

Healthy Schools

All ages

30 mins

An activity to get people thinking about how to make their school a place that supports and promotes good mental health

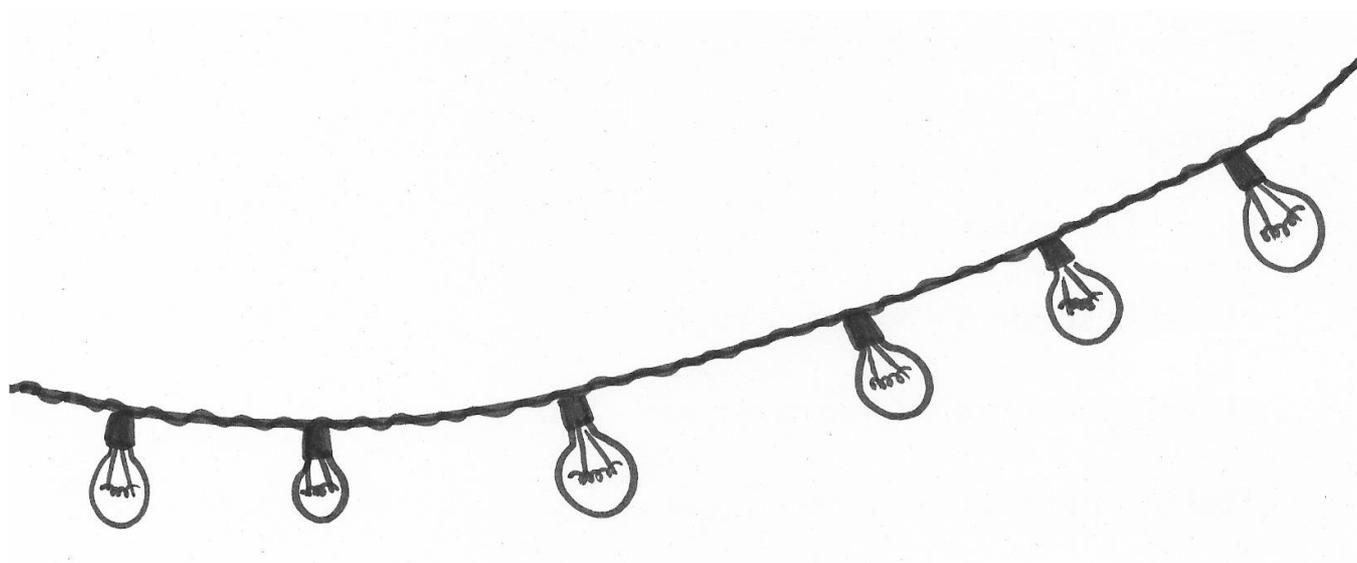
What you need:

- Each of 3 Questions written on a large sheet of paper
- Small coloured dots or coloured marker pens
- Copies of Equalities teams and Young Parliament responses with scissors and glue sticks (optional)

Method:

- Explain that the focus of this year's Young Parliament was mental health and one of the workshops considered what schools could do to support good mental health.
- Read out the recommendation Young Parliament came up with:
 1. **All schools to have PSHE lessons to address what to do if you are worried about a range of issues**
 2. **Provide access to a safe, peaceful space to go if you feel stressed and anxious.**
 - This place could be staffed with a counsellor or someone that has the time to listen to you and hear how you are feeling. Or it could be run by young people themselves. It should be able to signpost to leaflets, posters or websites for further support and be a comfortable space to relax in.
 3. **Schools to provide ideas on self-help. Have posters and/or lessons with lots of ideas to support yourself if you are feeling down.**
 - Suggestions included music, pictures, text messages or emails to yourself
 4. **Schools to have a 'happiness book' (similar to Chew Valley) where students can write/draw things that make them happy and also read what others have written.**
 5. **Use school planners as a source of information for websites and phone numbers etc.**
- Similarly at the Equalities team meeting last autumn school representatives addressed the same issue. They were asked to respond to three questions: If your school was a place that promoted good mental health....
 1. **What would the curriculum be like?**
 2. **What would staff and students be like?**
 3. **What support would be available?**

- Explain that you will share the feedback from Equalities teams shortly but first ask the students to think about and respond to the same 3 questions.
- 3 large sheets of paper are placed around the room with one question on each.
- Students spend 10 minutes moving around and adding their ideas to each. (Ask them to leave some space between comments.)
- Then compare their responses with those of the E teams (see below)
- Ask a volunteer to read out what has been written in answer to the first questions by the class. If there are any additional suggestions made by the E teams, not mentioned by the class, these should be added to the sheet. (by writing or they can be cut out of the list and stuck on the sheet)
- Repeat this exercise with questions 2 and 3.
- Finally students vote for their top three answers to each question by placing coloured sticky dots next to their top three or by drawing a coloured tick or star next to their top three.
- When everyone has finished tally up which are their favourites and discuss what they can do to help achieve the changes they would like to see.



E team Responses to the three key questions were as follows:

If your school was a place that promoted good mental health:

1. What would the curriculum be like?

- Pupils allowed to have a break within lessons if they needed it
- There would be space/time for relaxation
- Mental health awareness would be part of the curriculum
- There would be a specific focus on mental health services
- Lessons/sessions on relaxation and mindfulness
- PSHE would be RELEVANT and help people understand mental health disorders (ignorance fuels stigma)
- PSHE to cover positive mental health and reducing stigma

2. What would the staff and students be like?

- No trivialising or insulting mental health issues
- Staff and students could be open about their own mental health issues without fear of prejudice
- Everyone would be open and accepting of mental health issues but don't make a big fuss as that can be patronising

3. What support would be available?

- All staff would know when there was a need for support
- Form tutors are open and know where to direct you for support
- Pupils and staff would know where they can get support
- There is a place in school where you know you can go to and talk to someone if you are struggling
- Staff/ pupils can choose who to talk to about issues or choose not to talk
- Staff trained to support pupils with mental health issues
- Peer mentors who can offer a listening ear
- Someone to talk to if you are feeling low

