UPS AND DOWNS OF THE DAY

1 hour

Create a safe and positive learning environment by agreeing ground rules for the lesson.

It may help if the teacher does this activity for themselves before doing this exercise with the class, this would help to see the range of issues that can affect emotional health and provide some possible examples for the class to consider.

In this lesson we will learn:

- that emotional health can and does vary over time
- that everyone is different and that feelings are normal and ok
- to recognise that everyone has emotional health
- some things that can improve your emotional health.

Resources

- Ups and downs of the day slide
- time graphs blank (handout)
- objects to make a real see-saw or 'Seesaw' slide Sam's story script
- white board
- first aid box handout.

Digital resources

- First aid audio
- Sam's morning video.

The short session 'What is emotional health?' can be used as a starter for this session.

Activity

1. Watch the video clip 'Sam's morning' or read the script to the class. Identify some of the things that happened that affected how Sam felt. Ask the class to think about whether it would make any difference what had happened the day or week before as to how Sam felt now? Look at the blank timeline on the board and draw in Sam's morning, drawing a line to show how he was feeling through the morning. Encourage the class to share feeling words and write these down (you will need to go with some assumptions as we won't know everything that is going on for the character).

2. Ask the class to think about a recent day and record it according to what happened and how they felt, as far as they feel comfortable to do so.

3. Ask students to share their graphs with someone nearby if they feel comfortable to. What do they notice? Feed back as a class – were any identical? Why not? Emphasise that even if we had had identical days we would experience them differently because we are unique. Everything that happened to us yesterday, last year, or years ago can have an impact on how we feel about things that happen on a day-to-day basis and that is ok. Moving up and down through a day is normal. If we don't move up at all then we need to talk to someone and seek support with this.

4. What issues affected our emotional health? Explain that our health is a bit like a seesaw. Look at the seesaw slide and discuss the different things that may put us off balance? What could go on the side that helps us cope well, our protective factors? And what might go on the struggling to cope with side or risk factors?

   Ask students for examples to go on either side. Show how things can be kept in balance by having ways of coping and things that make us feel happy to balance out things that we find difficult, our risk factors. If the seesaw stays down on this side it may be a sign that someone needs support to help them get things back in balance.

   Note: we are all different and how we react to things around us is dependent on many factors. We may be physically healthy – this doesn't mean we are emotionally healthy. Things will happen to us all that can knock us off balance and we all find different ways of coping.

5. Remind the class that emotional health is about how we think and feel. It is about our sense of wellbeing, our ability to cope with life events and the ability to acknowledge our own emotions, as well as those of others. Emotional health means we can find ways of helping our line stay steady and our life stay in balance. When someone feels down too long or is not able to experience positive feelings, that's when they need help and support to feel better. We can't all feel good all the time either. Knowing that going up and down is entirely normal is important. It's also important to know that it's not normal to stay in one place – for example, down all the time – and getting help can mean that you feel more positive again.

6. Listen to the 'First Aid box' audio. Ask students to recall what Naomi put in her box as her emergency first aid (Note: You could also provide an example of what you would put in yours). Ask students to consider what they can put in theirs. Hand out first aid box sheets and ask students to fill in their boxes. Encourage them to take this home and make a box.

Reflection

What does this mean for me, what did I learn about myself?

It's alright not to feel great all the time.

Links to: Talking about depression | Expressing feelings | Supporting a friend | Managing stress | Coping with change

Learning journey: building resilience: Ups and downs of the day | Expressing feelings | Managing stress making choices | Building resilience | Talking helps | Being positive

Learning journey: accessing support: Ups and downs of the day | My support network | Developing listening skills | Barriers to seeking help | Making assumptions (short) | Helping my friends

Learning journey: coping: Ups and downs of the day | My support network | Self-harm myths and facts | Supporting a friend | Open questions (short) | Coping with changes | Who are Samaritans?

Learning journey: my emotional health: Ups and downs of the day | Talking about depression | Expressing feelings (short) | Talking helps it's hard to say (short) | Finding a way forward | Positive thinking | Who are Samaritans?

Learning journey: coping with stress: Ups and downs of the day | My support network | Developing listening skills | Managing stress making choices | Aggression | Let it out

Make sure young people know what support is available and how to access this support.