

Bounce Forward Healthy Minds Mental Illness Investigated Student Handbook

Name:

Teacher:



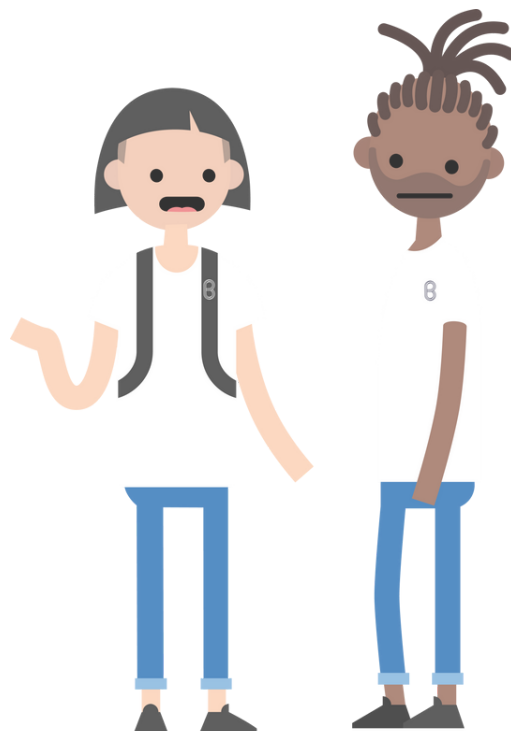


Lesson 1

Defining mental health

Learning outcomes

- I know where and how to get support both in and beyond school
- I can define mental health
- I can draw parallels between mental and physical health
- I understand that mental health is a spectrum and can illustrate this with examples



Sources of further support

School-based support

You could discuss, as a class, the support available in school.

Your teacher can help you to complete the answers to the following:

What support is there in school?

Who is it suitable for?

How do students access it?

What happens next if students ask for support?

Other sources of support

www.youngminds.org.uk – Young Minds is a charity which focuses on young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. The site includes downloadable information leaflets on a range of topics, including self-harm, aimed at both young people and adults.

www.selfharm.co.uk – this is a website developed by someone who used to self-harm. It provides lots of support and information including access to ‘Alumina’, which is a six-week online programme to help you overcome self-harm. You can self-refer.

www.b-eat.co.uk – Beat, the eating disorders charity: the UK’s leading charity supporting anyone affected by eating disorders or difficulties with food, weight or shape.

www.childline.org.uk – Childline provide support to young people who have concerns about themselves or their friends. They are trained listeners who will never break your confidentiality and will never judge. They are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can either call them on 0800 1111 or you can talk to them online at www.childline.org.uk

www.samaritans.org – Samaritans: call 08457 90 90 90 any time day or night.

www.studentsagainstdepression.org – Students Against Depression offers information and resources validated by health professionals alongside tips and advice from students who have experienced it themselves.

Worried about a friend?

Lesson 1

Statistically, 5 children in a classroom of 30 are likely to have negative mental wellbeing or suffer from a diagnosable mental illness. So it would not be surprising if, as you learn more about mental illness, you were to start to see signs in a friend that cause you concern. We have shared some ideas below to help you know what to do next if you are worried. You will learn more about how best to support a friend in lesson 4, but you can talk to your friend, or a trusted adult, any time you are worried.



**GOOD LUCK.
YOUR FRIEND IS LUCKY
TO HAVE YOU**

Worried about a friend?

Seek support

Depending on the nature of your friend's concerns, it's likely you'll need to encourage them to seek further support as you'll not be able to manage the problem between you. Telling a trusted adult for example at home or school will enable you to access further support – for both of you. Your friend might be reluctant to share their concerns with anyone else but if you're worried then it's important that you don't go it alone as your friend might be in danger. Also, you need to look after your own wellbeing so you are in the best position to help your friend.

You can help your friend to feel reassured and more in control of the situation by discussing:

WHAT?

What information needs to be passed on – you need to share enough information to access support, not every single thing they've told you.

WHO?

Who needs to know – think carefully about whom you trust to respond appropriately and support

HOW?

How you're going to tell them – does your friend want to do it themselves, do they want you to do it for them, should you do it together or should you write a letter or email? you both.

Worried about a friend?

Seek support

Of course, seek your friend's consent before alerting someone to their issues, however, there are some circumstances in which you should tell a trusted adult right away to keep your friend safe and to access support as quickly as possible. These circumstances include:

- Self-harm including alcohol or drug misuse
- Suicidal feelings
- Difficulties concerning food including bingeing, starving, vomiting or laxative abuse
- Abuse at home (physical, sexual or emotional)
- Abuse from a boyfriend or girlfriend (physical, sexual or emotional)
- Bullying of any type

If you need reassurance before you or your friend talk to someone face to face then you can get good support, anonymously, from the Samaritans or Childline either on the phone or online (see Further Sources of Support Handout).

STICK BY THEM

Finally, stick by your friend, through thick and thin and through ups and downs. It's hard being friends with someone who's facing these kinds of difficulties; you may find your friend pushes you away, stops coming out with you, starts acting differently to the person you made friends with or ignores you completely. But rest assured that your support will mean a huge amount to them (even if they don't show it) and will help them through their recovery. Even just the occasional text message can mean a huge amount to someone who's struggling to get through each day.



Worried about a friend?

LISTEN

The most important thing you can do for your friend is to make time for them and to listen to them. They need to feel listened to, so get rid of all distractions. Being given the space and time to talk is a really important first step and something that is hugely supportive right through (and beyond) the recovery journey. If you don't feel ready to do this, perhaps you can talk to a mutual friend or an adult you can trust and together you can approach the friend you're worried about.

