

Lesson 2: Managing challenges and change Key stage 2: Year 5/6

This is the second in a series of three lessons written for upper KS2, Year 5 or 6 about mental health and wellbeing. Pupils explore some of the things that can affect a person's mental health as well as managing times of change and challenge. It begins to look at healthy coping strategies and how to put them into practice. 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

Pupils will learn:

- about how feelings and emotions are affected and can be managed at changing, challenging or difficult times



Learning outcomes

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

- describe what can impact on mental health (life events and circumstances) and how mental wellbeing can be affected
- recognise conflicting emotions and when these might be experienced
- explain how feelings and emotions change over time
- identify positive actions to support mental wellbeing during difficult times, including identifying their personal support network



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.



Resources required

Box for anonymous questions



A4 paper (blank)



Pens and pencils



Resource 1: Life events grid



Resource 2a: Emotions timeline



Resource 2b: Emotions timeline with suggestions



Resource 3: Helpful for mental health list



Resource 4: Advice cards



Key words

feeling, emotion, moods, thoughts, mental health, wellbeing, events, change, challenge, advice, support, personal network, affirmation

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Baseline assessment	Pupils complete sentences about what can affect mental health and how to manage this	10-15min
2. Situations	Using a scenario as stimulus for initial discussion, pupils consider life events that can impact on a person's mental wellbeing and how these can make them feel	15min
3. Conflicting feelings	Pupils identify life events that can cause conflicting emotions	5min

4. Emotion timelines	Pupils plot how a situation and the associated feelings change over longer periods of time	15min
5. Supporting mental health	Pupils go back to their work on life events and how they affect feelings and suggest ways people can support themselves or others at these times	15min
6. Signposting support	Pupils think about their own personal support network and record who is part of their personal network	5-10min
7. Endpoint assessment	Pupils complete sentence starters to reflect on their learning about mental health so far	5-10min
8. Extension activity	Pupils create a set of affirmations to support mental health	-

Baseline assessment



Sentence starters (1)



Ensure this activity is completed before delivering the lesson.

Display the following sentence starters on the flipchart or interactive whiteboard. Pupils complete the sentences individually, writing down their responses:

- A time when someone's mental health might be affected is...
- The person might feel...
- Something the person can do to help themselves is...
- Something someone else can do is...

The purpose of this activity is to enable you to find out pupils' existing knowledge and attitudes. Whilst they are working, do not to prompt them in any way. When complete, ensure pupils write their name at the top of their paper. Collect in and note any responses and any misconceptions that need addressing through the lesson.

Core activities



Situations: What can affect mental wellbeing?



Establish or reinforce existing ground rules and highlight any rules that are especially relevant to the lesson. Introduce the lesson, explaining that talking about mental health may make them think about themselves or people that they know who are experiencing a difficult time with their feelings or emotions. Remind pupils of the people in school that they can talk to if they are concerned.

Read the following scenario to the class:

A few weeks ago Sasha's mum explained there were going to be some changes coming...

Sasha's family moved house to a completely new area. Sasha had to leave the local street-dance club and start a new school as well. Sasha feels terribly lonely and doesn't know anyone in the new area – everyone seems to have their friendship groups already and Sasha's mum is always busy. Sasha is spending more and more time alone and feels like things will never change.

Pupils discuss how this situation might affect Sasha's mental health and wellbeing (feelings and emotions).

Pupils work in groups to think of other times in people's lives that might affect their feelings and emotions, such as: parent starting a new job, death of a pet/close relative, new baby brother/sister, tests or exams, argument with a friend, a marriage or divorce.

Pupils consider how these times might affect their feelings and emotions, and record their ideas using **Resource 1: Life events grid**, completing the first two columns (left and middle) only.



Conflicting emotions

Reflect with the class, that sometimes life events can prompt mixed-up or conflicting feelings; people can feel lots of different emotions all at once. Pupils share examples from the previous activity.



