



World Mental Health Day

Assembly summary

Aim

- To increase awareness of the importance of mental health
- To offer advice from young people on how they recognise difficult times and take steps to improve their own mental health.

Context

World Mental Health Day is held on **10 October** every year. It supports mental awareness and education to fight stereotypes and the social stigma attached to mental health issues.

The video explores the following:

- The opinions of four young people who talk honestly about mental health, including the following:
 - The importance of talking about mental health
 - Recognising the signs when we struggle
 - What support they would appreciate from others
 - How to talk to friends and family
 - The positive effect of activity on mental health
 - Advice for dealing with long-term concerns.

This video can be used as part of an assembly or classroom discussion. It includes elements of the following curriculum standards:

English National Curriculum

- KS3 and KS4: Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society
- PSHE/RSE notes: Health and well-being; mental health
- OFSTED: Children's welfare and well-being.

Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

- Health and Well-being: Mental, emotional, social and physical well-being; planning for choices and changes; food and health; substance misuse; relationships
- Social Studies: People, place and environment.

Northern Ireland National Curriculum

- KS3: Learning for Life and Work: Personal development: self-awareness and personal health
- KS4: Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

Curriculum for Wales (CfW)

- Learning Purposes: Healthy, confident individuals who: are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy; apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives; know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well; take measured decisions about lifestyle and manage risk; form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect; face and overcome challenge, have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can
- Areas of Learning and Experience: Health and well-being.

Possible discussion points before watching the video

Prepare students in advance about the assembly, making sure they are aware of the sensitive nature of the content themes

The emphasis should always be on developing pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, language and confidence to seek support, as needed, for themselves or others. They should understand when to seek help, what help is available, and the likely outcome of seeking support

It is also advisable for the teacher to reassure there are people to talk to in the school, reinforce the message of the safeguarding team and who to go to if they want more information or support

Reassure students that they will not be expected to talk about themselves or their own concerns. This is an opportunity to take on board general advice about supporting others and thinking about their own mental health.

Ask students if they are aware of World Mental Health Day; students may not have heard of it.

Introduce key terminology, including:

- **stigma:** when people judge or shame someone for their mental health, making them feel embarrassed or afraid to speak up.
- **discrimination:** when someone is treated unfairly or badly because of who they are or what they are dealing with.
- **anxiety:** feeling very worried or nervous, especially when things feel stressful or out of control.
- **procrastination:** putting things off or delaying tasks, even when you know you should do them.

Possible discussion questions after watching the video

Do we talk enough about mental health?

What more could schools do to support students?

Are parents/carers/guardians aware of mental health issues that might impact on young people?

How can we remove the negative associations of talking about mental health?

Activity ideas

Students could design a poster about World Mental Health Day.

Students could create a list of tips (in the form of a flyer, email, text message, social media post or media recording) to share with all students about how to manage their own mental health

Divide the class into groups to discuss the stigma and discrimination of talking about mental health issues

Students could plan their own personal self care kit of things to do which would support on any day they struggle

Students could research mental health support in their school/community by pinning on a map: both helpful services and safe spaces and areas where more support is needed

Schools could invite local councillors/MPs/Mayors in to show and to pitch for more spending around mental health issues.

The following links could be used as research or provided to students after the assembly.

[BBC Bitesize 'Five tips to reduce overwhelm for World Mental Health Day'](#)

[BBC Bitesize 'Mental Health and Well-being – Teaching Resources'](#)

[How to have conversations about mental health](#)

[World Mental Health Day Website](#)

[Childline](#)

[Mind 'World Mental Health Day'](#)

The BBC cannot be held responsible for the content or reliability of external links.

Possible assembly framework (Hall or classroom)

1. Entry

A calming piece of music could be played, setting a positive environment.

2. Introduction

Potential starting questions:

- What is it like if we are having a bad day (in respect to a school day) [Ask for responses.]
- What are some of the stresses young people have today? [Ask for responses.]
- Do students think the attitude to mental health has changed over the last ten years? [Ask for responses.]

3. Play the video

The final words are: '...that it's gonna be, it's gonna be alright'.

The duration is: 4min 16 secs

4. After the video – time to talk

An opportunity to discuss pupils' responses to the film. See above.

Some initial reaction questions to the video may include:

- Why might someone not want to ask for help?
- Do you have any tips for physical activity to change how we are feeling, for example, going for a run or a walk?
- What impact do smartphones and social media have on our mental health?
- Do your friends know they can talk to you if they want to? [This does not need responses from students.]

5. Closing the assembly

Some reflections on the comments made in the video and mental health in general:

- Did you find some of the advice useful in this video? [Ask for hands up.]
- What help and support do you think are, and could be, the most useful? [Ask for responses.]
- Name a job linked to supporting mental health. [Ask for responses.]
- A moment of quiet reflection could be added if appropriate.

6. Music

You could play suitable music as pupils leave in silence.