

## **Mental Health lessons for Key Stage 1**

### **Ground Rules/ Group Agreement Example**

Additional rules may be added or existing ones adapted to ensure the groups achieve ownership of the ground rules.

It is advisable to revisit the ground rules at the start of every lesson to enable pupils to feel safe and therefore able to contribute to discussions and activities and gain more from the sessions.

### **For Key Stage 1**

- Listen to the person who is speaking
- Don't laugh at other people
- Be thoughtful and kind to others
- Try to understand we are all different
- Accept other people's opinions and views
- Treat everyone with respect
- Concentrate on your learning
- Don't interrupt when someone is speaking
- Be honest and not to cover up the truth

### **Introduction**

Start the session by explaining we are going to talk about health and all sorts of things associated with it.

Ask the group in a "hands up" from the rug moment

What is health? - What does it mean to them as an individual take feedback and write the words on the board.

Then ask the class what the word "mental" means to them and again write this down, encourage them to come up with as many words as they can.

Explore with the class what the words they have shared mean then go on to ask them to complete the next task.

Draw and write activity exploring health and mental health.....

Give the children large pieces of paper and ask them to draw a person who is healthy and one who is not. Gingerbread people templates may be used and examples provided to encourage them to get started. The teacher can make suggestions as to how a healthy person might look, eg smiling, standing upright, perhaps with some sunshine in the background. They might be running or being active in some other way. They could be seen eating a healthy piece of fruit.

The alternative unhealthy picture might be a person in the rain, crying and all alone.



Unhealthy Bodies

Healthy



# Key stage 1 All About Me

1. My favourite food is.....

2. I am happy when.....

3. I am angry when.....

4. I am good at.....

5. I persevere at.....

6. I don't like it when.....

The Children could also be asked to bring in a photograph of themselves to show to the class and use for future activities

What is Happening & How I Feel?	Evening	Morning	Afternoon
 			
 			

The idea behind this activity is that the message centre's on not what happens to you but how you feel about it. The teacher could provide an activity highlighting something they find enjoyable, this might be singing or dancing? Another person might not enjoy this and feel uneasy or even sad at the thought.

The exercise encourages reflection on times that were a pleasure and those which might have brought pain. Again this emphasises how whilst you can be upset over something the feeling passes and we all ride the ups and down. It also gives you an opportunity to relive something which made you smile or laugh out loud and enjoy that feeling again.

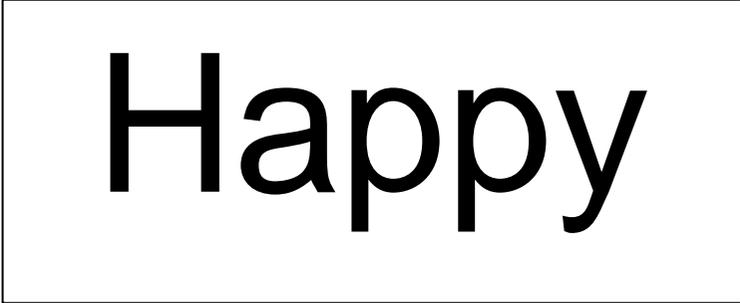
The class are asked to write or draw in each column to show what happened to them over the last 48 hours and particularly if this made them smile or feel sad or angry. The teacher then facilitates feedback and the class are encouraged to share what they have written or drawn.

## Mental Health Continuum

The teacher introduces the idea of the continuum and explains we are all on it. The question is where in terms of our vulnerability or resilience. For younger children this would mean if we get easily upset or laugh off a setback. The children are encouraged to consider what might place them in a particular place on the continuum and then given some examples and asked to form a line which represents the continuum. For key stage 1 the word vulnerability and resilience will be replaced with “Happy or Sad”

### Examples might include:

1. Death of a pet.
2. Going swimming after school
3. Visiting Grandma
4. Having favourite dinner
5. Playing on a new game
6. Watching a favourite programme
7. Reading a new book
8. Listening to music
9. Riding your bike
10. Learning some new spellings
11. Being told off
12. Falling out with your friend
13. Being left out of a game
14. Falling over and hurting yourself
15. Feeling embarrassed
16. Being laughed at
17. Having your hard work recognised
18. Being praised to helping out
19. Feeling unwell
20. Not being listened to
21. Struggling with my work
22. Choosing to do something



Happy



Sad

The teacher asks the class to think of words for feelings for the whole alphabet. This could contain a competition element in terms of how many words they can think of. Depending on the mood they are currently experiencing this will influence their answers

The teacher could develop this activity further by asking the children to demonstrate or give examples of when they had those feelings. What it was that contributed to the situation and it is useful to highlight we all have the right to our feelings and they are different for each individual person and each individual situation

### A – Z of feelings

Angry  
Brave  
Calm  
Determined  
Emotional  
Frightened  
Generous  
Helpful  
Interested  
Jittery  
Knowledgeable  
Loving  
Mean  
Nice  
Open  
Pain  
Responsible  
Sad  
Tired  
Upset  
Vicious  
Worried  
eXtra  
Yuck  
Zany



Younger groups could be asked to design a poster to promote positive mental health

