



Peer  
Education  
Project



Mental Health  
Foundation



# What is mental health and the mental health spectrum?



Lesson



## Lesson plan:

- **Welcome**  
Slides 1 & 2 ..... 7
- **Being in the moment**  
Slide 3 ..... 9
- **Building connections**  
Slide 4 ..... 10
- **Introducing the topic**  
Slides 5-11 ..... 12
- **Learning through activity**  
Slides 12-14 ..... 20
- **Reflecting on the learning**  
Slides 15-19 ..... 26
- **Being in the moment**  
Slide 20 ..... 29

## ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

- **Taking action** .....  
Slides 22-24 ..... 31
- **Challenging thinking**  
Slide 25 & 26 ..... 35
- **Resources**  
Case studies ..... 38  
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Reflection worksheet ..... 41



## Overview (continued)



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:

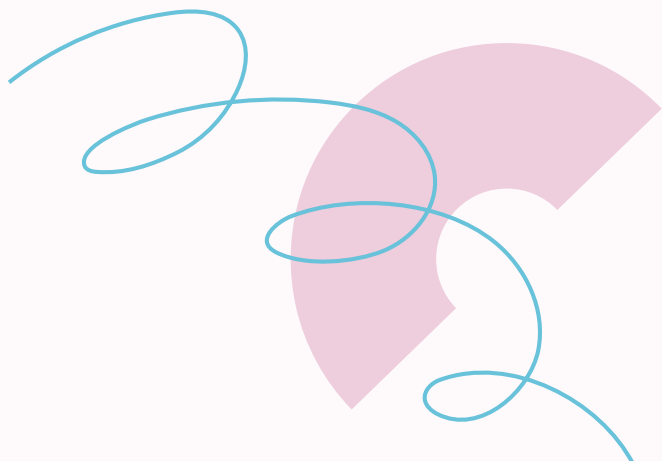
- To introduce the concept of mental health and the mental health spectrum.
- To learn that mental health can change over time, and in response to different factors.

### Resources checklist:

- PowerPoint slides
- The mental health spectrum case studies resource
- OPTIONAL: Mental health as a spectrum worksheet
- OPTIONAL: Reflection worksheet
- OPTIONAL: Pens and paper

### 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		<b>Select either:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the 'Taking action' section; or</li> <li>• the 'Challenging thinking' section.</li> </ul> 25 Minutes
Introducing the topic 10 Minutes	Introducing the topic 10 Minutes		
Learning through activity 10 Minutes		Learning through activity 10 Minutes	<b>Reflecting on the learning</b> 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.

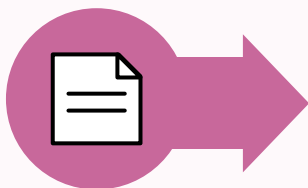


Key messages and activity instructions to be said.



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.

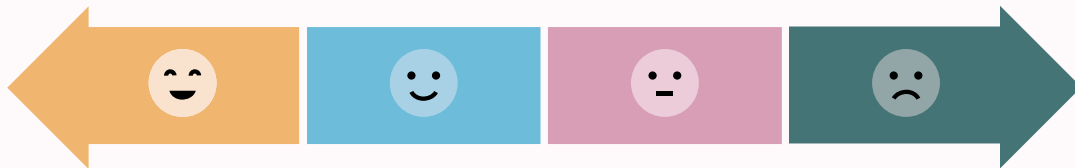


# Welcome 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 1 & 2

## Slide 1



## What is mental health and the mental health spectrum?



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 what mental health is, and how it can change over time and in response to different factors."**





#### 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.



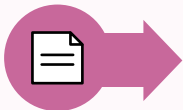
Say:

**"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 may 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

## Slide 4

### Building connections



SLIDE 4

Arrange yourselves into height order:



### Recommended ice breaker



Do: Present Slide 4.



Say: "Today's welcome exercise is designed to get us thinking about how things can be placed and move on a spectrum or scale."



Do: Make one end of the room 'TALLEST' and the other end 'SHORTEST'. Ask the Peer Learners to arrange themselves in height order as quickly as they can, without speaking.

*Time to complete: 1 minute 30 seconds.*





## Building connections (continued)



When they are lined up in order, ask:

- “How did you find completing the task?”
- “Did you need anything to make the task easier?”
- “What could happen to the line up if we asked other classes to line up with us, or we repeated this activity in six months?”



