

# Healthy Minds: Read first

## *A guide to using the Healthy Minds resource*

The 'Healthy Minds' resource has been developed to support staff to initiate discussions about mental health with young people with the aim of promoting good mental health.

It has clear links with Curriculum for Excellence Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes in mental, emotional and social wellbeing, specifically "*I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.*" (HWB 3-06a/HWB 4-06a)

The resource is designed to be used flexibly in schools or with groups of young people in community settings. If time is tight, delivery can be condensed into 2 school periods (approx 1.5 – 2 hours). If more time is available, the components of the resource could be delivered separately to encourage discussion and promote deeper understanding.

### **Learning intentions**

- To develop young people's understanding of 'mental health'
- To dispel myths about mental health and in doing so help to reduce stigma
- To encourage young people to think about where they might seek support if they were struggling with their mental health
- To discuss digital media that young people might explore to promote their mental wellbeing.

### **Success criteria**

- I can contribute to discussion about mental health
- I know where I can turn to for support if I experience difficulties with my mental health
- I can give at least two examples of digital media (apps and websites) that could help me promote my mental wellbeing.

### **The resource includes**

- 'Public eye' exercise and guide for facilitators
- 'What do you think?' exercise and discussion aid for facilitators
- 'Sources of support' exercise sheet
- 'Digital media for promoting mental wellbeing' exercise sheets.

## How to use the resource

### **'Public eye' exercise**

- See the 'Public Eye – A Guide for Facilitators' for instructions.

### **'What do you think?' exercise**

- Mark a continuum on the floor with 'Strongly agree' at one end and 'Strongly disagree' at the other.
- Choose which statements will be used – recommended statements to start initial discussion are: 'Very few people have mental health problems', 'People should talk openly about mental health problems' and 'A mentally healthy person is always happy'.
- Facilitator reads the first card, shows it to the group and asks participants to stand on the continuum in the spot that represents their opinion about the statement.
- Role of facilitator is to be 'devil's advocate'. Facilitator can refer to the 'What Do You Think? – Discussion aid for facilitators'.

Participants can move on the continuum throughout the discussion if their opinion changes as a result of the discussion.

### **'Sources of support' exercise**

- Give each participant a 'sources of support' sheet and sticky dots/pens (sticky dots for paper version, wipeable pens for laminated version).
- Ask the participant to mark who/where they would look to for help/advice if they or a friend were struggling with their mental health, and to suggest other possible sources of support that are not already listed.
- Lay out the sheets and discuss as a group.

### **'Digital media for promoting mental wellbeing' exercise**

- Provide list of apps and websites.
- If time permits, encourage participants to explore and review apps and websites for promoting mental wellbeing individually using the review form.
- If time permits, discuss as a group.

### **Task – taking responsibility**

- Encourage participants to consider what they can do to promote their own mental wellbeing.

*To encourage support for good mental health (within school, the home and wider family environment), it is possible that senior pupils could be supported to use the 'What do you think?' exercise to raise awareness of mental health with peers, adults in school and parents/carers.*