DON'T JUDGE

More than almost anything, young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues such as depression or eating disorders fear the judgement of others. They worry that people will over-react, thinking that they are crazy or want to kill themselves. Or sometimes they worry that people will be dismissive and think that they're just attention seeking. A good friend listens without judgement and still sees their friend rather than an unhelpful label ('anorexic', 'self-harmer' etc), after a friend discloses their concerns to them.

ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

When someone shares their struggles and concerns with you, the most helpful thing you can ask is 'how can I help?' There is no need to dissect the ins and outs of why your friend feels this way; that is the work of a therapist or doctor, but as their friend you can talk to them about practical measures you can put in place to support them through each day. Think about difficulties and barriers which are making each day harder for them. For example, if they're struggling with anxiety they may find arriving at school in the morning when it's really busy makes them feel panicky and out of control. To relieve this you might arrange to meet them a short walk from the school gates and walk into school with them to provide them with some moral support. Exactly how you can help will vary from person to person and is likely to change over time as well so the best thing to do is to have a discussion with your friend to bounce some ideas about. You should also try to revisit the topic every now and then.



Lesson 1

Mindmap

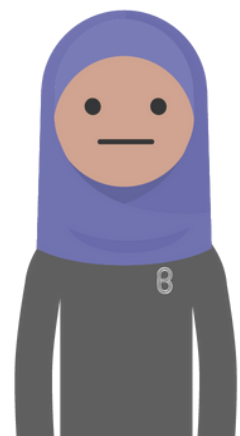


Lesson 1

Maisie case study

Maisie is an able student who really enjoys school. She works incredibly hard and is known as something of an over-achiever and perfectionist amongst her friends. Her friends think that everything comes easily to her and that there is no need for her to worry about exams because she always passes with flying colours but Maisie feels differently. Only the best is good enough for her and if she gets an A instead of an A* then she feels she's failed.

She spends a lot of time studying, staying up late into the night pouring over textbooks and making sure her homework is perfect. Things aren't great at home at the moment – she hasn't told anyone but her parents have been arguing loads and she's really worried because things seem to be getting worse rather than better. Filling her head with school work with her music on loud is one of the ways that she blocks out the noise of her parents arguing and the horrible way she feels.



Where would you place Maisie on the mental health spectrum?



Why?

What might cause Maisie to move up or down the spectrum?

Lesson 1

Aakash case study

Aakash has always been quite shy compared to his classmates. He doesn't have a lot of confidence in the classroom. He is an able pupil and often comes to the right answers – though he rarely raises his hand. He is quiet but is known amongst his friends as someone who is very kind and reliable. He lives at home with his parents, his grandmother and his two brothers. His grandmother moved in a few months ago because she had been unwell. She is suffering with dementia and often gets confused, so it was felt she was safest moving into Aakash's family home. It is nice to have her around though it can be upsetting if she gets distressed or confused.

Aakash is the oldest of the three siblings and is very involved in helping to look after his younger brothers now that his parents are busier with tending to his grandmother's needs. He is happy to help, though sometimes it takes so long to get his brothers ready for school that he risks being late himself.

Aakash loves reading, gaming and films and spends much of his free time with his best friend Goldin who is also quite shy but really 'gets' Aakash.



Where would you place Aakash on the mental health spectrum?



Why?

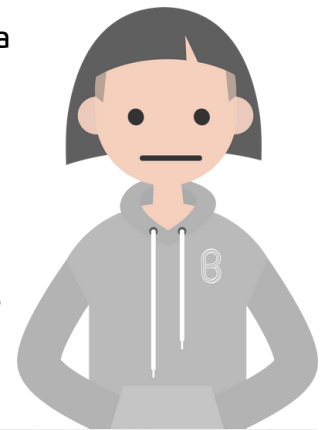
What might cause Aakash to move up or down the spectrum?

Lesson 1

Adrienna case study

Adrienna feels like she lives her life in a constant state of panic – even the tiniest things make her jump and her head is constantly filled with fears and worries. She worries a lot about her family and friends and whether something terrible will happen to them. She knows that this is irrational but these horrible thoughts enter her mind constantly making it hard to focus on other things.

She finds it hard to sleep at night as she is full of such anxious thoughts and it has also made it difficult to focus in class or to carry on normal conversations and activities with friends. She hasn't told anyone how she feels because she thinks they will think she is just being silly, but it feels like things are getting worse and on some days she has told her Dad she is too unwell to go to school because the thought of it makes her feel physically sick. If she does try to go to school on a bad day, or if something happens during the day to make her feel worse, like an argument with a friend, being told off by a teacher or doing badly on her homework, then she ends up feeling really bad. Her heart races, her palms get sweaty, her breathing becomes difficult and she gets dizzy. She feels like she's dying. It's horrible. When this happens she hides as she doesn't want anyone to see. She doesn't understand what's happening to her or how to make it stop.



Where would you place Adrienna on the mental health spectrum?



Why?

What might cause Adrienna to move up or down the spectrum?

Lesson 1

Landon case study

Landon feels like his whole body is made of lead. When his alarm goes off in the morning, he turns it off and goes back to sleep – he never feels like he’s had enough sleep no matter how many hours he’s had. When he is awake he feels numb all the time. He used to really enjoy playing the guitar and going out with his mates, but now he just can’t be bothered. He can barely talk to anyone.

He has nothing to say and doesn’t care about what other people have to say either. He has put on weight as he feels constantly hungry and does find some comfort in eating junk food. He knows he shouldn’t but he can’t help himself – its’ the one thing he seems to find any pleasure in. He is frequently late for school, his grades are slipping and his friends are drifting away. He doesn’t understand why he is living in a dark, numb fog or what he should do about it.



Where would you place Landon on the mental health spectrum?



Why?

