

## Learning Objectives

- ✿ To understand what emotional health is, and how it may vary over time (knowledge).
- ✿ To be able to identify and put into practice protective factors that will help to maintain balance in students personal emotional health (skills).
- ✿ To challenge the stigma associated with poor emotional health, and to be able to discuss ways of maintaining good emotional health (attitudes/values).

Total Time  
**45 mins**  
**+15mins**  
extension  
activities

## Teacher's Notes

### Preparation:

- ✿ It may help to do the emotional health time line for yourself before you take this lesson. Reflect on what you have learned about your own emotional health.
- ✿ Insert photographs of celebrities onto worksheet 1.
- ✿ Photocopy both worksheets.

Ground rules: Please read this statement out at the beginning of the lesson: "In this lesson we will be covering some sensitive issues. You may be affected personally by the topic that we are discussing today, or you may know someone else who is. Please be respectful and thoughtful of others, and treat the subject responsibly.

If you would like to talk to someone after the lesson, you can go to... (please either give the contact person in the school, for example a school counsellor, or an outside number, for example Samaritans).

## Resources

- ✿ Photocopies of Worksheet 1: Rate a Celebrity – enough for each student (insert photographs of 2 current suitable celebrities before photocopying – eg a well known footballer and a pop star – 1 male, 1 female)
- ✿ Photocopies of Worksheet 2: Emotional Health Graph – enough for each student
- ✿ [optional] Post-it notes for emotional health balance line (Reflect and Discuss)
- ✿ [optional] Samaritans Emotional Health DVD – Section 1: Emotional Health Awareness
- ✿ [optional] Worksheet 3: Mini biography – photocopies for each student
- ✿ [optional] DVD Player

## Introduction

Start by defining the differences between, physical, mental and emotional health.

### Health

The World Health Organisation defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In any organism, health is the ability to efficiently respond to challenges (stressors) and effectively restore and sustain a "state of balance," known as homeostasis.

### Mental Health

This is a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life.

### Physical Health

Physical fitness is a general state of good physical health. A physically handicapped person may be physically healthy, but is likely to have less ability. Physical fitness is usually the result of regular physical activity and proper nutrition.

### Emotional Health

A person with good emotional health has the ability to express all emotions appropriately, and to maintain a balance of emotions so that negative emotions such as depression, stress, anxiety, fear and anger are not dominant.

Time  
**5 mins**



## Starter Exercise - Rate a Celebrity

10 mins



Introduce the exercise as a comparison of physical and emotional health. Someone may score highly on physical health, but low on emotional health, and vice versa.

Hand out Worksheet 1 to each student. Ask them to work in pairs.

- ✦ Ask students to rate each celebrity's physical and emotional health out of 10 on Worksheet 1.
- ✦ Ask them to write down the challenges the celebrities face and how they are coping.
- ✦ Take feedback and discuss what emotional health means. **Highlight** that we make assumptions about people's wellbeing based on their behaviour, we can never really know unless we ask them.
- ✦ Reflect that everyone faces challenges in their life and has to find their own way of coping.

## Core Activities

20 mins



### 1 Emotional Health Time Line Graph

Handout copies of Worksheet 2 to each student. Ask students fill in the self reflection time line of how they have felt over the past 6 months. Demonstrate on the board first.

- ✦ Ask students how easy or difficult they found this exercise.
- ✦ Ask students to reflect, noting that everyone has ups and downs and this is normal. Problems arise when someone feels down for too long and can't get back up. Samaritans often gets calls from people when they feel down or when they feel seriously depressed or even suicidal.
- ✦ Explain that having good emotional health doesn't mean you'll never feel bad. It means being able to recover from the downs and find your emotional balance.

### 2 Balance Line

Show students the emotional balance line on the board.

- ✦ Explain that we all fall on this continuum somewhere.
- ✦ We move along the line depending on how we're feeling.



Most of the time we're balanced somewhere in the middle. When something really good happens we're at the positive. We all face challenges in our lives, and the stress or pressure of these can push us towards the negative end.

- ✦ Emotional health is about finding positive ways to cope with challenges in our life and keeping our emotional balance.

#### Risk factors

Ask students to suggest what knocks people off balance. List these on the board.

- ✦ Negative factors could include: worrying about schoolwork, missing out on a social activity, getting a poor mark for work, feeling ill, being bullied
- ✦ Positive factors could include: sport, relaxing in front of the telly, getting homework done, socialising, a favourite lesson, weekends, being with family, sharing a problem with someone else, finishing some revision, etc.
- ✦ Protective factors: Now ask students what helps people to recover and keep their balance. Get them to write suggestions on post-it notes and stick them on a sheet at the front. Alternatively just take suggestions, and write them on the board
- ✦ Reflect that it is the little things you do everyday that help to look after your emotional balance or health, as well as the big things like trying to solve the problem or cope with difficult feelings.

## Optional Extension Activities

### 1. Samaritans DVD – Introduction to emotional health (5 mins + discussion time)

Play part 1 of the DVD – Emotional Health Awareness. Use this as a starting point to discuss what emotional health is, and how it affects people's everyday lives.

OR

### 2. Mini biography

Read out the Christopher Reeve Mini Biography. Reflect that everyone faces challenges in their life and has to find their own way of coping. Ask the students to identify the high and low points of his life, and the things that helped him to get through the worst times. Run as a whole class discussion, or use handouts for written work.

### Mini biography

Christopher Reeve was born September 25, 1952, in New York City. When he was four, his parents divorced. His mother moved with sons Christopher and Benjamin to Princeton, New Jersey, and married an investment banker a few years later. After graduating from high school, Reeve studied at Cornell University, while at the same time working as a professional actor. In his final year of university, he was one of two students selected to study at New York's famous Juilliard School of Performing Arts. His roommate was Robin Williams, who remained a life-long friend. Christopher was most well known for his role as Superman. He got the part when he was only 24. He was also a licensed pilot. Unfortunately his life took a sudden turn for the worse when he was paralyzed after a horse riding accident in 1995 aged 43. He did a lot of physiotherapy to help, but broke his leg after falling out of his wheelchair during a workout in August 2000. However, he persevered throughout this time of immense difficulty, and his autobiography, "Still Me" became a bestseller. He and his wife opened the first center in the United States devoted to teaching paralyzed people to live more independently. He said that after he was paralyzed, it was his wife's support that kept him from choosing death over living on a respirator. He died suddenly at age 52, after several years of living and working with his severe disability. He is famously quoted as saying "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

15 mins  
each  
activity



## Reflect and Discuss

- ✿ Draw together all the lessons learned today about emotional health, recapping on the differences between emotional, mental and physical health.
- ✿ Give everyone a couple of minutes to complete the definition on worksheet 2. Write on the board for them to copy.

5 mins



## Summary

Closing discussion and feedback. Check students understand what emotional health is.

- ✿ Ask if they feel confident they know how to look after their emotional health.
- ✿ Ensure that they know where to go for help either in school or out of school if they want to talk further about any issues raised.

5 mins





# WORKSHEET



## Emotional Health Awareness

### Worksheet 1 - Rate a Celebrity.

Successful, popular, rich . . . what more could anyone want?

<Insert photo of celebrity>	<Insert name>
	 Marks out of 10 for physical health?
	 Marks out of 10 for emotional health?

What challenges has this person faced?	
How do they deal with these (good or bad)?	

<Insert photo of celebrity>	<Insert name>
	 Marks out of 10 for physical health?
	 Marks out of 10 for emotional health?

What challenges has this person faced?	
How do they deal with these (good or bad)?	

# WORKSHEET

## Emotional Health Awareness

### Worksheet 2 - Emotional Health Graph

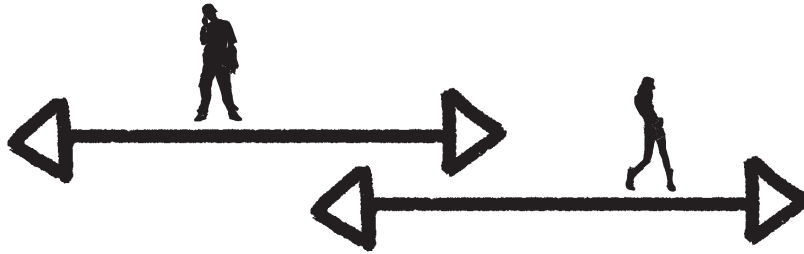
Emotional health is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emotional balance line



My last 6 months...



# WORKSHEET

## Emotional Health Awareness

### Worksheet 3 - Mini Biography

#### Superman

Christopher Reeve was born September 25, 1952, in New York City. When he was four, his parents divorced. His mother moved with sons Christopher and Benjamin to Princeton, New Jersey, and married an investment banker a few years later. After graduating from high school, Reeve studied at Cornell University, while at the same time working as a professional actor. In his final year of university, he was one of two students selected to study at New York's famous Juilliard School of Performing Arts. His roommate was Robin Williams, who remained a life-long friend. Christopher was most well known for his role as Superman. He got the part when he was only 24. He was also a licensed pilot. Unfortunately his life took a sudden turn for the worse when he was paralyzed after a horse riding accident in 1995 aged 43. He did a lot of physiotherapy to help, but broke his leg after falling out of his wheelchair during a workout in August 2000. However, he persevered throughout this time of immense difficulty, and his autobiography, "Still Me" became a bestseller. He and his wife opened the first centre in the United States devoted to teaching paralyzed people to live more independently. He said that after he was paralyzed, it was his wife's support that kept him from choosing death over living on a respirator. He died suddenly at age 52, after several years of living and working with his severe disability. He is famously quoted as saying "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

1 List the high points of Christopher Reeve's Life

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2 List the low points of his life

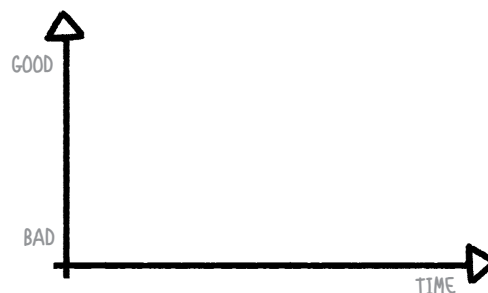
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3 Who helped him most at the low points of his life?

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4 Draw an Emotional Health graph for his life, showing the high and low points



5 What have you learned from his life?

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