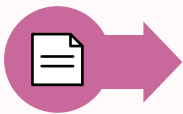
Time to complete: 15 minutes.



Do:

Invite pupils to share their ideas and resources with the class.

Time to complete: 10 minutes.



Notes and troubleshooting

Classroom management: Remember to emphasise to the Peer Learners that we can support our friends with some things that are happening in their lives, but other things will require help from a trusted adult – a caregiver or teacher. If they are worried about a friend, they could support them to talk to a trusted adult.

Follow-up: Collect the resources and share with the class teacher, the Mental Health Staff Lead or student ambassadors such as Head Pupil or prefects.



Challenging thinking 25 mins



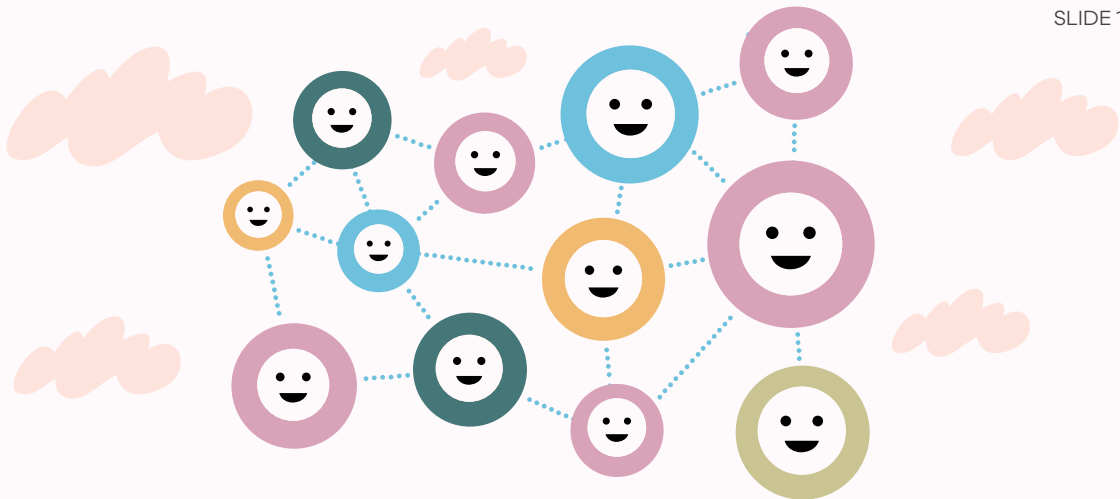
Resources needed: • Slides 17-20
• Pens and paper

Slide 17

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 17



Do: Present Slide 17.



"Connecting with others is an important way to support our mental health and wellbeing. Through the experiences we have and the interactions with others, we begin to build our support network. A person's support network will be individual to them."



Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 18

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 18

"What are the benefits and challenges to building a positive support system?"

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 18.



Ask:

"What are the benefits and challenges to building a positive support system?"



Do:

Invite pupils to share their ideas with the class and write them on the slide.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 19

Challenging thinking



What are the barriers to asking for support?

Click to add text

SLIDE 19



Do:

Present Slide 19.

Ask pupils to discuss in pairs what the barriers might be to someone asking for help from their support network when they are not feeling at their best.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Do:

Invite pupils to share their ideas with the class and write them on the slide.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 20

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 20

How can pupils be encouraged to ask for help with their mental health and wellbeing?

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 20.

Ask pupils to discuss in small groups the different ways to encourage pupils in school to reach out for help when they need support.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