### 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:** Before starting the next section, ensure all Peer Learners are sitting quietly in their seats.





# Introducing the topic 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 5-11

- Mental health as a spectrum worksheet (optional)
- Pens and paper (optional)

## Slide 5

### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 5

The mental health spectrum:

MENTAL HEALTH

Good mental health / coping well



Mental health problems / not coping well



Present Slide 5.



"Many things are arranged on, and can move along, a spectrum or scale, such as age, temperature, or height.

Mental health can also be shown as a spectrum. Mental health can move along the spectrum as it can change over time, and in response to different factors and experiences."





## Introducing the topic (continued)

### Slide 6

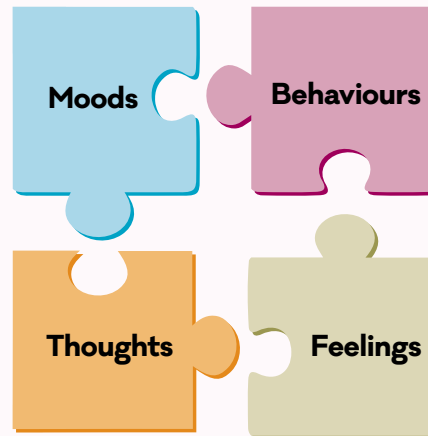
#### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 6

**Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours.**

Mental health is something we all have and need to look after.



**Present Slide 6.**



**"Mental health is something we all have. It consists of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours. Mental health is linked with the ability to interact with others and cope with challenges in life."**



#### **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:** If using the worksheet, ask the Peer Learners to write down the components of mental health.





## Introducing the topic (continued)

### Slide 7

#### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 7



**Sad**



**Feel lonely  
or worried.**



**Experience  
challenging  
thoughts such as  
'nobody likes me'  
or 'I am a failure'.**



**Be tearful  
or distance  
ourselves from  
others.**



**Do:** Present Slide 7.



**"For example, if we are sad, we may:**

- **feel lonely or worried.**
- **experience challenging thoughts such as 'nobody likes me' or 'I am a failure'.**
- **be tearful or distance ourselves from others."**





## Introducing the topic (continued)

### Slides 8 & 9

#### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 8



Moods

Happy



Feelings

Click to add text



Thoughts

Click to add text



Behaviours

Click to add text

#### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 9



Moods

Fear



Feelings

Click to add text



Thoughts

Click to add text



Behaviours

Click to add text



Do:

#### Present Slides 8 & 9.

As a class, repeat the activity to explore the emotions 'happy' and 'fear'.

Invite Peer Learners to share ideas of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that may be experienced for these emotions.

Write the ideas in the relevant boxes on the slides.

*Time to complete: 5 minutes.*





### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 10

#### Good mental health is when we can:

- Cope with the challenges we face.
- Manage our feelings and express them when we need to.
- Build good relationships with ourselves and the other people in our lives.



Do:

Present Slide 10.



Say:

“If our mental health is good, we can:

- cope with the challenges we face,
- manage our feelings and express them when we need to; and
- build good relationships with ourselves and the other people in our lives.

Having good mental health doesn't mean there are no problems in life. Instead, it means feeling able to cope with what comes our way.”

*Continued...*





## Introducing the topic (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:** If using the worksheet, ask the Peer Learners to write down the description of good mental health.





## Introducing the topic (continued)

Slide 11

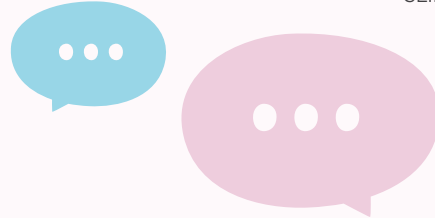
### Introducing the topic



SLIDE 11

#### Who can I talk to in school?

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 11.



Say:

“Problems with our mental health are common and can sometimes be serious. There are things we can do when we are experiencing challenging feelings and emotions, such as talking to a trusted adult.”



Do:

Share the details of the people within school pupils can speak to.



#### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** Add to Slide 11 the details of the people within school Peer Learners can speak to.

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

*Continued...*





## Introducing the topic (continued)



**Classroom management:** If using the worksheet, ask the Peer Learners to write down the details of the people to speak to in school.





