



Mental Health Awareness Lesson Plan

A Programme Designed by Young People for Young People!!

Learning Points:

- *There are many words for Mental Health but we tend to associate more negative words with mental health and this can be stigmatizing*
- *Everyone has mental health, regardless of their situation or circumstances. It is common for people to encounter difficulties with their mental health but on top of this they may feel stigmatized.*
- *Recognizing the early signs and symptoms of mental distress and testing their knowledge using a case study.*
- *There are factors that can increase risk of developing mental health problems but also factors that can protect against developing mental health problems*
- *The Importance of resilience and to reflection on students' own experiences of resilience*
- *Young people to identify how they can look after their own mental health and build their resilience*
- *Recognition that there are things that we can all do to help each other and ourselves plus there are services that offer different kinds of support depending on what young people need*



NB: Notify all students that this session may raise distressing feelings and nobody has to share their own story. Please inform students of how to access the school's CAMHS Information Advice and Guidance Worker

Activity 1

The Words We Use & Stigma

Learning Point: There are many words for Mental Health but we tend to associate more negative words with mental health and this can be stigmatizing

- Divide the class / group into smaller groups of 4.
- Provide each group with 2 flip chart pieces of paper.
- On 1 flip chart ask each group to write down the positive (good) words associated with Mental Health and on the other Flip chart paper ask the group to write down the negative (bad) words associated with mental health.
- Give each group 5 – 10 minutes depending on their age and ability.
- If appropriate ask each group to have 1 member hold up their flip chart and 1 member of the group to feedback their answers.
- At the end of this task the teacher / facilitator should generate a discussion on the groups' answers and acknowledge that there are many words for Mental Health but nobody is talking about it in a helpful way
- Discuss the concept of **STIGMA** using the following information and infographic on PowerPoint:

Many people don't feel comfortable talking about their feelings. But it's healthy to know and say how you're feeling. When it comes to mental health problems there is still a stigma attached to them. This means that people feel unable about talking about them for fear of the reaction they might get. This can get in the way of seeking support, meaning that people suffer in silence, and in the long run stigma can make problems worse.

Taken from the Time To Change Website:

(<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/youngpeople/what-stigma>)

“When someone experiences a mental illness it can be difficult for others to understand what that person may be going through and how they can help.



When we make assumptions about how mental health problems will affect someone's behaviour, this makes it more likely that they will be singled out, or labelled as different, dangerous or strange. This is what we call **stigma**.

Treating someone differently from how we treat others because of their mental health, whether consciously or subconsciously, is what we call **discrimination**.

In a recent Time to Change survey, 9 in 10 young people reported experiencing stigma from others as a result of their mental health problem. They described stigma as feeling:

- Isolated
- Shamed
- Misunderstood
- Criticised as a person
- Demeaned.

In fact, many said the stigma they received from friends, family, boyfriends or girlfriends, teachers and even doctors was worse than the mental health problem itself!

The fear of stigma can stop them doing everyday things like hanging out with friends, leaving the house or going to school, college and university. For many people with mental health problems, the fear that they'll be labelled can make them want to give up on their hopes and dreams. Stigma is a serious problem."

Provide Handout 1: Stigma & Myth busting



Activity 2

Who has Mental Health?

Learning Point: Everyone has mental health, regardless of their situation or circumstances. It is common for people to encounter difficulties with their mental health but on top of this they may feel stigmatized.

- Hand the Worksheet 1 out to each pupil.
- The pupil has to decide if the person mentioned in the statement has Mental Health or does not have Mental Health by placing a tick in the box they think is the correct answer.
- The correct answer is that all of the individuals have mental health on a continuum
- Play 'Who Has Mental Health?' Video
- Generate discussion on the following information:

Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem.

We all have mental health, like we all have physical health.

If you're in good mental health, you can:

- Make the most of your potential
- Cope with life
- Play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends

Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'well-being' and it's just as important as good physical health.

Mental health is everyone's business. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into a more serious problem and that could happen to any one of us.

Everyone is different. You may bounce back from a setback while someone else may feel weighed down by it for a long time.

Your mental health doesn't always stay the same. It can change as circumstances change and as you move through different stages of your life.



Activity 3

The Signs & Symptoms of Mental Health Problems

Learning Point: *To educate young people on recognizing the early signs and symptoms and testing their knowledge using a case study.*

- Hand out the Early Signs and Symptoms sheet (Handout 2)

Case Studies

- Divide the class / group into smaller groups.
- Give each group a Case Study to consider. Each Group has to identify the signs and symptoms in each case study using the Early Signs and Symptoms Handout



Activity 4

Risk & Resilience

Learning Point: There are factors that can increase risk of developing mental health problems but also factors that can protect against developing mental health problems. Whilst we can't always control the bad things that happen, we have some control over improving our resilience and the resilience of others

- Explain the concept of risk and resilience to the group

People don't develop mental health problems for no reason.