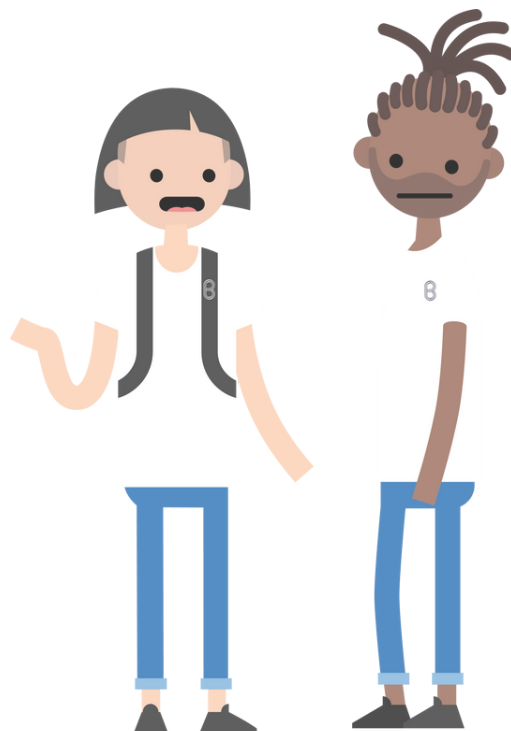
What might cause Landon to move up or down the spectrum?

Lesson 2

The science of mental illness

Learning outcomes

- I can define mental health and mental illness
- I understand that mental health is a spectrum and can illustrate this with examples
- I can explain the brain's role in keeping us mentally healthy



Lesson 2 notes page

Exploring brain functions

THE 6 COMPONENTS OF BRAIN FUNCTION:

1 THINKING OR COGNITION

The thoughts going through our minds and how we comprehend the world around us.

PERCEPTION OR SENSING **2**

How the brain sees the world.

3 EMOTIONS

The ability to experience feelings and express those feelings to others.

SIGNALLING OR RESPONDING **4**

How the brain becomes responsive to and reacts to the environment around it.

5 PHYSICAL FUNCTIONS

The brain controls many of our physical sensations.

BEHAVIOURS **6**

Everything we do, all of our behaviour, is controlled by the brain.

Exploring brain functions

Discuss how the different components of brain function might react and consider what each person might be thinking and feeling, physically and emotionally – and how they might respond.

Activating events	Notes
Jane is scared of spiders. A spider runs across the ground in front of her	
Aboushek walks in on his boyfriend kissing someone else	
Noorah is upset. Her friend comes and puts an arm around her and talks to her soothingly	
Derek is about to take his driving test	
Angus's friend gives him a birthday present	
Roysan just beat his high score on his favourite game	
Deeli just failed a history test she studied hard for	
Saneel has reached a really sad part in the novel she is reading	

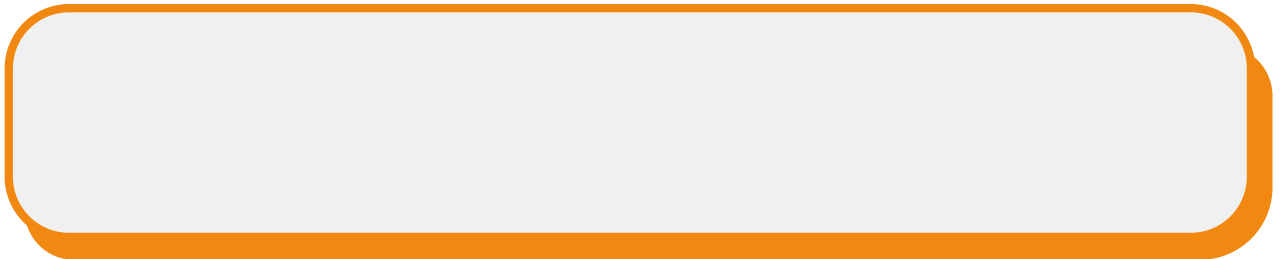
In your own words

Summarise the four points in your own words. What do you understand them to mean? If you were explaining it to someone else, what words would you use?

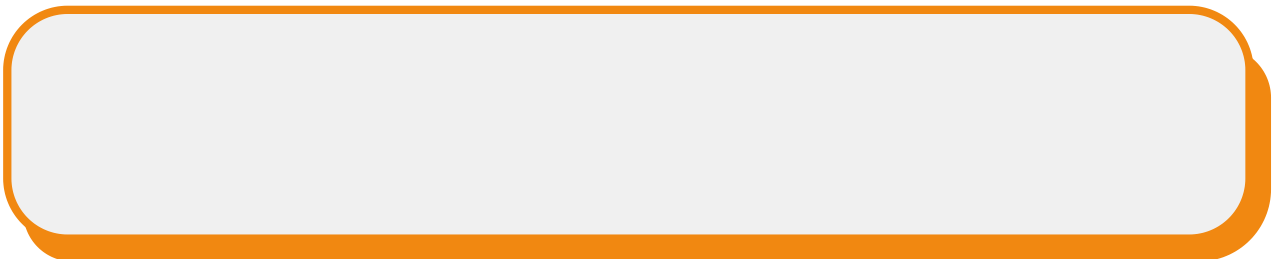
1 A specific part of the brain is not working well



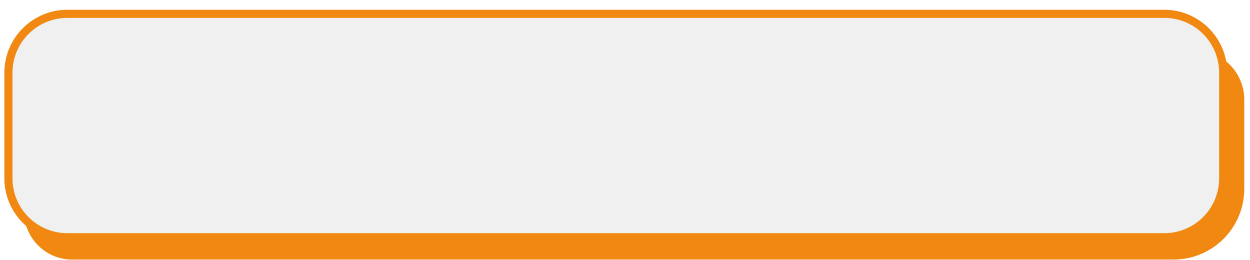
2 A specific part of the brain is not working in the right way



