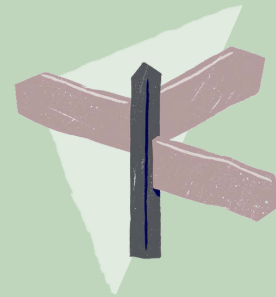


# Good Thinking: An Introduction to Mental Health and Wellbeing for Secondary School Pupils



## Teacher Notes and Lesson Pack Overview

This flexible lesson pack has been developed to use with young people aged 11 – 18, utilising high-quality resources created by mental health professionals.

We have created a resource that is easy to access and tailor to the needs of your pupils. You can cover the full content or dip into the sections that you feel your pupils will benefit from the most at any given time.

Open discussion with young people about their mental health and wellbeing, and advice on how they can look after it is crucial, equipping them with coping strategies and resilience to navigate the modern world and its many challenges.

Discussing mental health and wellbeing can be a sensitive topic, and while encouraging openness and awareness is beneficial to addressing stigmas and discrimination, it is also advisable to use distancing techniques in these lessons. This ensures that, unless they wish to, students don't feel that they must discuss their emotions or personal experiences in front of their peers.

### Curriculum coverage

The content has been created to support statutory health education objectives.

### Mental wellbeing

Pupils should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary; that happiness is linked to being connected to others;
- how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns;
- common types of mental ill health (e.g. anxiety and depression);
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health;
- the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness.

### Health and prevention

Pupils should know:

- the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn.

Pupils should be taught:

- how to judge when they, or someone they know, needs support and where they can seek help if they have concerns. This should include details on which adults in school (e.g. school nurses), and externally can help.

## What this lesson pack contains

This introductory pack covers:

- What we mean by the term 'mental wellbeing'
- Attitudes towards mental wellbeing and mental health issues
- Common challenges that people experience with their mental wellbeing
- The aspects of everyday life that might pose a risk to our mental wellbeing
- Different thinking styles and unhelpful thoughts
- Coping strategies for dealing with challenges
- The five ways to wellbeing: connect with others, keep learning, be active, give to others, and take notice
- The power of rest, sleep and diet to support mental wellbeing
- Spotting the signs of mental ill-health
- Seeking support

We have included resources (or links to resources) from the [Good Thinking website](#), where you can find a wealth of resources to support mental health and wellbeing. The site hosts resources specifically aimed at young people and students.

We have also included resources (or links to resources) from our partner work with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). [Every Mind Matters](#) provides support for teachers delivering lessons on mental wellbeing.

The pack comprises:

- A PowerPoint presentation
- Lesson Plans
- Accompanying activities to use with pupils in the lessons

## How to use the lesson pack

We have designed this lesson pack to be flexible, enabling teachers to use it however works best in their setting.

You might choose to cover everything in the lesson pack, in order, and engage learners in the activities as suggested. You may wish to cover all the content in the pack but in a different order, using alternative accompanying activities that you feel are suited to your learners' needs.

You may have already covered certain content with your learners, so may wish to omit some elements covered in this pack. It may also be that you wish to cover certain aspects in more depth with your learners and spend longer on certain topics. Where relevant, we have included suggestions for further activities so that you can explore a subject in more depth with your class.

At the end of each section in the PowerPoint presentation, you'll find a slide containing a relevant quote. This slide signifies the end of that lesson and can be used with students to reflect on what they have learnt. You may also wish to print these quote slides out and display them in school.

## Terminology and definitions

In this resource pack, we have carefully chosen the terminology to be used when discussing this topic. It is important to use vocabulary and explanations that will support students' understanding and mitigate misconceptions and stigmas associated with mental health.

**Mental wellbeing** – A person's emotional, psychological and social state that impacts how they think, feel and behave. Everyone has mental wellbeing, and we can all put protective factors in place to support positive mental wellbeing.

**Mental health condition** – A diagnosed or undiagnosed condition that affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. A person may receive treatment to manage the symptoms of their mental health condition.

**Anxiety** – A feeling of unease or nervousness, such as worry, fear or dread, that can be mild or severe. Anxiety is a common mental wellbeing challenge.

**Stress** – The body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure; when we are stressed our body releases a hormone called adrenaline. Stress is a common mental wellbeing challenge.

**Low mood** – Feeling sad or not enjoying things as much as usual. Long-term, persistent low mood may be diagnosed as depression. Low mood is a common mental wellbeing challenge.

**Depression** – We have chosen not to refer to depression in these packs, as this is a diagnosed mental health condition that may require treatment such as therapy and/or medication. Depression is less common than anxiety, stress and low mood.

**Challenges or difficulties** – We have chosen to use the terms 'mental health challenges' or 'difficulties', rather than the term 'problems' to avoid the negative connotations of mental health conditions.

**Risks and triggers** – We have chosen to use the terms 'risks' and 'triggers', rather than the term 'threats' when referring to things that can influence our mental health, as a softer way of discussing the topic.

**Thinking styles** – We have used the term 'thinking styles' to refer to the way a person's natural predisposition impacts how they process information. A range of thinking styles and their effects are discussed in these resources.

## Signposting and additional supporting resources

It is important to know where to go for additional information and support, for educators and pupils. Consider your school's provision and ensure students are fully aware of the support available.

## Information and support

**Anxiety UK** – A charity providing support for people living with anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression.

**Mental Health Foundation** – Information about mental health.

**mind.org.uk** - A charity focusing on mental health.

**Rethink Mental Illness** – Offering advice, information and training about mental illness.

**SANE** – Information and guidance on mental illness.

**Young Minds** – Mental health support, training and resources for young people, parents and professionals.

## Helplines

[C.A.L.L.](#) – A listening and support service for people living in Wales.

[Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\)](#) - A service providing someone to talk to during the evenings.

[The Mix](#) – Support for people under 25, via their website of text messages.

[National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK](#) – A supportive listening service for anyone with thoughts of suicide.

[NHS urgent mental health helplines](#) – Urgent mental health support in England.

[NHS 111 Wales](#) – Urgent mental health support in Wales.

[Papyrus](#) – Support for people under 35 who are struggling with suicidal feelings.

[Samaritans](#) – A service where you can talk about anything that's upsetting you.

[SANEline](#) – Support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

[Shout](#) – A texting service for when you prefer not to talk.

[Switchboard](#) – Support for people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