Risk factors are what can increase a person's chances of developing mental health problems.

Risk factors include a range of stressful life events and situations, relationships, genetic factors and the behaviour of ourselves and others. The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to develop a mental health problem.

BUT

Resilience factors protect us against the possibility developing mental health problems. Again these include genetics, situations, relationships and many other things. The more resilience factors a person has in place, the better able they will be to bounce back from the tough stuff that happens in life.

- Hand Risk vs. Resilience work sheet to small groups.
- Ask the group to sort the statements into 2 categories, 1 for risk factors and the other for resilience factors.



Activity 5

Carrots, Eggs & Coffee

Learning Point: The aim of the activity is to educate the group on importance of resilience and to reflect on their own experiences of resilience

- Give out the Carrots, Eggs and a Cup of Coffee worksheet (worksheet 3)
- Read the story or ask the individuals to read the below story and complete the question at the end.
- Generate discussion



Activity 6

How to Build Resilience

Learning Point: Young people to identify how they can look after their own mental health and build their resilience

- Distribute the How to Build Resilience hand out and Promises to Myself activity sheet to each individual.
- Explain the concept of Five Ways to Well Being

The **Five Ways to Well-being** are a set of evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing. They are:

- **Connect**
- **Be Active**
- **Take Notice**
- **Keep Learning**
- **Give**

These activities are simple things individuals can do in their everyday lives. Kind of like 5 fruit and veg a day, by actively engaging in the 5 ways to wellbeing, you can protect yourself from the risk of developing mental health problems and increase your sense of well-being



Activity 7

The Help Available

Learning Point: To recognise that there are things that we can all do to help each other and ourselves plus there are services that offer different kinds of support depending on what young people need

Important to signpost to accurate information such as <http://liverpoolfyi.com/> and www.freshcamhs.org

- Read out the following statement:

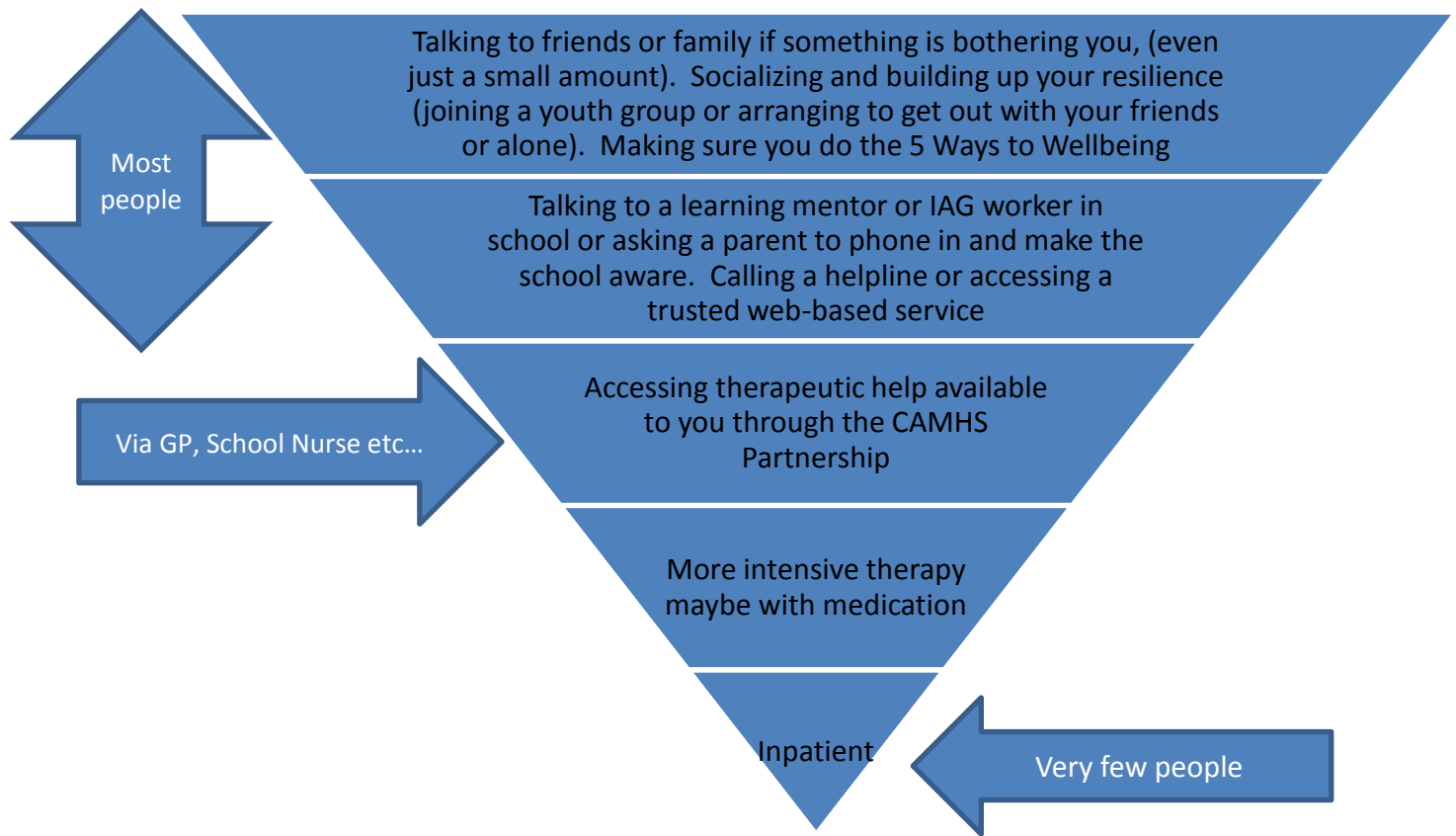
Mental Health is everybody's business: we can help ourselves, our friends and family members. However if that help and support is not enough there are caring and qualified professionals who can offer support at different levels.

