

Assembly or tutor-time session for 11-14 year olds

Aim

- To encourage young people to consider the different ways we can connect, and the impact that these connections can have on our mental health.

Materials required

- Laptop / projector (if using slides).

NB: Be particularly aware of care-experienced children, adopted children and those in kinship care during this activity, and children who may have limited contact with parents or other family members.

Step 1

Teaching point:

Connection can mean different things to different people.

Slide 1

Hello everyone and welcome to our Place2Be Children's Mental Health Week Assembly. The theme this year is 'Let's Connect' and it is wonderful to be here together to connect and spend time together thinking about the connections which are important to us.

Slide 2

Let's take a minute to pause and reflect on what connection means to you. Does this quotation by Brene Brown match your thoughts about connection or do you have different ideas?

The presenter might like to share their own thoughts about the quote and invite young people and staff to share theirs.

Slide 3

Most of us have connections that are important to us, those people that are around us every day – family, friends, pets. Connections that are enjoyed in real life, and online.

Are there times when we take these connections for granted?

Again, take a minute to think about the people you connect with every day. Think about how you might show them how you appreciate them – what might you say or do?

Step
2

Teaching point:

Feeling disconnected can have an impact on our mental health, and the smallest connections can make a big difference.

Slide 4

Covid-19 has shown us how important connection is....and how hard it can be when we feel disconnected.

Feeling disconnected for whatever reason can have an impact on our mental health. Sometimes the smallest connections can make all the difference – a smile, a wave, a Whatsapp message or a phone call.

Connections can endure over time, even when you don't actively see the person in question. And sometimes we make connections that shift and change over time. There are people who have such an incredible impact on us they stay in our thoughts long after we have last seen them...

Show the Ian Wright video as a powerful example of this connection.

We can make connections with people when we are young that can stay with us for the rest of our lives and bring a sense of joy or inspiration.

The presenter might reflect on how people stayed connected during their childhood and/or memories of how things have changed.

Slide 5

Play the video that shares Fred's experience of evacuation and staying connected with his family (watch from 0.25 - 2.19).

- How did Fred stay connected with his family?
- How do you think it must have felt to be so far away from home?
- How do we use technology now to stay connected? How is it the same and different from what Fred experienced?
- What questions would you ask Fred about his experiences?

Step 3

Teaching point:

Technology has enabled us to connect in different ways, but that can bring about its own challenges.

Slide 6

**"We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain."
Stephen Hawking**

It is so easy to connect across the world using technology and we can forget what a privilege it is to have these types of resources.

The technology we use now has not been available for that many years and as young people the ways you connect are so different to the ways your parents and grandparents did when they were your age. Include information about Safer Internet Day

It is also important to remember that not everyone in the world has access to this technology and sometimes there are strict restrictions on what people can say and who they can connect with.

Slide 7

If we're making connections online, how can we stay safe?

Ask young people to share thoughts, or briefly discuss in pairs.

SMART is a good way of remembering the key ways to stay safe online.

- **S is for safe.** Keep your personal information safe and don't give anyone any personal details about you.
- **M is for meet.** Meeting up with someone you only know online, even a friend of a friend, can be dangerous as this person is still a stranger.
- **A is for accepting.** Think carefully before you click on or open something online (e.g. links, adverts, friend requests, photos) as you never know where they may lead to, or they may contain viruses.
- **R is for reliable.** Not everything you read online is true. To find reliable information compare at least three different websites, check in books and talk to someone about what you have found.
- **T is for tell.** Tell a trusted adult if something or someone ever makes you feel upset, worried or confused. This could be if you or someone you know is being bullied online, or if you see something upsetting or concerning.

Even adults don't always remember the best ways to stay safe online – adults often fall victim to phishing or online scams – so you could share these tips with your parents or carers too.

For more resources or follow-up activities on staying safe online, visit the Childnet website and take a look at their free resources for Safer Internet Day (7 February 2023).

Step
4

Teaching point:

It's important to keep connecting with others, and to make new connections.

 Slide 8

And as we come to the end of the assembly, let's think about how we might connect with others more.

- Who might you message or send a voice note to today?
- Are there people in the community we could reach out to?
- What could we do to create more connections? Does connecting always have to be verbal?

Share a final thought about how connecting with others supports our emotional wellbeing and mental health and share a poem or song to finish off the session. E.g., read the poem or show the video recording of 'Together' by Matt Goodfellow youtu.be/bOsbofgusak (or a poem with a similar theme).

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



- 1 Hold a 'Dress to Express' day to raise vital funds for children's mental health childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/fundraise
- 2 Watch our video activities, and explore the theme of connection through art and creativity childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/schools
- 3 Share our tips for parents and carers with your school community childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/families
- 4 Spread the word by sharing how you plan to take part on social media! Don't forget to use #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/socialmedia
- 5 Add yourself to the Children's Mental Health Week map! childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/map

