

Lesson 4: Promoting emotional wellbeing

Key stage 4

This is the last of a series of lessons in KS4 exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing. This lesson focuses on ways to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.



Learning objective

Students will learn:

- strategies to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing



Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- differentiate between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies and recognise the importance of using healthy ways to manage emotions
- evaluate a range of ways to promote mental and emotional wellbeing
- critique the reliability of sources of support in relation to mental health



Resources required

Box for anonymous questions



Resource 1: Emotional wellbeing strategies diamond 9



Resource 2: Assess the risk



Resource 3: Healthy ways to promote emotional wellbeing



Resource 4: Summary sheet (optional)



Climate for learning

Before teaching these lessons, ensure that you read the accompanying PSHE Association document [Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, handling questions, and additional advice relating to teaching about mental health effectively and safely.

NB: It is important not to talk about specific ways in which people harm themselves, ways in which people might hide self-harm, specific ways in which people lose weight, purge or hide eating disorder symptoms, as this could be instructional for students at risk of using unhealthy coping strategies. It is also important not to use numbers when discussing weight loss, or to share extreme images, as this can provide a 'benchmark' or aspirational example for some young people.

Key words

Mental health, emotional wellbeing, wellness, healthy/unhealthy coping strategies, reliability

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Introduction	Revisit ground rules and introduce lesson objectives and outcomes.	5min
2. Baseline assessment	Rank effectiveness of healthy coping strategies	5min
3. Assessing risk	Assess the risk level of a range of unhealthy coping strategies and justify their decisions	10min
4. Evaluate techniques	Read information sheets to create persuasive arguments about the effectiveness of different wellbeing techniques; Class vote on the most persuasive argument	20min

5. Assess reliability	Class list features to use to assess reliability of web content	10min
6. Plenary and endpoint assessment	Rate confidence levels in each lesson outcome; Reflection on each lesson in the unit of work	5min
7. Signposting	Revisit signposting and ensure all final questions are addressed	5min

Baseline assessment



Introduction

Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. Ensure students know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories. Remind students that they can ask anonymous questions using the question box/ask it basket throughout the lesson. Remind students that although they can ask questions at any time, this lesson will be the last in this unit, so today is an ideal opportunity to raise any final points.

Share the learning objectives and intended outcomes for the lesson. Explain that unhealthy coping strategies, including self-harm and eating disorders, will be discussed but make it clear that specific methods of self-harm or disordered eating won't be used and ask them not to raise such points either, in order to keep learning safe.



Baseline assessment activity

Give students **Resource 1: Emotional wellbeing strategies diamond 9** and ask them to rank the techniques in order of their effectiveness for them as an individual or for people in general, using their own perceptions of their usefulness.

NB: A blank diamond 9 template has been provided should you wish for students to create their own suggestions for useful strategies.

Discuss the findings from this activity, stressing that there are many things people can do to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing and invite any ideas they might have in addition to those on the cards. Use the feedback from this activity to gauge student understanding of the range of techniques available to support wellbeing and adjust lesson content accordingly.

Core activities



Unhealthy coping strategies

Ask the class what is meant by healthy and unhealthy coping strategies. Refer to the long term health implications of unhealthy strategies such as eating disorders using the [teacher guidance](#) at page 13.

Working in small groups, give each a scenario from **Resource 2: Assess the risk** and ask the students to list as many risks as they can think of associated with the behaviour. Encourage them to think about:

- Immediate / Short term risks
- Long term health risks

(Cont.)

- Social and emotional risks
- Alternative, healthier coping strategies the person could try

If time allows, rotate the scenarios and asks groups to add new ideas to the new scenario they have been given. Repeat until students have had the opportunity to see several/all scenarios.

Take feedback from the scenarios; teacher notes are available (Resource 2a) to support you.

NB: Students may raise further questions about self-harm during this activity. Specific examples have not been included in Resource 2, however teachers may wish to refer to the Understanding Self Harm and Eating Disorders leaflet from key stage 3 to manage these discussions, should they arise.

Support:

Ask students to explain the difference between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies in their own words and provide 2 examples of each.



Strategy evaluation

Allocate one information sheet from **Resource 3: Healthy ways to promote emotional wellbeing** to each small group. Differentiate as necessary for your class following the baseline discussion.

Each group should read the sheet and prepare a short, persuasive argument as to why their strategy is a good way to support emotional wellbeing. They should go beyond simply reading or summarising what is on the handout. For example, student presentations might involve modelling the strategy, an interview where one of the team is hot-seated as an expert, or creating a list of the most persuasive reasons and researching additional quotations or statistics.

Give each group time to present their arguments and finish with a class vote on the best strategies.

Support:

Ensure class groupings take account of different students' needs.

Challenge

Further research questions are provided on the handouts to allow for additional exploration if student knowledge is already secure (based on feedback from the baseline task).



Critique reliability of support

This discussion encourages young people to be discerning about where they seek online support. Students write examples on post-it notes of things that would indicate whether the advice/support provided on a website is based on sound clinical evidence and expertise or is not and could even be potentially harmful. Each idea should be on a separate post-it note and then collected together as a class. Students are not required to actually search websites as part of this activity, as this could lead them to inadvertently or intentionally view harmful content.

Summarise the students' ideas and ensure the following have been included and discussed:

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Ensure the group discusses the following features:

- Reputation of the organisation
- Presence of medical research links
- Whether a mainly positive or negative approach is taken
- Is there filtering of harmful material?
- Is there encouragement of unhealthy coping strategies?

You may wish to show the MIND website as an example to highlight key messages

[\(https://www.mind.org.uk/\)](https://www.mind.org.uk/)

- They are a registered charity (webpage footer)
- They have an 'about us' section that features clear policy and strategy sections
- Their helpline details explain that they have been awarded the Helplines Partnership Quality Standard for Helplines
- Their information pages display the Information Standard quality mark and references for research are available on request, along with dates when the page content was updated so we know how recently the research details have been checked
- The section on news and campaigns means there is scope to check authenticity and reputation via other media sources
- The content is balanced and does not inspire people to use unhealthy coping strategies.

Plenary/ Assessment of learning



Assessing progress and reflection



Ask students to rate their confidence levels in relation to the learning outcomes for the lesson, using fingers or mini-whiteboards to indicate a rating from 1 (low confidence) to 5 (high confidence). If there are any strong gaps in the responses, consider what additional learning might be needed.

To complete the unit, ask students to complete **Resource 4: Summary sheet**. In each box, they should explain what they learnt from their work on mental health and emotional wellbeing. This can be kept in their books as evidence of progress and to inform future teaching on mental health and emotional wellbeing.



Signposting support



Allow time to address any unanswered questions and comments from the question box.

Remind students that they can access support at home, and both in school (e.g. through their form tutor, head of year, or school nurse) and out of school, through local and national organisations. Explain to students that there are lots of different ways that young people can seek help from reputable organisations, including text-based support, digital chat support and online counselling, as well as face to face or via phone. Share the following websites and phone numbers with students:

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Childline - www.childline.org.uk Phone: 0800 1111

Samaritans - www.samaritans.org Phone: 116 123

Shout - a 24-hour text service for someone experiencing a crisis and needing immediate help: 85258

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**It may be necessary to lift the mood after this learning - ensure the lesson ends on a positive note, using a strategy of your choice (see accompanying PSHE Association document [Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) p12).*

Extension activities

Students create a wellbeing toolkit for themselves e.g. a collection of photos, memes, crafts which lift their mood, a list of strategies they might use to support their wellbeing if things are difficult, and a snapshot of people, places and websites which offer support if they need some help.