We can all support somebody if they are not feeling too good or we can ask them to seek help from other professionals such as teachers, youth workers, the school nurse or their G.P.

- Explain the Pyramid Diagram
 - The vast majority of people's mental health problems can be addressed by talking and connecting with family, friends and living a healthy lifestyle. The ups and downs of life are normal and talking regularly about how you feel and actively looking after your mental health is enough for most people
 - At the next level up: many problems might need non-mental-health professionals to become involved in a supportive role. From this, there may also be a role for very brief interventions and advice. Each school has an Information, Advice and Guidance worker from the CAMHS Offer who visits the school regularly
 - Some mental health difficulties may require that a person engages in therapy with a trained mental health professional. This might involve going for counselling, or attending CAMHS to work through difficulties in a confidential environment. Therapy is scientifically proven to help people to recover from mental health difficulties. Sometimes medication is also helpful
 - Very few mental health problems require that a person gets very intensive support, sometimes in a hospital setting. In the North West we tend to use the Dewi Jones Unit for younger children, and Maple Ward and Pine Lodge in Chester for the older age range. This level of service is only considered when attempts to resolve the difficulties at earlier stages have not been successful



Levels of Support



Activity 8

What Could Todd do?

Learning Point: To apply the knowledge from the session in a case study. The aim of the activity is to educate the group on how if help and support is not reached individuals can or may feel worse.

It is also vital to note that early help with anybody who is feeling like Todd is key to preventing any serious mental health difficulties.

Explore the case study below and generate a whole group discussion

What could Todd do?

- Todd has recently moved from London to a school in Liverpool. Todd has struggled to make new friends at school and in his community. Todd is feeling lonely and isolated.

What could Todd do? What could others do?

- Todd did not speak to anyone about how he was feeling. 3 months have passed and he still feels lonely and isolated. These feelings are getting worse. To make things worse, Todd's Dad who he is very close to has recently begun a new job where he has to work away overseas. At school Todd feels different to the other kids as he talks differently to his peers. One day the teacher called upon Todd to answer a question, when Todd answered, another young person imitated him and made fun of his accent. Now Todd is reluctant to participate in lessons and has withdrawn even more.

What could Todd do? What could others do?

- Todd begins to feel worthless, he doesn't have his Dad around to talk to and he thinks his Mum is too busy looking after his little sister and taking care of the house. Todd feels like he has no one to turn to and has recently begun to cut his arm.

What could Todd do? What could others do?

- More time has passed, this situation has worsened and Todd now feels hopeless and like there is no point living. He has thought about suicide and has begun to write a suicide note.

What else could Todd do? What could others do?



Final Thoughts

Encourage the group to share something that they have learned from the session and how they might take things forward

Remind the group that they have access to Information Advice and Guidance Workers in school or can seek referrals from GP, School Nurse etc

Please direct to the following for more information:

<http://liverpoolfyi.com/>

www.freshcamhs.org

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.time-to-change.org.uk