# Learning through activity 10 mins



- Resources needed:
- Slides 12-14
  - The mental health spectrum case studies resource

## Slide 12

### Learning through activity



### Case study Part 1

Click to add text



SLIDE 12



Do:

### Present Slide 12.

Put Peer Learners into small groups. Read out the first part of the case study written on the slide. Ask the pupils to discuss it in their small groups and decide where on the spectrum they would place the character.

*Time to discuss: 2 minutes.*

*Continued...*





## Learning through activity (continued)



Do:

Make one end of the room MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS and the other end GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

Once they have discussed it, ask one member of each group to go and stand at the point on the spectrum where they think the case study character would be. They may need to talk to the Peer Learners around them to decide exactly where this should be.



Ask:

**“Why have you chosen this point on the spectrum?”**



Do:

Invite each group to answer the question. Once each group has answered, ask the Peer Learners to return to their seats.



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** Select one case study from the mental health spectrum case studies resource to use within the lesson.

Write part 1 on Slide 12 prior to the lesson.



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### Case study Part 2

Click to add text



SLIDE 13



#### Present Slide 13.

Read out the second part of the case study written on the slide. Ask the pupils to discuss in their small groups how the character's mental health has changed and whether they should now stand somewhere else on the spectrum. Explain that the case study character may, or may not, have moved on the spectrum.

*Time to discuss: 2 minutes.*



Once they have discussed it, ask another group member to come and stand on the spectrum where the case study character would be now.

*Continued...*





## Learning through activity (continued)



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** Select one case study from the mental health spectrum case studies resource to use within the lesson.

Write part 2 on Slide 13 prior to the lesson.





## Learning through activity (continued)

### Slide 14

#### Learning through activity



SLIDE 14

- How did the mental health of the character in the case study change?
- What kind of help did the character need, and did they get it?
- What could the character have done to support themselves?
- What don't we know about this character and their situation?



Do:

**Present Slide 14.**



Ask:

Invite each group to share something they discussed. You could ask them:

- **"How did the mental health of the character in the case study change?"**
- **"What kind of help did the character need, and did they get it?"**
- **"What could the character have done to support themselves?"**
- **"What don't we know about this character and their situation?"**



Do:

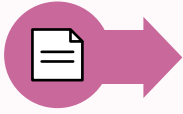
Once each group has answered, ask the Peer Learners to return to their seats.

*Continued...*





## Learning through activity (continued)



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Classroom management:** Peer Learners might disagree about where the case study should be, based on their own views and experiences. That's ok – there aren't right or wrong answers in this activity.

**Variations:** If there is time, share another case study with the class to work through together.

Alternatively, this activity can be run by handing out the mental health spectrum case studies resource to each group. The group can then discuss each case study using Slide 14 to guide their discussions.





# Reflecting on the learning 10 mins



- Resources needed:
- Slides 15-19
  - Reflection worksheet (optional)
  - Pens and paper (optional)

## Slide 15

### Reflecting on the learning



SLIDE 15

One thing I have learned.

One thing I will do differently.

One question I would like an answer to.



Do:

Present Slide 15.



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."

Continued...



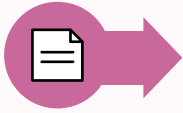


## Reflecting on the learning (continued)



Do:

Invite pupils to share their reflections with the class for each statement. Write their responses on Slides 16-18.



### 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 the Peer Learners to write down their reflections.

**Follow-up:** Collate any questions that weren't answered, and follow-up with responses to the pupils in the next lesson.





## Reflecting on the learning (continued)

### Slide 19

#### Lesson summary



SLIDE 19

- Mental health is something we all have. It consists of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours.
- Mental health can be shown as a spectrum. It can move along the spectrum over time and in response to different factors and experiences.
- Good mental health means feeling able to cope with life's challenges by managing our feelings and asking for support when needed.



**Present Slide 19.**

Read out the lesson summary.