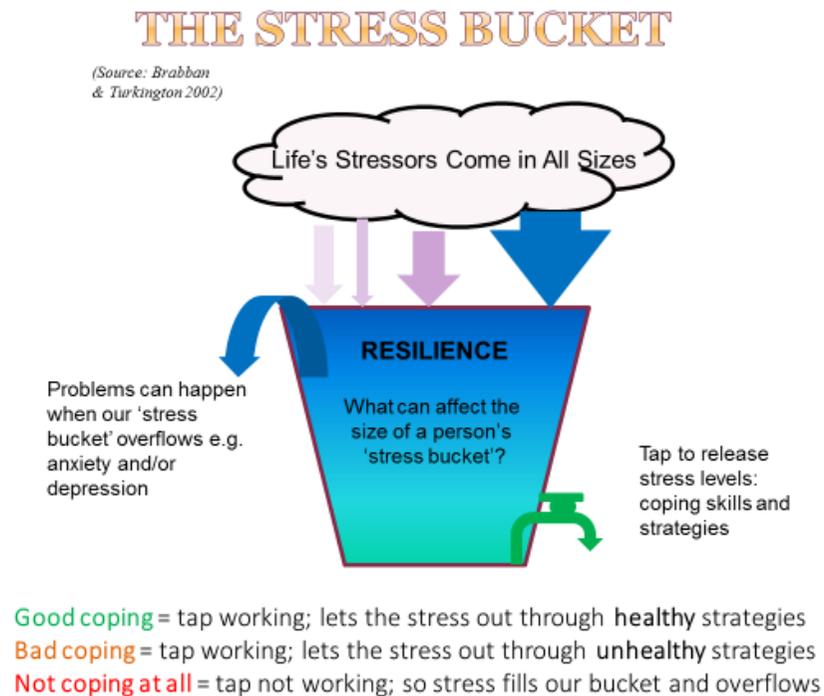
Key stage 1 might be able to produce a poster to show what feeling good looks like?



## We all have a Stress Bucket?

### Introduction

The group are asked to consider what stress means to them. For younger groups this would be talking about worries or “uh oh” feelings they are encouraged to talk about whether all stress is bad for you. When the term anxiety is used it can have a negative effect upon people although it is important to realise that some anxiety may be helpful and that it is completely normal. The teacher introduces the idea of a stress bucket to the class. Essentially as the diagram illustrates stress flows into our buckets and unless we find ways of coping then the bucket overflows and we become unwell.



## **Resources**

- Small plastic or metal buckets
- Scrap paper
- Post-its and flip chart
- Pens

## **Aims:**

- To consider what stress is and how it affects individuals
- To explore and list the protective factors that influence wellbeing
- To understand more about resilience and what might promote it to reduce problems.

## **Method**

The idea is that pupils explore what increases their levels of stress. They are encouraged to write them down and place them in the buckets. Students are reminded of the ground rules to ensure safety and advised that whatever they write on the paper that goes into the buckets will not be read by school staff.

## **Activity**

When the buckets are full students are asked how they felt completing the activity. Reflecting upon how cathartic the exercise is to offload your worries and dispose of them. They are then provided with post-its and asked to write down suggestions of coping strategies. This might mirror their own chosen preferences or ideas they would like to try or have heard about. Flip chart sheets are pinned up around the class and students are encouraged to stick their positive coping strategies on the sheets to enable everyone to look at them and make other suggestions. The teacher might like to collate all the ideas and reproduce them for students to remind them of ways of coping?

## Discussion

The teacher facilitates discussion around what are the factors that influence young people to determine if there are common themes. This also provides an opportunity to emphasize the importance of talking to someone if you are worried or feeling stressed and will be continued in the next session. It is also useful to point out that if students are concerned about a friend then perhaps they could talk to someone about that too as this may prove very helpful. Some people find it easy to talk about their problems whilst others find it very difficult and can find having an advocate incredibly helpful. It also provides the opportunity for the teacher to highlight how early intervention helps and that people do not access support for a number of reasons. The class could be encouraged to explore these.

For key stage 1 we could offer examples such as:

Being left out

Being told off

Getting changed for PE

Etc .....

## **What Keeps us Well?**

The group are asked to consider what keeps us well and if there is a particular order of importance, eg arrange the following in priority order.....

**Talking about worries to someone you trust**

**Taking regular exercise**

**Meeting up with friends**

**Being kind to yourself**

**Being kind to others**

**Doing something you enjoy**

**Getting enough sleep**

**Focusing on the positive**

For key stage 1 ask the class what they need to keep them well and happy?

Suggestions might include:

Having enough to eat and not being hungry

### Activity on what is helpful and what is not

The group are asked to arrange the following statements under the headings

#### **Helpful**

**Maintaining a routine**

**Going for a walk**

**Talking about your worries**

**Writing down things you have to be grateful for**

**Doing something you enjoy**

**Letting go of what makes you sad**

**Being kind to someone else**

#### **Unhelpful**

**Getting angry**

**Avoiding situations**

**Staying in your room alone**

**Hurting yourself**

**Picking Arguments**

**Crying**

For key stage 1 the teacher can ask the group for examples this will ensure we have language that is suitable for them