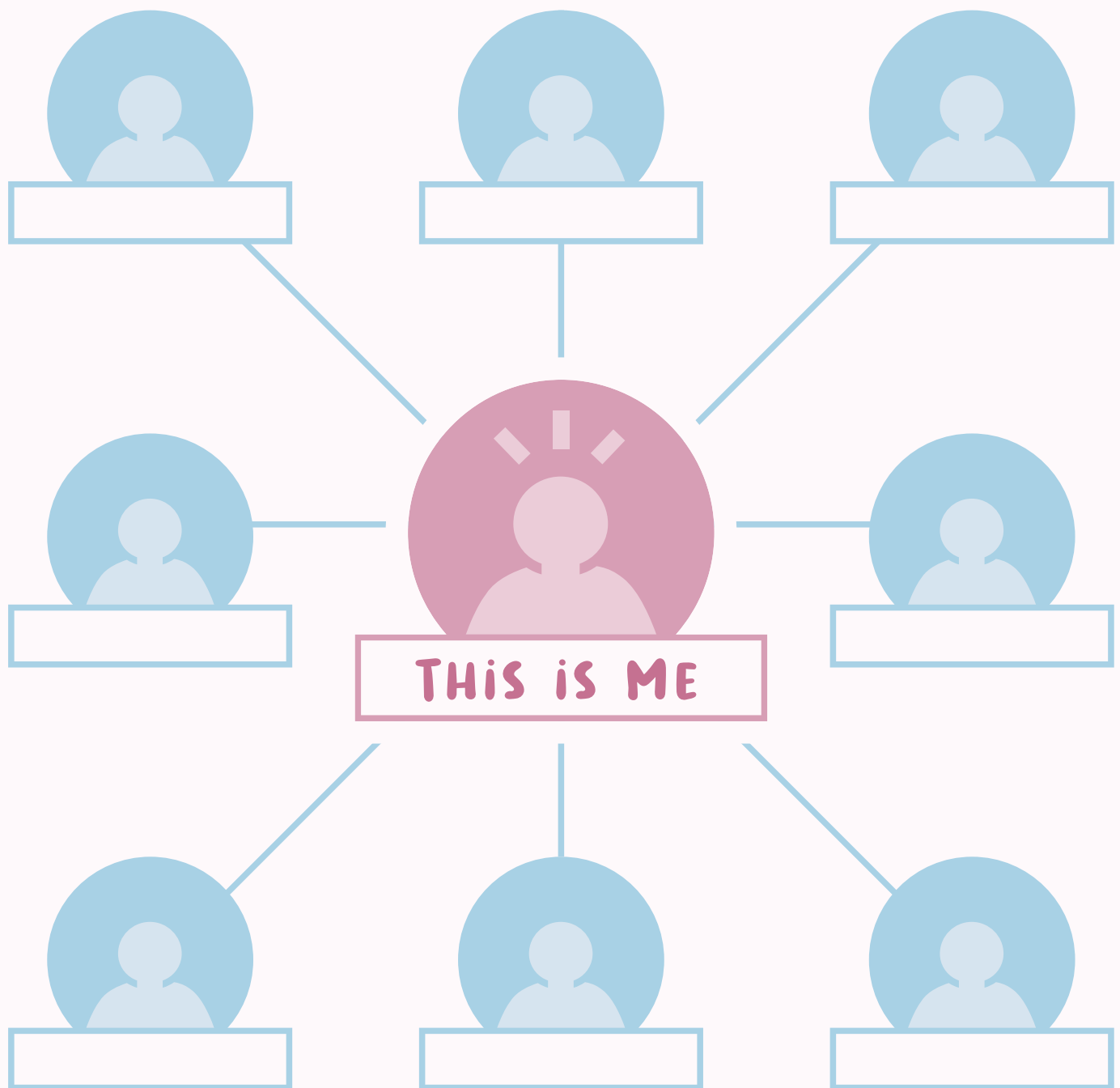
Do:

Invite pupils to share their ideas with the class and write them on the slide.

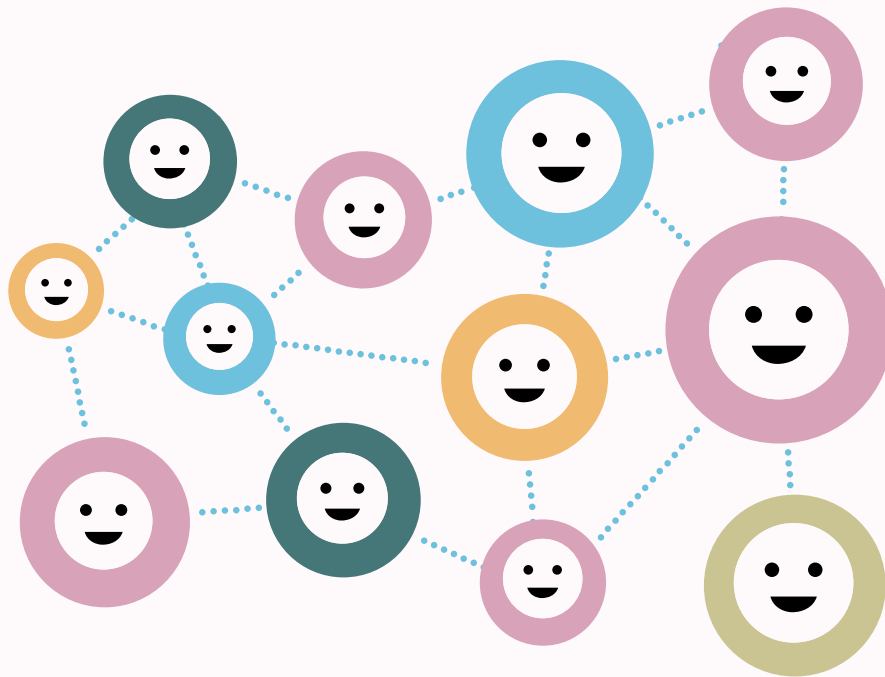
Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Web of connections worksheet



Reflection worksheet



One thing I have learned:

One thing I would do differently:

One question I would like an answer to:





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Many thanks to the pupils and staff who have delivered the Peer Education Project since 2015, and have provided feedback on the resources.