# Being in the moment 5 mins



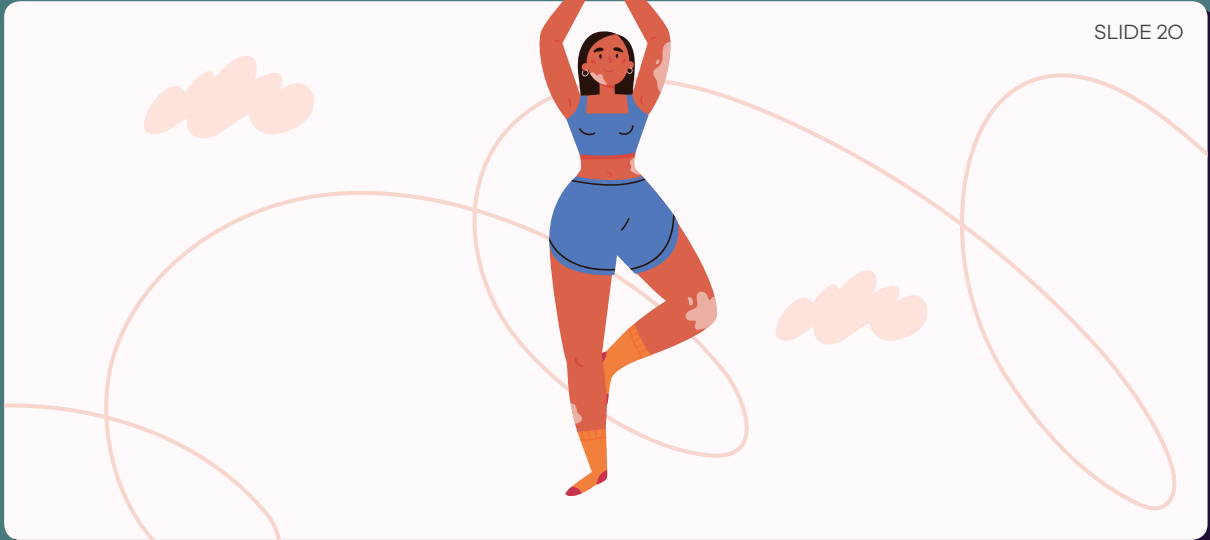
Resources needed: • Slide 20  
• A mindfulness activity

## Slide 20

### Being in the moment



SLIDE 20



Do:

Present Slide 20.



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."



### Notes and troubleshooting:

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

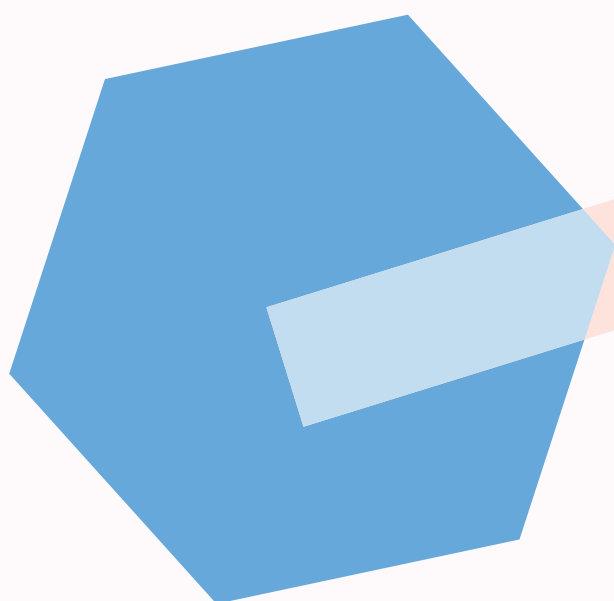






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# Alternative activities





# Taking action 25 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 22-24  
• Pens and paper

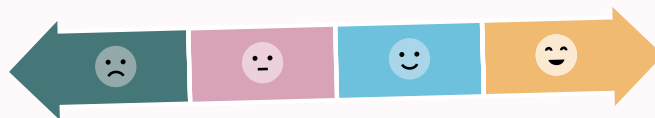
## Slide 22

### Taking action



SLIDE 22

Mental health can be shown as a spectrum. It can move along the spectrum as it can change over time, and in response to different factors and experiences.



Do:

Present Slide 22.



Say:

"Mental health is something we all have. It consists of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours. Mental health is linked with the ability to interact with others and cope with challenges in life.

Mental health can be shown as a spectrum. Mental health can move along the spectrum as it can change over time, and in response to different factors and experiences."