3 A brain network is disrupted



4 Neurochemical messengers are not working properly

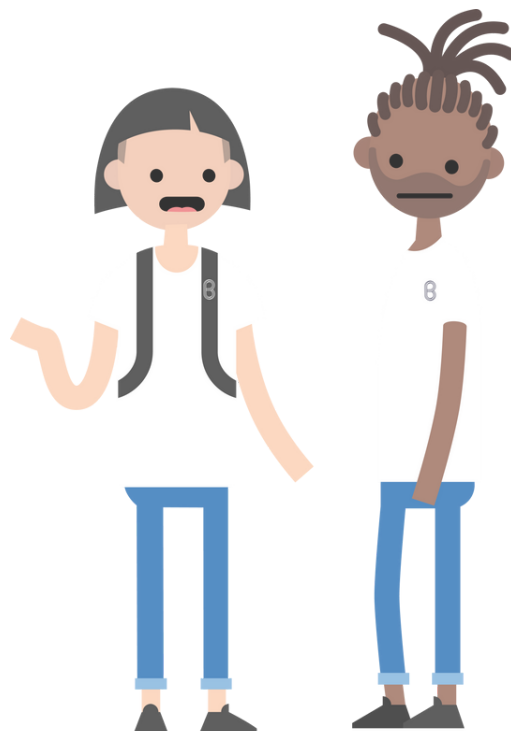


Lesson 3

Understanding mental illness

Learning outcomes

- I can define depression and anxiety and outline their prevalence.
- I can describe the symptoms of depression and anxiety and explain how these might impact on someone's day-to-day life.
- I can explain the most common treatments for common mental health issues.



Lesson 3

Mindmap



A day in the life of

Creating your character

In this activity you're going to think what a typical day would look like for someone facing the condition your group has been assigned.

First imagine who your character is. Try to imagine someone who's just a fairly typical person of about the same age as you and list a few details about them below:

Name:

Age:

Where do they live and who with (parents, siblings, pets?)

Who are their friends, and what are they like?

What are their favourite ways to spend time?

Who can they talk to if they are worried?

A typical day in the life of a young person with ...

First, discuss briefly with your group what symptoms your character might experience and how does this make them feel? Consider a typical school day for your character. Think about their thoughts, feelings and behaviours throughout the day. What situations might make them feel worse or better? What situations might feel difficult or trigger their condition? What might they avoid? How will other people respond to them?



7am

9am

11am

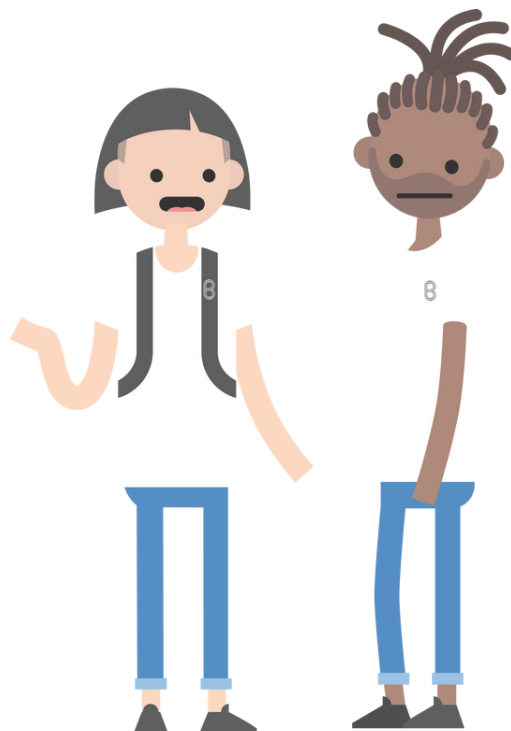
1pm

Lesson 4

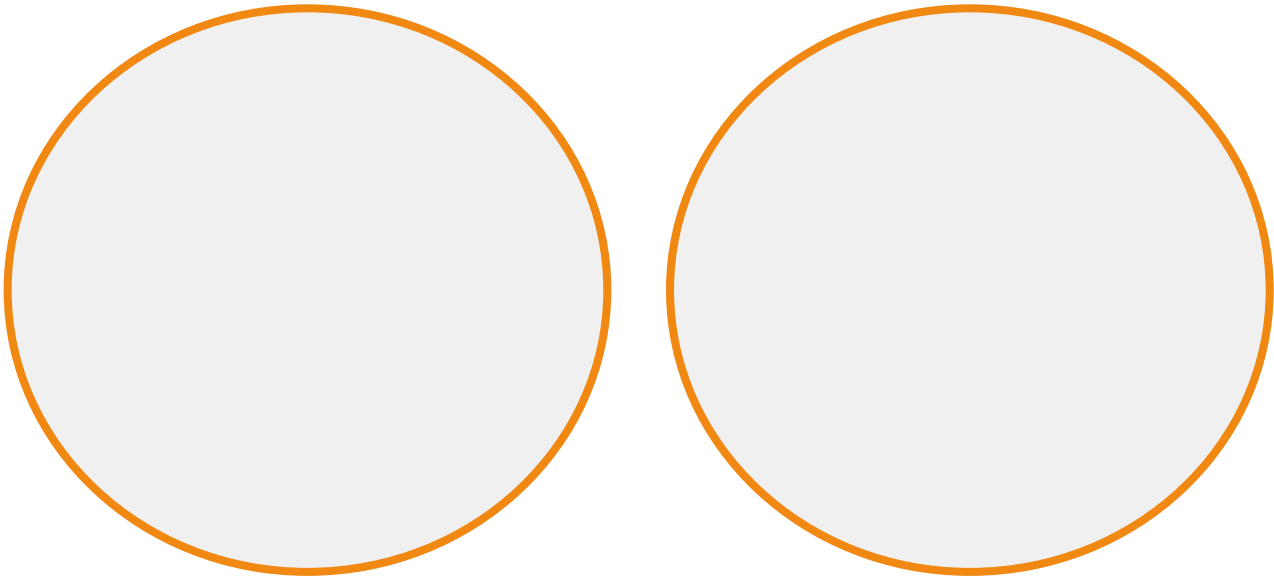
Triggers, protective factors & promoting wellbeing

