Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

Mental Health Awareness Week

Looking after our mental health: music for self-care

Assembly plan

Age group: Primary

Timing: 20 minutes

To note: This year, the theme of Mental Health Awareness Week is loneliness. To mark this, the following assembly plan will explore loneliness and the practical steps pupils can take to look after their mental health.

There are several points in the assembly when it would be helpful to hear thoughts from pupils. We have included notes below to support with some of these questions.

If you are delivering this assembly virtually, it may be difficult to gain live feedback and be interactive with the children. It could be useful to gain some ideas from pupils prior to the assembly so that you can share them whilst presenting; for example, slide 13 could be an opportunity to exhibit how some children make themselves feel better if feeling sad or lonely.

Idea for further development: If you want to develop this assembly further, you could play a song or piece of music as the pupils enter and settle into assembly; additionally, a live music performance from pupils or staff members could be added.

Resources:

- Projector, screen and sound
- "Drumming and self-care" video link (open and ready)
- Music for self-care: Assembly PowerPoint for Primary (open and ready)

Slide no.	Teacher presentation/discussion points
1.	• This week we will be celebrating Mental Health Awareness Week - the theme this year is loneliness. This week is a time for us to think about our feelings and those of others. It is also an opportunity to talk about the things we can do if we feel sad, lonely or worried.
2.	• In this assembly, we will learn about: - the difference between physical and mental health - some ideas of things you can do if you feel lonely, sad or worried

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	- how some people use music to be more mentally healthy.
3.	• As lots of us know, physical health is the health of our bodies. Looking after our physical health includes regular exercise, eating a balanced diet and getting enough rest, brushing our teeth, drinking lots of water.
4.	• What do we mean by mental health? Gather ideas from a few children. • Share definition - Mental health is about our feelings, our thoughts, our emotions, and our moods. Looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health. • One of the most important things to know about mental health is that we all have it. It is different to our physical health as we can't always see it in the same way that we can see a broken leg.
5.	• I am going to show you some pictures of two children, and I would like you to think about how they are feeling. • On your own, think about or tell the person next to you what emotions the child in the picture might be experiencing. • Gather ideas from a few children, asking some follow up questions. Why do you think that? How do you know? What might be making them feel like that? What do you think could make them feel better? What do you think they should do? What would you do if they were a child in your class?
6.	• Now let's look at a different picture. • Encourage pupils to think how about the child in the picture, asking questions such as how are they feeling? How can you tell? What is different here? What is the same? What do you think they are thinking about?
7.	• We've looked at two pictures of children who were both alone. One child was sad being alone, we could say they felt lonely. The other child seemed happy or content to be alone. Sometimes being alone makes us sad, sometimes being alone makes us happy. Being alone is not the same as being lonely. In fact, at times being alone is healthy for us because it allows us to do things on our own that make us feel good.
8.	• At times our feelings make sense to us because we understand what caused them, for example you may feel excited because it is nearly your birthday or tired because you woke up early.
9.	• But occasionally we can experience feelings that we can't explain, which may come and go. Sometimes there aren't any obvious reasons why we feel the way we do. For example, we can feel lonely even when we are with friends.

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	• Explain that this can happen to anyone from time-to-time, and these feelings don't usually hang around too long. Part of being mentally healthy is knowing some things we can do to take care of ourselves when difficult emotions come up.
10.	• Here are some things that people do on their own that make them feel happy and mentally healthy. • Explain how some of the ideas on the slide can help us, for example exercise helps us to feel good as our brains releases a hormone called serotonin which improves our mood. Reading a book allows us to use our imagination and learn more about the world. Drawing or painting can support us to feel calm and concentrate as we use different colours and materials to create something beautiful.
11.	• Music is also an activity that many people enjoy doing on their own and with others. For many people, if they feel worried or sad, listening to or playing music can help them manage these emotions. This may be because it allows them to think about something different for a while or just because the music itself makes them feel good.
12.	• We are now going to watch a video where children, a teacher and professional musicians will show us some simple drumming rhythms and talk about how music can be used to be more mentally healthy. • Watch "Drumming and self-care" video [2:12 mins].
13.	• Now we have heard from people about how playing music makes them feel good, can you think of a few things that you could do if you are feeling lonely, worried or sad? What could you do if you notice a friend is lonely in the playground? • Gather ideas from a few children.
14.	• If you are having difficult emotions or are worried about a friend, it is important to let a trusted adult know. • In our school, you can talk to… [fill this section in with support options in your school].
15.	• End the assembly with a positive message - reminding pupils that we all have mental health, and even if we are sometimes feeling lonely it doesn't mean that we are alone.

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