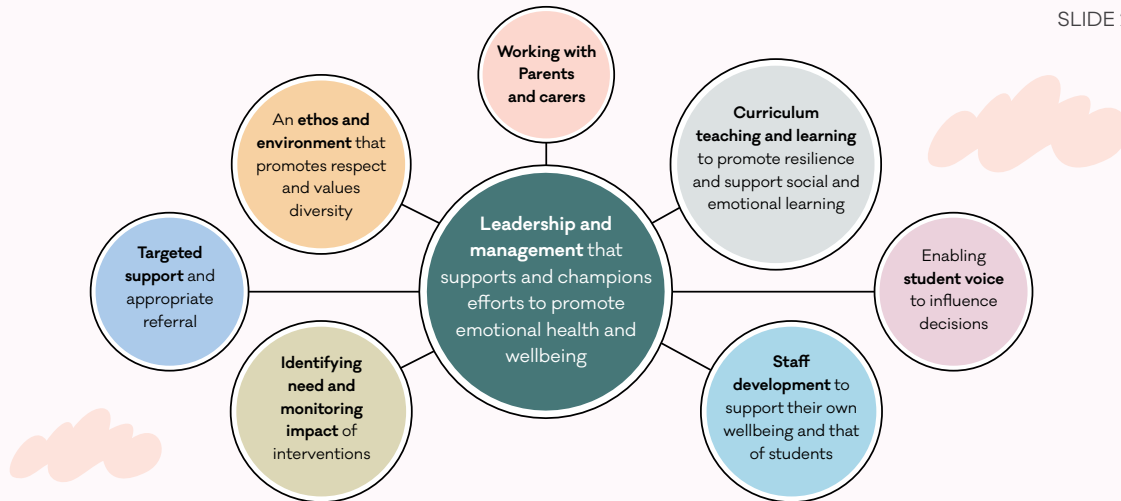




### Taking action



SLIDE 23



Do:

Present Slide 23.



Say:

"We are going to think about mental health support in school. There are eight principles of a whole school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing, set by the Department for Education. One of the principles is 'enabling student voice to influence decisions'."



## Taking action (continued)

Slide 24

### Taking action



SLIDE 24

Mental health and wellbeing activities and policies in our school...

Click to add text



#### Present Slide 24.

Read out the current mental health and wellbeing activities and policies in school.



**"Are there any changes to current activities or policies, or additional ones, you would like in our school?"**



Invite pupils to share their ideas, writing the responses on the slide.

*Time to complete: 5 minutes.*

*Continued...*





## Taking action (continued)



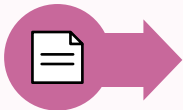
Put Peer Learners into pairs and hand out the pens and paper. Ask each pair to select one of the ideas listed on Slide 24 and create a campaign poster. The poster will be either to promote an activity or policy already set up in school, or to campaign for something new.

*Time to complete: 10 minutes.*



Invite pupils to share their campaign posters with the class.

*Time to complete: 5 minutes.*



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Prepare:** Collate information on the current mental health and wellbeing activities and policies in school – you may want to discuss with the School Lead or class teacher. Write them on Slide 24.

Ahead of the lesson, design example posters – one for an existing activity or policy, and one for a new idea – to share with the Peer Learners. This will support them to visualise the activity and take inspiration from the posters.

**Follow-up:** Collect the posters 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 25 & 26  
• Pens and paper

## Slide 25

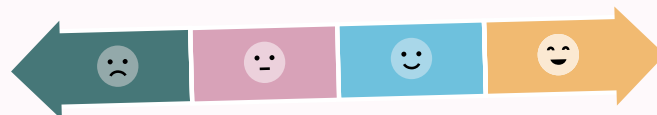
### Challenging thinking



Mental health can be shown as a spectrum. It can move along the spectrum as it can change over time, and in response to different factors and experiences.



SLIDE 25



Do:

Present Slide 25.



Say:

"Mental health is something we all have. It consists of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours. Mental health is linked with the ability to interact with others and cope with challenges in life.

A spectrum is a common way of showing how mental health can change, depending on experiences and circumstances. However, there are many variations of the spectrum, from the words and images used to what each point represents for a person."





## Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 26

### Challenging thinking



SLIDE 26

**A mental  
health spectrum**

Click to add text



**Do:**

**Present Slide 26.**



**Say:**

**"We are going to discuss as a class your ideas on what a mental health spectrum could look like, including the words and images used, and what each point on the spectrum represents in terms of emotions, feelings, thoughts and behaviour."**



**Do:**

**Invite Peer Learners to share their ideas and note them on Slide 26.**

*Time to discuss: 5 minutes.*



**Say:**

**"You are now going to design your own mental health spectrum."**

*Continued...*





## Challenging thinking (continued)



Hand out the pens and paper.