Learning outcomes

- I can explain a range of protective factors that reduce the risk of developing mental illness.
- I understand that physical health underlies mental health and can describe small changes to promote wellbeing.
- I can explain some of the common triggers for mental illness.
- I can differentiate between facts and myths about mental health and know where to seek further information if I am unsure.
- I can describe the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' and outline simple changes I could try to make to promote my own wellbeing.



Triggers & protective factors worksheet



Five ways to wellbeing

Tried and tested

Evidence suggests there are five steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing. You need to take them regularly and make sure you include all five as intentional activity to look after your wellbeing.

Connect

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

Be active

You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find the activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

Keep learning

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up to learn a new sport, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

Give to others

Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

Take notice

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, be aware of the world around you and what you are thinking and feeling.

Five ways to wellbeing

What can I try?

List some simple, achievable ideas that you could try to improve your mental wellbeing in line with the five ways to wellbeing.

Connect

Be active

Keep learning

Give to others

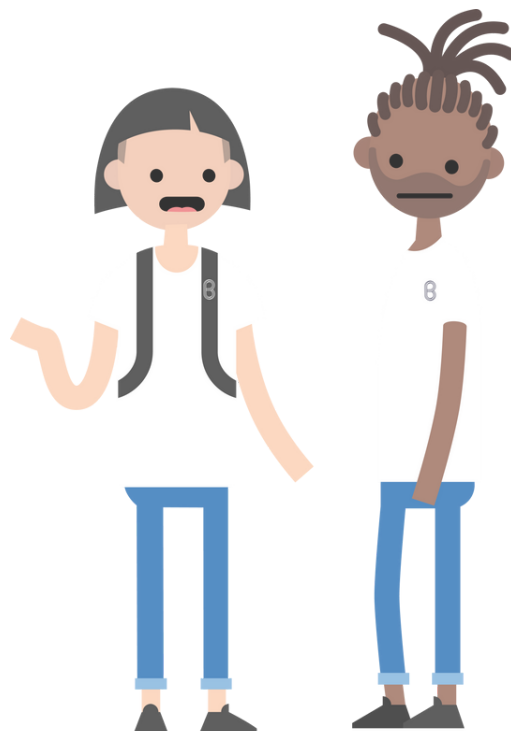
Take notice

Lesson 5

Mental illness spotting & supporting

Learning outcomes

- I can model how to have a conversation with a friend about their mental health.
- I know when, where, how and why to get support for myself or a friend and I am aware of the types of support that are available.
- I can recognise the early warning signs of mental illness.



Lesson 5

Mindmap



Recognise the warning signs

Think back to the character you created in lesson 3. What warning signs do you think your character's friends, classmates, family members or teachers might be able to pick up on that indicate they are in need of support?



Imagine you were their friend or someone in their class.

What physical signs might you see?

How might their behaviour change?

What might they say or do?

What other things might you notice?

What next?

Who could help you? Who should you talk to?



Are there any safe websites or helplines that might help

What help is available at school?

Are there any local services that might be able to support?
Don't forget to refer to your 'Sources of Further Support'

Top tips for talking to a friend

1



2



3



4



5

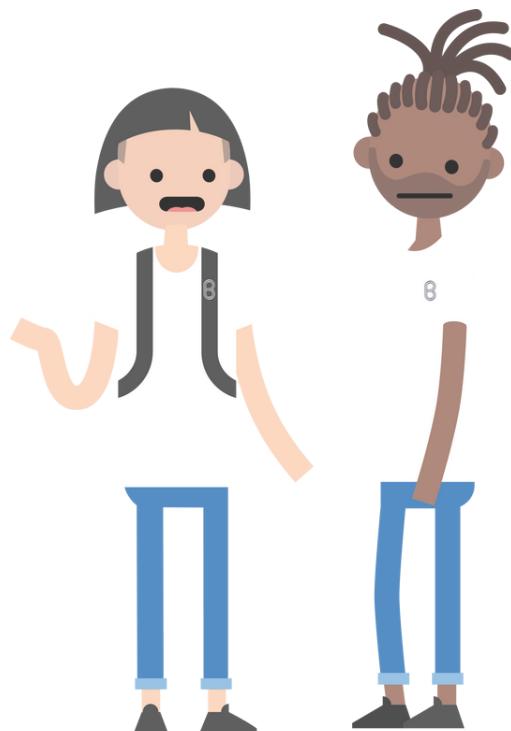


Lesson 6

Healthy coping strategies

Learning outcomes

- I understand that everyone must manage difficult situations, thoughts and feelings sometimes.
- I can describe healthy and unhealthy coping responses.
- I can describe a range of difficult situations, thoughts and feelings and suggest specific healthy coping strategies that might help someone manage each of these.
- I can explain a range of simple coping strategies and how these might help someone manage difficult situations, thoughts and feelings.
- I know how and where to access further support if I need to.



