

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

## Lesson plan 4: Mental wellbeing: risks and triggers

### Lesson objectives

- To recognise common problems and challenges people face and experiences that may impact a person's mental wellbeing.
- To know 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.
- To appreciate the negative impacts that time spent online and on social media can have on our mental wellbeing.

### Resources needed

- PowerPoint presentation
- Slips of paper or sticky notes
- Triggers and Responses activity sheet

Information and guidance	Activity
Explain that events and circumstances in life can present risks relating to our mental health and wellbeing. These will impact individuals in different ways because we are all unique. Learn about the risk factors that can influence how we perceive and deal with challenges in life, meaning some people may be more prone to struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.	Ask students to consider how a person who associates with one or more of these risks might look to protect their mental health and wellbeing.
Help students to appreciate that what is challenging for one person to cope with may not impact another person so significantly. Ensure they are respectful of each other's suggestions when they discuss events or circumstances that might trigger a person to experience challenges with their mental wellbeing. Students can jot ideas down on sticky notes or you could use a digital collaborative whiteboard app.	In groups, students can discuss, jot down, then share examples of events or circumstances that could be a threat to a person's mental wellbeing.
Learn about protective factors: things we can all do to protect our mental health and wellbeing, meaning we are more able to cope when things happen that pose a risk.	Ask students to reflect on protective factors they employ and whether they could do more to protect their mental wellbeing.
Consider the way most people currently live their lives and how this can impact people's mental health and wellbeing. Encourage students to share their thoughts on how modern life can challenge our mental wellbeing, ensuring all suggestions are valued. Issues mentioned are likely to include: school pressures relating to workload and exams, difficulties with relationships, bullying, family and home-life difficulties, social media, changes to structure, routines and surroundings, and new experiences.	Students can suggest common pressures people face today, especially young people, without the need for sharing anything personal.

Information and guidance	Activity
<p>Using the <b>Triggers and Responses activity sheet</b>, explore examples of things that could trigger a person to feel anxious, stressed or experience low mood. Remind students that their responses are personal to them, and that answering honestly will help them to consider how they react to these triggers. However, their responses reflect how they are feeling right now, and this can change; at certain times, we may be more resilient or better at coping with challenges than at other times.</p> <p>Discuss making healthy choices and consider the examples in the PowerPoint. Remind students that we all have different methods for coping but that some responses are generally considered better for our mental health and wellbeing than others.</p>	<p>Students work individually to complete the quiz activity.</p> <p>Students suggest how the person in each scenario could respond. This discussion could take place in groups or as a whole class.</p>

Suggestions for further activities
<p>'Every Mind Matters' NHS-approved resources are available on the topics <b><u>Bullying and cyberbullying</u></b>, <b><u>Social media</u></b>, <b><u>Online stress and FOMO</u></b>, <b><u>Exam stress</u></b>, <b><u>Body image in a digital world</u></b> and <b><u>Dealing with change</u></b>. These might be useful to further explore some of the issues discussed in this lesson in more depth. The resources include lesson plans, PowerPoints and videos to help students explore and discuss each subject.</p>