Timeline: Emotions change over time



Discuss how different feelings grow, change, pass or get stronger with time. In pairs, pupils consider how the situation and Sasha's feelings might change over time and record their ideas using **Resource 2a: Emotions timeline**. Compare responses.

Support:



Pupils can use **Resource 2b: Emotions timeline with suggestions** which has been partly completed for them.

Challenge



Pupils may be able to give other examples of similar situations and explain how the feelings change over time.



Supporting mental wellbeing at challenging times



You may wish to refer to **Resource 1a: Mental health thermometer** from lesson 1. Explain that there are likely to be times like this (change, challenge, excitement or difficulty) in everybody's life, when feelings and emotions can result in mental health moving up the thermometer to the 'struggling' or 'unwell' areas, so learning how to manage them is important.

Display **Resource 3: Helpful for mental health list** (which includes suggestions from lesson one) explaining that these ideas may help to keep someone in the 'healthy' – 'struggling' areas, although pupils may also have different or other suggestions.

Pupils suggest what will help Sasha manage the current situation. For example, they might suggest: keeping a diary of feelings; talking to Mum about it; talking to a teacher; joining a school-club to make some new friends; going for a walk in the new area; thinking positively about the future and remembering that this feeling will pass.

Pupils go back to their groups to complete the third column (right) of **Resource 1: Life events grid**, consider which strategies might best help a person in each of the situations. Share ideas and responses.

Challenge



Pupils respond to the requests for advice (**Resource 4: Advice cards**) to help the characters manage the challenging time they are experiencing.

Plenary/ Assessment of learning



Signposting support: personal networks



Reiterate that anyone's mental health can be affected at different times in their lives and times of change, challenge or difficult events do not always cause or lead to a mental health concern. Sometimes nothing in particular happens to cause a mental health concern – moving in to the struggling and unwell areas; feelings can seem to develop without a specific cause. But, that if people are worried they can get help and advice and knowing you have a support network of people you can trust and turn to when needed, is helpful to remember, and may help to keep someone's mental health in the healthy and coping areas.

Explain that Sasha has been thinking of who is in their support network. It includes: Mum, step-dad Billy, Uncle Joe, Granny Mack, best friends – Mylo and Robyn, teacher – Ms Williams, plus the children's websites/helplines such as Childline www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111

On a piece of plain A4 paper, ask pupils to write their own name about a third of the way down and underline it with a long line, so their name is in the middle and the line goes across the page.

Ask pupils to think quietly about their own support network and to add initials, a symbol or picture to represent each person or group of people they are thinking about under the line their name is sitting on. This is so that they do not publicly identify individuals and are not 'put on the spot' in naming others, for example if one family member or friend is a greater support than another.

They should put the people who they feel are the greatest source of support closest to the line and the more indirect/distant people further down the page.

Pupils can keep their personal network sheets to refer to in future.



Endpoint Assessment: Sentence starters (2)

Display the following sentence starters on the flipchart or interactive whiteboard. Pupils complete the sentences individually, writing down their responses in the light of their learning:

- *Before this lesson, I didn't know mental health...*
- *Something else I have learned about mental health is...*
- *These lessons helped me to think about...*
- *Something I will do following these lesson is...*
- *Something I would like to know more about is...*

Collect in the pupil responses and use these to help assess their progress and any future learning needs.

Extension activity

Affirmations for mental health

Explain that affirmations are statements or phrases which can help people to manage their feelings and emotions. Affirmations help people to focus on the positive aspects of themselves and can be used as self-talk to manage feelings or thoughts. They can be especially useful at times of change and challenge.

(Cont.)

Ask pupils to compose a short set of affirmations which could be used to support mental wellbeing at different times, e.g. 'I always try my best', 'Every day I am getting better at 'x', 'I can ask for help if I am feeling worried'.....

These can be written on post-its and displayed on mirrors/bedroom wall, diaries and places where people will see them during the day.