Lesson 6

Mindmap



Healthy coping strategies

There are lots of different ways that we can cope with difficult thoughts, feeling and situations. Here we've listed a wide range of ideas suggested by young people. Everyone is different, so what works for one person might not work for another. You'll probably have further ideas you could add to these lists.

Some of these ideas will feel like a perfect fit, whilst others will seem ridiculous to you, it's just about seeing what works for YOU, we're all different. These ideas have all been suggested by people who've self-harmed in the past, so they worked for someone!



Venting BIG Feelings

Sometimes our feelings become too much for us to bear. These ideas are all ones designed to help vent anger, frustration or other extreme feelings.

- Go somewhere quiet and scream
- Punch a punch bag
- Make a ball out of play dough and smash it
- Hurl lumps of ice at the ground and watch them smash
- Smash a watermelon
- Hammer nails into wood
- Play squash
- Tear up a magazine
- Write down what made you feel angry and scribble it out until the paper is worn through
- Dance like nobody is watching
- Play music loudly
- Bang drums or other percussion instruments
- Run up hill
- Write a letter to the person who has made you angry, venting your frustration (but don't send it)
- Cry
- Cut up an old piece of material
- Tear up cardboard
- Have a pillow fight with a wall
- Stamp your feet
- Snap sticks in half
- Sing very loudly

Healthy coping strategies



When feeling down or alone

These are ideas which might help someone when their mood is low – if they feel alone or deeply sad.

-
- Look at photographs of friends and family
 - Think of the best day ever
 - Tell someone about the best day ever
 - Talk to someone trustworthy
 - Call a helpline or use a 'trusted' online forum
 - Listen to soothing music
 - Take a walk in the garden, notice each tree and flower and try to learn their names
 - Walk a dog
 - Go to the park and swing, listen to the laughter of children playing
 - Re-read a favourite childhood book
 - Watch silly videos of cats on YouTube
 - Listen to a 'feel good' playlist of songs



-
- Put your books in height, alphabetical or colour order
 - Plan your diary for the next week, build in rest or fun breaks
 - Build something intricate like an Airfix or Lego model
 - Paint by numbers
 - Read a kids' 'choose your own adventure' book making all the 'wrong' choices
 - Make bread from scratch
 - Give your bedroom a facelift by shifting the furniture around
 - Give your room a deep clean

Healthy coping strategies



Ideas for distraction

These are ideas designed to remove the focus from difficult thoughts and feeling to something more manageable.

- Watch something light-hearted on TV
- Go for a walk
- Call a friend for a chat
- Have a shower
- Do a jigsaw
- Find something beginning with every letter of the alphabet
- Write a letter or an email
- Read a book
- Learn the words to a new song
- Practice a musical instrument
- Curl up on a bean bag and watch the world go by
- Find out one new thing about something you are interested in



-
- Practise a new skill (e.g. speaking a ••• language, juggling)
 - Bake
 - Sew or knit
 - Build a card house or line of cards then knock it down
 - Look for pictures in the clouds
 - Do some cleaning
 - Work in the garden, dead-head some flowers or do some weeding
 - Fly a kite
 - Watch out for birds and try to identify the different types
 - Skim stones – how many bounces can you do?
 - Write a blog post or journal entry

Healthy coping strategies



Ideas for working through confusing thoughts & feelings

These are ideas can help people to understand what is really going on

- Use resilience skills to understand the beliefs that are leading to how you feel and check the beliefs for evidence to make sure you are not missing something important.
- Write a poem called 'I don't understand'
- Paint a big, abstract, picture using poster paints
- Write down all the questions in your head
- Stop and work backwards through the last hour trying to answer the question 'what made • me feel this way?'
- Express confused feelings through music
- Use the WoBbLe skill when you are catastrophising
- Use your assertive communication skills to express what is going on to yourself by saying it out loud to te mirror



Ideas that won't be noticed in busy situations

- Scream silently in your head
- Imagine yourself in your favourite place with your favourite people
- Become aware of every part of your body in turn, think about your toes, then your ankles then your knees etc.
- Breathe deeply and slowly, counting to five with each inhalation and each exhalation
- In your head, recite a fact about each other person in the room
- If you're amongst strangers, pick one and imagine what they did last Friday
- Use the Take 5 breathing exercise from the ersilience skills lessons

Ideas to try worksheet

Complete the questions and keep this safe so you can come back to it another time. You could also think about which ideas might help a friend you are worried about, or you could add your own ideas. The ideas listed in 'Healthy Coping Strategies' may help get you started.



When I need to vent my feelings



When I feel sad or low

Ideas to try worksheet

Complete the questions and keep this safe so you can come back to it another time. You could also think about which ideas might help a friend you are worried about, or you could add your own ideas. The ideas listed in 'Healthy Coping Strategies' may help get you started.



When I feel helpless or overwhelmed



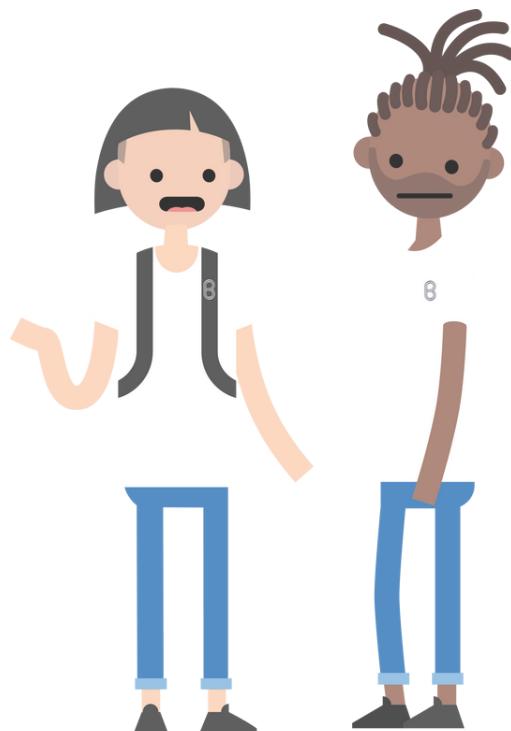
When I feel stressed or anxious

Lesson 7

Reducing mental health stigma

Learning outcomes

- I can define stigma and describe the impact it may have on someone with mental illness or emotional wellbeing issues.
- I can demonstrate some simple steps to overcoming mental health stigma in our school community to enable those who need it to seek support.



