



Mental Health Awareness Week

Looking after our mental health: music for self-care

Assembly plan

Age group: Secondary

Timing: 20 minutes

To note: This year, the theme of Mental Health Awareness Week is loneliness. To mark this, the following assembly plan will explore loneliness and the practical steps students can take to look after their mental health.

There are several points in the assembly when it would be helpful to hear thoughts from students. We have included notes below to support with some of these questions.

If you are delivering this assembly virtually, it may be difficult to gain live feedback and be interactive with the young people. It could be useful to gain some ideas from students prior to the assembly so that you can share them whilst presenting, for example slide 10 may be an opportunity to exhibit a selection of student's passions.

Idea for further development: If you want to develop this assembly further, you could play a song or piece of music as the students enter and settle into assembly, additionally a live music performance from students or staff members could be added.

Resources:

- Projector, screen and sound
- *"Making music as self-care" video link* (open and ready)
- *Music for self-care assembly PowerPoint* (open and ready)

Slide no.	Teacher presentation/discussion points
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This week we will be celebrating Mental Health Awareness Week - the theme this year is loneliness. This week will raise awareness of the impact of loneliness, as well as providing an opportunity to think about our own mental wellbeing. Reducing loneliness is a major step towards a mentally healthy school and society.
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this assembly, we will learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why it is okay to sometimes feel lonely or have feelings that don't make sense to us - some ways we can look after our own mental health - why finding and following your passions can be the best self-care of all.

3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, what is mental health? Gather ideas from a few students. • Share definition - mental health is about our feelings, our thoughts, our emotions, and our moods. Looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the most important things to know about mental health is that we all have it. • Some of the people on the screen have spoken openly about their mental health, including experiences with anxiety and depression.
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I was to ask all the students in this assembly how they are feeling today, I would probably get a lot of different answers. Some of you may be excited about [add a trip or activity that is coming up], some of you might be happy because you've just shared a joke with a friend or feeling upset because just this morning you've had an argument with a parent/carer. • These feelings may make more sense to us as we can understand what caused them.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But we can also experience feelings that we can't explain, which may come and go. Sometimes there aren't any obvious reasons why we feel the way we do. For example, we can experience loneliness even when surrounded by friends. • Explain that this can happen to anyone from time-to-time, and these feelings don't usually hang around for too long. Part of being mentally healthy is knowing some things we can do to take care of ourselves when difficult emotions come up.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One thing we can do to look after our mental health, is to find the things in life that we love doing, learn new skills, find our passions and make time to do them. • Looking after our mental health can sometimes be known as self-care.
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore this idea a bit further, we are going to watch a video from a young person called Georgia who has used music to support with her mental health. • Watch "Making music as self-care" video [3:38 mins].
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather reflections from a few students about the video, such as: how did learning the guitar help Georgia with her mental health? How is playing the guitar part of Georgia's self-care? Has learning an instrument helped anyone else with their wellbeing?
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like you to take a moment now to think about the activities and interests that you feel passionate about. Could any of these be used as part of your self-care, especially at stressful times of the year such as the revision and exam period?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite staff or students to talk about their passions or the things they do to help look after their mental health.
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that if they are feeling overwhelmed with any emotion, it is important to reach out for support. • In our school, you can talk to [fill this section in with support options in your school].
12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of school, these options are available [add support options that are available in your local area to the bottom of the list].
13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the assembly with a positive message - remind pupils that it is okay to sometimes have feelings that don't make sense to us, or we can't explain. If those feelings become overwhelming, there are ways that we can look after our mental health and find support. Sometimes finding and following your passions can be the best self-care of all.