*Time to complete: 10 minutes.*



If pupils feel comfortable to, invite them to come and place their mental health spectrum design at the front of the class, either on one desk or taped to a poster board.

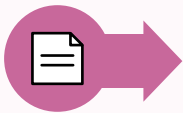
Invite all pupils to come to the front and look at the designs. Encourage pupils to do this quietly, taking note of any similarities and differences.

*Time to complete: 5 minutes.*



Ask pupils to return to their seats and invite them to share their thoughts on the different spectrums, including the similarities and differences.

*Time to complete: 5 minutes.*



### Notes and troubleshooting

**Classroom management:** Peer Learners might share differing ideas about the mental health spectrum and how it should be presented. That's ok – there aren't right or wrong answers in this activity. Remind the pupils of the 'Ways of Working' and encourage them to be curious of ideas that are different to their own.



# The mental health spectrum case studies resource

## Case study - Joey

**Part 1:** Joey is being bullied at school. Some people in their class have been calling them names and it doesn't seem to be getting any better. Joey has a few close friends they can spend time with at lunch times. Joey tries to stay away from the bullies.

**Part 2:** The bullying is now taking place outside of school as well. Joey is receiving unfriendly messages and calls. They feel unsafe and have been off school two days this week. Joey feels really overwhelmed.

## Case study - Charlie

**Part 1:** Charlie has recently started secondary school. They are often talking in class and avoiding doing the class work. Charlie sometimes argues with their teachers and leaves the classroom. The only class Charlie is engaged with is Physical Education.

**Part 2:** Charlie's form tutor arranged for them to join a weekly lesson that supports pupils finding the transition to secondary school challenging. They also encouraged Charlie to join a lunch-time sports club in the school. Charlie regularly spoke with the Physical Education teacher after class and during the sports club. They opened up to their Physical Education teacher that they enjoy being active and often lose focus in other lessons.





### Case study - Taylor

**Part 1:** Taylor's parents are separating. Taylor is really upset and worried about how things are going to change. They would usually talk to one of their parents about how they are feeling and any worries they have, but Taylor doesn't want to add more stress to the situation.

**Part 2:** During a break time, at school, Taylor burst into tears. One of their friends comforted them and listened to what is going on. Taylor's friend suggested speaking to their form tutor about it. The friend offered to come with them.

### Case study - Ali

**Part 1:** Ali is in their final year at school. They are feeling pressured to do well in all exams and feeling overwhelmed with leaving school. Ali has close friends in school and often sees them regularly over the weekends.

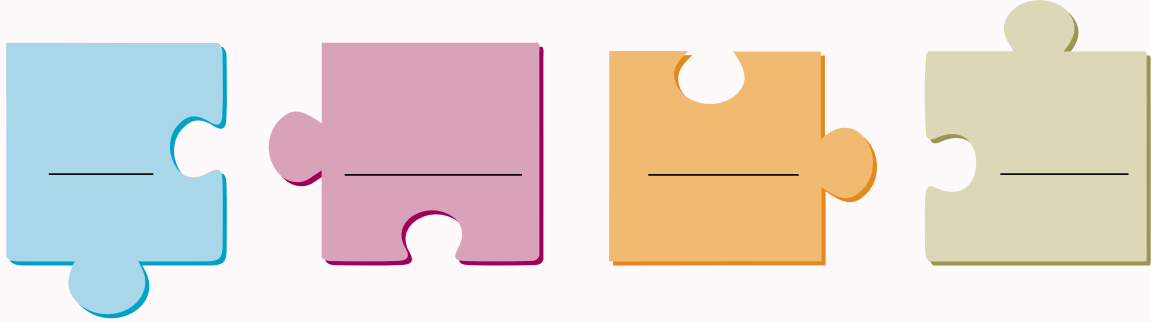
**Part 2:** Ali has received their mock exam results and is not reaching their predicted grades in three subjects. They are very embarrassed and have not told their caregiver or friends. Ali has made a revision timetable and knows they won't be able to see their friends as often at weekends until exams are over.





# Mental health as a spectrum worksheet

What are the components of good mental health?



The mental health spectrum:



What does good mental health mean?

---

---

Who can I speak to in school?

---

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# Reflection worksheet

## MENTAL HEALTH

Good mental  
health /  
coping well



Mental health  
problems / not  
coping well

One thing I have learned:

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---

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One thing I would do differently:

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One question I would like an answer to:

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---

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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.**