Explaining to an alien worksheet

Greetings. We've heard of something called 'stigma'

- what is it?
- why does it exist?



We understand that humans can suffer from illnesses in their bodies and minds. Is there stigma around health issues?

If so, does the stigma people experience differ depending on what health issues they are suffering from?

How would we recognise mental health stigma when we're observing humans?

How would experiencing stigma affect a human with mental health issues?



Can't other humans do something to reduce stigma? What could they do?

Explain stigma to the alien

Video questions

Did anything surprise you or make you feel differently in any way?

In what ways do you think the people in the video might have been treated differently as a result of their mental health issues?

How could mental health stigma affect their chances of accessing support or treatment?

Did the video make you want to learn more about anything?

Addressing mental health stigma

Resource A: Ideas for challenging stigma from the 'see me' campaign

Challenge inappropriate behaviour

Put yourself in the shoes of the person who is at the receiving end of the words, behaviour or actions and imagine how that makes them feel. Together or as individuals we need to have the strength to challenge anyone who fails to treat someone with a mental health problem with respect, dignity and as an equal.

Often, the people behaving inappropriately may not mean to cause harm and are ignorant of the negative impact of their actions or words. Simply explaining the situation may be enough for them not to make the same mistakes again. The good news is inappropriate behaviour is increasingly not tolerated as awareness and better understanding about mental ill health continues to spread. However, phrases and words will still crop up in our day to day lives from direct conversations, our experiences and in the media. Phrases like 'pull yourself together' or 'there are people worse off than you' can hurt and affect those battling mental ill health.

Examples of casual stigma:

- Language used (nuts, mental, psycho, weirdo, a bit OCD).
- Reinforcing stereotypes such as the mental patient Halloween costume, Frank Bruno psycho headline.
- Unhelpful comments – “Is that you out on day leave?” said taxi driver.
- Pictures used to depict mental ill health like the “head clutcher”.

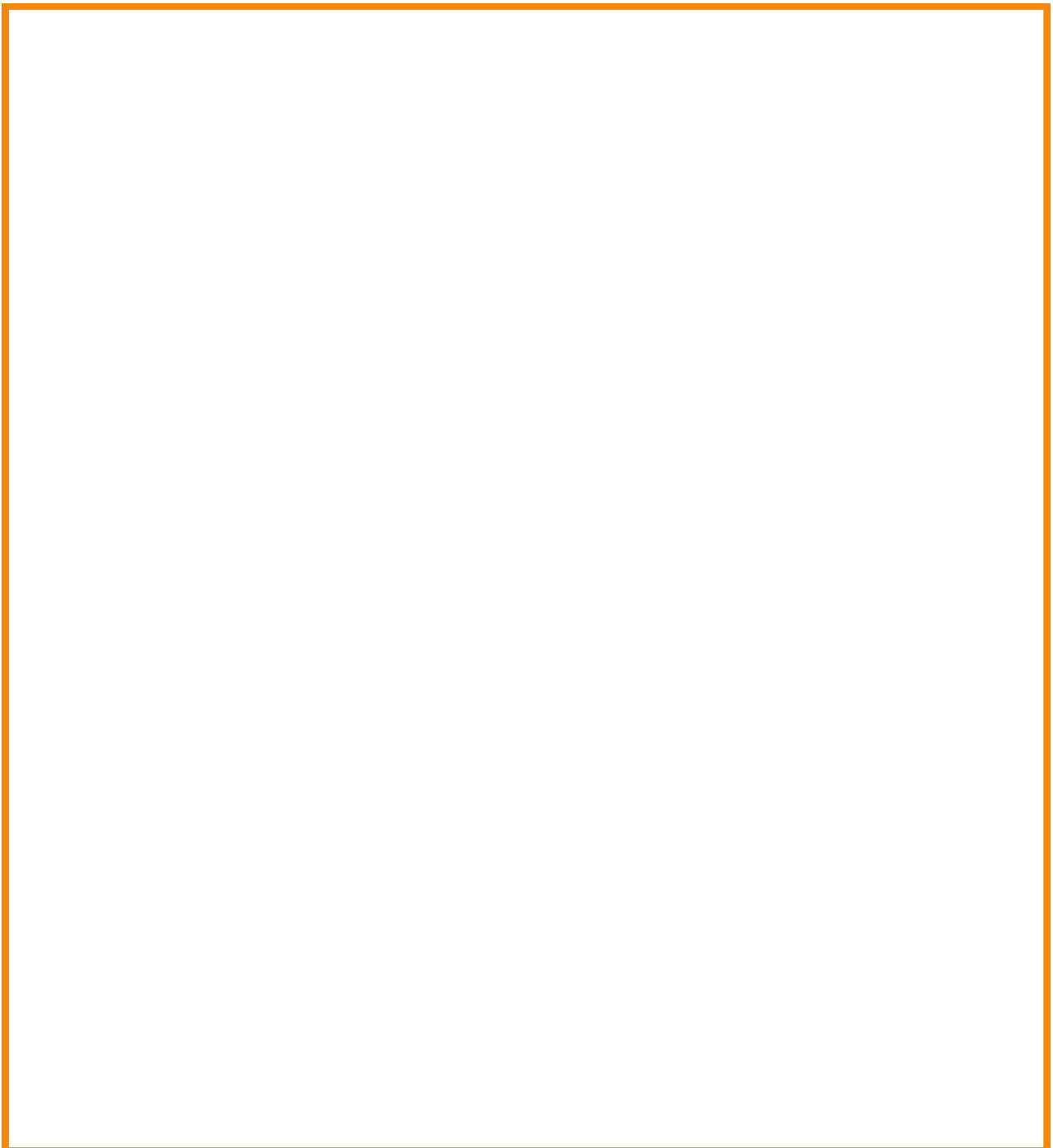
Other things to look out for:

- Avoid making a judgement based on a diagnosis of mental illness.
- Don't ignore a cry for help from a friend or family member as you see their behaviour as attention seeking when in actual fact, seeking attention is nothing to feel ashamed about but a sign of strength.
- Making someone feel different due to mental ill health which can hinder recovery by causing self doubt over the validity of the illness – ‘am I really ill?’.
- Recognising that opening up to friends and family is still too daunting an experience for many with mental ill health. Be patient and wait till they are ready. Don't show frustration and be there to listen nonjudgementally when the time is right.

Don't steer clear of someone with a mental health diagnosis. They are still the person you know but are unwell.

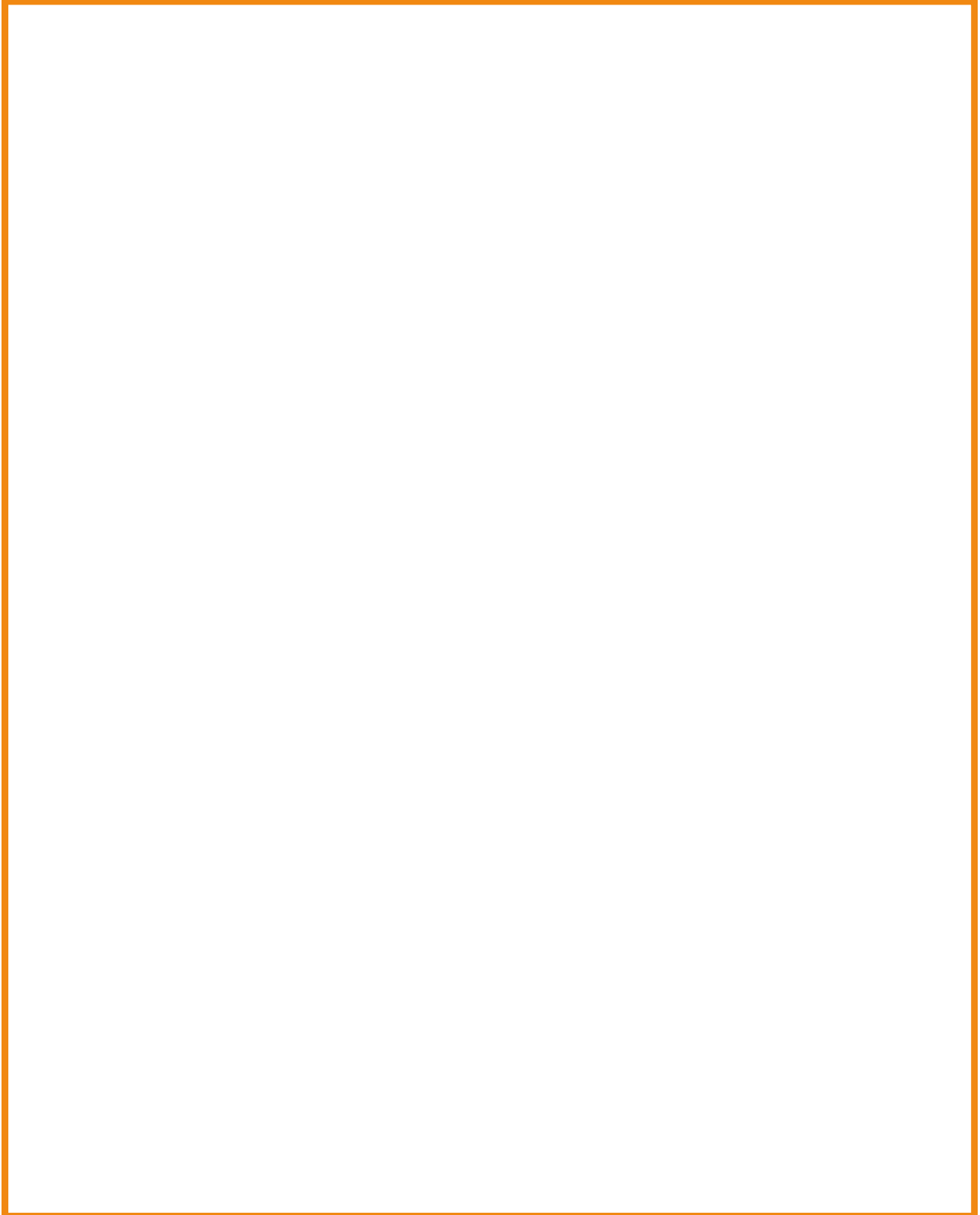
Addressing mental health stigma

Use this space to make notes from your group discussion about what you and your school can do to address mental health stigma. We will discuss these as a class. The videos you have seen and the resources on the preceding pages should help to get your thinking started.



Our class charter

Note down the actions that you have agreed as a class to take to try to tackle mental health stigma in your school and beyond.



Looking back and forwards

Thinking back over the lessons you have done about mental health, reflect on your own learning.

Something(s) I know now that I didn't know before these lessons

Something(s) I feel differently about now than I did before these lessons

Something(s) I'll do differently as a result of these lessons:

Something(s) I feel more confident about than I did before these lessons:

Something(s) I am interested to learn more about in the future:

