The following are some exercises for staff to use to prepare to deliver the DEAL programme. Exercises can be used as part of an INSET/training day. You may wish to invite volunteers from your local Samaritans branch in to support you.

During these activities you will learn:

- What emotional health is
- The importance of exploring issues of emotional health with young people
- How to create a safe learning environment to address sensitive issues
- Strategies to help overcome concerns about teaching emotional health and wellbeing sessions
- Facts and information about young people and emotional health and wellbeing
- How Samaritans’ policies support and inform learning about emotional health
- To consider attitudes towards mental health
- How to use the DEAL resources.

The training session is divided into activities that are designed to last approximately 30 minutes. The training can be delivered in one session that should take about two hours. They are designed for staff to use as part of an INSET day or a staff meeting.

**Activity 1**

**Aims**

- To know how to create a positive and safe climate for learning.

**Resources**

- post it notes or slips of paper
- DEAL teachers’ notes

**Activity**

**Introduce DEAL**

DEAL is a Samaritans resource that is designed to support teachers to help students to:

- Develop effective communication skills, be able to listen and support others and ask for support for themselves if needed.
- Develop awareness of their own emotional health and that of others, and understand what can affect their emotional health and what they can do to maintain positive emotional health.
- Develop the skills to express emotions effectively and appropriately.
- Learn different and varied ways to cope with life’s challenges.
- Recognise that everyone experiences difficult times and that there is always a way through these times.
- Understand the benefits of talking.
Ask the participants to think about the themes and topics that are covered in DEAL. These are about emotional health, coping, difficult feelings, asking for help and developing listening skills. Many of the activities ask students to share their thoughts and ideas and cover some issues that may affect anyone in the classroom.

Tell the participants to imagine that they are a student sitting in a PSHE (or equivalent) lesson and the subject of difficult feelings is being introduced. Ask them to write down on the post it notes any concerns or fears they would have about being a part of these lessons (these same concerns and fears would probably also apply to the teacher) e.g. I’m scared that I’ll be asked about my personal life, what if I get upset? Explain that no one will be asked to read out their own ideas but that you will be collecting them in and sharing the ideas recorded. Collect in the post it notes or slips of paper and put to one side.

When teaching and learning about ourselves, in PSHE or any other curriculum subject, we need to create a safe and positive climate where it is ok for students to talk and share ideas. What can we do to enable this to happen?

- In groups of three or four, ask participants to list three ‘rules’ that they would like to set so that the session feels safe and comfortable to take part in. Allow a few minutes, then collect ideas from groups and record on a board. Merge similar responses. When everyone’s contribution has been recorded, ask if there is anything else anyone would like to add, or that they are concerned about.
- Look at each post it in turn, read it aloud and ask if the concern would be overcome by having these new ground rules in place? If yes, put to one side, if no then put back in a pile. You will come back to these.

Most concerns about taking part in these sessions would be addressed by having ground rules for everyone to agree on. It has been shown that people engage more readily when they have ownership of the rules that have been set.

- Look at the DEAL teachers’ notes – Page 2: Delivering DEAL activities
- Allow time for everyone to read through and for discussion if there is anything that they don’t agree with or are unsure of. These are suggestions from Samaritans but teachers must be clear about their schools’ own confidentiality and safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Go back to the pile of concerns that have not been addressed and talk through each issue with the group. What would help a person thinking or feeling this? Share ideas and agree on what could help. Make sure that every concern has been addressed. There may be some you need to investigate to find out the information for the next session.

Reflection

What else do I need to know so that I feel comfortable addressing emotional health in the classroom? What can I do in the classroom to make sure it feels safe for everyone?
Activity 2

Aims
- to understand what emotional health is
- to consider why we need to include it in the curriculum.

Resources
- DEAL introduction video clip
- large pieces of flipchart paper
- pens
- statements
- quiz slides or handouts

Activity
All staff activity: Where do we stand? Ask all staff to imagine a line across the classroom. At one end is ‘strongly disagree’, and the other end is ‘strongly agree’. You can label the walls if it helps. Read out each statement and ask staff to stand in the place that reflects how they feel. After each statement you can ask staff to volunteer to share why they are standing where they are, and then invite others to agree or share a different view. Staff should be encouraged to think about the benefits of learning about emotional health in the curriculum and to explore their personal views about this.

It is important that ground rules are set and followed, so that everyone feels safe to express their views.

Statements:
- If students are able to express their feelings, they are calmer and can concentrate better.
- Learning how to cope with difficult experiences is a fundamental life skill.
- Listening skills can help you become a successful employee.
- Students are here to learn, not to talk about how they feel.
- We should only be teaching emotional health to the few that really need it.
- Depression is just having a bad day.
- Young people cannot learn if they are unable to express how they feel.
- Aggression and violence are often a result of poor emotional health.
- Resilience is a state of mind – it cannot be taught.
- Young people need to learn facts, not social skills.
- Teachers should not be asked to cover such issues with young people.
- If students do not learn coping strategies, they may end up with long term mental health issues.
- Teachers who have mental health issues cannot teach about wellbeing to students.
- Suicide prevention is not the responsibility of schools.

Ask staff to work in pairs and think of ten things that affect students’ ability to learn at school. Allow a few minutes for this. Then ask them to repeat this for ten things that help students concentrate, learn and achieve at school. Now ask each pair to go through their list and underline all the answers that they think relate to emotional health or wellbeing. Feed these back and record them on flipchart paper so everyone can see.
Watch the DEAL introduction video clip. Allow time for reflection in pairs. Does everyone agree with what the young people are saying?

In groups of three or four, ask participants to draw a picture of someone who is healthy on a large piece of paper. Ask them to draw what the person’s body may be like and use words and drawings around the body to describe what that person does, likes, thinks, feels and how they behave. Allow ten minutes for this.

Then ask each group to highlight those characteristics that they think are to do with emotional health. They could colour code one colour for physical health and one for emotional health.

Ask the groups to consider whether they, as adults, would describe these things in the same way that teenagers would. Can they select the three most important things that contribute towards positive emotional health? Go from group to group, asking them to feed back their thoughts and ideas. Ask the group to consider (but not share) something that they are very good at doing that contributes towards their emotional health, and something that they could consider doing more/less of that would have a positive effect on their emotional health.

Share Samaritans’ definition of emotional health:

Emotional health is about how we think and feel. It is about our sense of wellbeing, our ability to cope with life events and how we acknowledge our own emotions as well as those of others.

Is this a definition that everyone is happy with? Discuss.

Why do we need emotional health in the curriculum? Ask staff to work in pairs and complete the quiz sheet, either using slides or the handout. Go through each answer and explanation. Give out prizes if you like.

Did any of the answers surprise anyone? Has anyone changed their opinions on the earlier statements now?

Are there any other questions about any of these issues? These could be recorded to discuss at the next session. An anonymous system could be offered for staff to ask questions or raise issues, such as a suggestion box.

Make sure that the emotional health of staff is also considered. Staff should be reminded of the relevant policies and procedures that exist to support them, and where they can access support, both within the school and from external organisations such as Samaritans. Your local Samaritans branch can provide contact details and information to hand out to staff.

Reflection

How do I feel about including emotional health in my lessons? What will I change as a result of this information?
Activity 3

Aims
- becoming familiar with DEAL
- looking at FAQs, overcoming fears and developing strategies.

Resources
- DEAL – online on computers
- slips of paper.

Activity
- Introduce the framework of DEAL: that it is designed to be a flexible resource, with sessions lasting either 20 minutes or approximately one hour. It is divided into four units.
- Ask staff to work online to have a look at a couple of sessions. You can allocate different sessions to each pair, or ask them to choose a couple of lessons that interest them. Allow enough time to get an idea of what the session is about.
- Ask pairs to feed back what they liked about the session.
- Ask staff to think about the worst case scenario of carrying out the session. What fears or concerns would they have about using the material?
- Give out a slip of paper to each member of staff and ask them to complete the sentence ‘what if...’ with something they could imagine being a difficult situation or something that they would not know how to handle. Collect these.

Reflection
How do I feel about using the DEAL materials?

Activity 4

Resources
- ‘what if’ questions
- prompt sheet.

Activity
Ahead of this session, categorise the ‘what if’ slips that you collected in. Put similar questions together and summarise them into one question if possible.
- Hand out one or two ‘what if’ questions to participants in small groups of three or four – if people get their own questions back it doesn’t matter, they don’t have to tell anyone.
- Ask the groups to consider what their response would be to each question or situation. Allow ten minutes for this.
Go around the room and ask participants to feed back their responses and discuss these as a group. Can everyone agree on what to do? Does the school have policies that cover all of the situations? Record key suggestions so that these can be used to form a prompt sheet to support staff when using DEAL. If needed, refer and include the prompt sheet from Samaritans.

Draw together agreed responses and procedures.

**Reflection**
What is something I feel more confident about now? If there is something else I still feel unsure about. What can I do about this?
What if a young person discloses a very difficult personal situation during a small group activity and someone else in the group comes and tells you?

Response: It’s important to reassure the young person who has talked to you. How are they feeling about this? Talk privately to them and make sure that they feel supported and they have some idea how to support the person who opened up.

Talk to the rest of the group privately and check that they are OK with what was discussed. Remind them that they have been trusted with this information and give them ideas on how they might be able to support their peer. Make sure they know that they can talk about any concerns in the future if they need to, and where they can go for support.

Talk to the young person who disclosed privately and tell them that someone was concerned about them. Let them know that if you have serious concerns for their safety, or if they are at risk of harm, you will need to report it to someone to keep them safe – but if that happened, they would be informed every step of the way. Ask them if there is anything they need to talk about. Allow the young person to control the conversation without digging for information. Use phrases such as “do you want to tell me more about that?” or “it sound like things are difficult for you at the moment – would you like to talk to me about what is happening?” Don’t feel you have to give advice. Reassure them that you care and that you are there to help, and that you are there for them if they need to talk.

If you need help to support a young person, speak to someone.

What if someone brings up suicide in a lesson and says they know someone who took their own life?

Response: Respond by saying that you are sorry to hear that and that it must have been a very sad time for them. Don’t feel concerned that someone has mentioned suicide. It’s a sign that they feel safe to talk about this and it can lead to a very helpful and healthy discussion. Research shows that talking about suicide does not increase suicidal intention in young people. Do not talk about methods of suicide, or talk about suicide in a way that glamorises or romanticises suicide or presents it as a reasonable solution to a problem. This would include talking about celebrities who have died by suicide. Talking about suicide statistics of young people is also not helpful as it can normalise suicide as an option. A teenager might think, ‘if such a high number are dying by suicide, this must be an acceptable and normal way of coping with my problems.’

It can be helpful to remind students that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, that suicide is final, that it puts an end to the possibility that things can get better and it leaves behind devastation on many levels. Talking about suicide in an open and honest way can help to prevent it. You can talk about someone who has died by suicide by remembering the good things that they have achieved, sensitively focus on their life achievements and the wastefulness of their death.

You can remind students that there is always someone to talk to, no matter whether their problem seems big or small, or even if they don’t know what to say but are feeling down. Refer students to support both in and out of school. Make sure that you get the support you need too.
What if I get upset when teaching about something that affects me?
Response: The message we want to give to all young people is that it is OK to not feel happy. This applies to you too. If you feel unable to continue a lesson, then send a student to find a member of staff to cover for you. If you feel able to, explain to the students that you are feeling upset. They don’t need to know why, but this also shows them that adults experience difficult feelings too, and have to find ways to cope with these.

What if I don’t know the answer to something the students ask?
Response: That’s ok, be honest and say that you don’t know. Say that you are glad they have asked and that you will find out the information that they need.

What if someone asks me if I have had a mental illness or another tricky personal question in class?
Response: Remind the class that we have agreed ground rules about sharing personal information so that everyone feels able to talk openly and feels safe in lessons. Tell them that it is nice that they are interested in you and that maybe the subject that they have brought up is something that you can all talk about together in class without anyone needing to share personal experiences.

What if someone shares that they are feeling suicidal or that they are self-harming in class?
Response: Be sensitive, thank them for sharing the information and say that you are sorry to hear that and that you would like to talk to them after the lesson to ensure that they have the help that they need. Remind the class of ground rules and that you expect them to be sensitive about the information that has been shared with them. Talk to the student afterwards and offer to listen and support them and tell them that you are glad that they have talked about this. Ensure that the student feels ownership of any referrals and reports that you make, and that they are involved in anything that happens next according to your school policy. The student should feel in control and most importantly, able to talk. Keep the communication and listening going. Tell them there is hope and that talking about how they are feeling can help them to begin to sort out what is happening and decide what to do.

You may need to talk to the rest of the class who are probably feeling very concerned about the student. You can share ideas about how to support the student and can let all the group know that they can talk to you or other available staff about their concerns at any time.

For most of these ‘what if’ questions, having sound agreed ground rules in place can really help provide a robust response. If an issue arises that is not addressed in your ground rules, then this is an opportunity to revisit the rules and adapt them to meet new arising issues.
DEAL activities include:

- Thinking about the myths about self harm.
- Considering who is in my support network.
- Learning about different ways of coping with stress.
- Identifying why people don’t talk about some things.
- Learning how to ask for support.
- Learning how to overcome barriers to seeking help.
- Considering the importance of telling someone if you’re struggling with your feelings.
- Understanding what depression is.
- Understanding what can affect our emotional health.
- Learning about causes of frustration and aggression.
- Considering hopefulness and optimism.
- Identifying personal skills and strengths.
- Learning how to support a friend.
- Recognising when someone may need support.
- Considering that everyone reacts and responds to challenges differently.
- Understanding what can affect our ability to cope.
- Learning that help is available.
- Learning when and how help can be accessed.
- Considering the risks when asking for support.
- Learning to express feelings.
- Learning to recognise feelings.
| Statements                                                                 | | Statements                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If students are able to express their feelings, they are calmer and can concentrate better | Learning how to cope with difficult experiences is a fundamental life skill |
| Listening skills can help you become a successful employee                | Students are here to learn, not to talk about how they feel                  |
| We should only be teaching emotional health to the few that really need it | Depression is just having a bad day                                         |
| Young people cannot learn if they are unable to express how they feel      | Aggression and violence are often a result of poor emotional health         |
| Resilience is a state of mind – it cannot be taught                        | Young people need to learn facts, not social skills                        |
| Teachers should not be asked to cover such issues with young people        | If students do not learn coping strategies they may end up with long term mental health issues |
| Teachers who have mental health issues cannot teach about wellbeing to students | Suicide prevention is not the responsibility of schools                   |
A young person discloses a very difficult personal situation during a small group activity and someone else in the group comes and tells you.

Someone brings up suicide in a lesson and says they know someone who took their own life.

I get upset when teaching about something that affects me.

I don’t know the answer to something the students ask.

Someone asks me if I have had a mental illness or another tricky personal question in class.

Someone shares that they are feeling suicidal or that they are self harming in class.