

Assembly or tutor-time session for 14-18 year olds

Aim

- To encourage young people to consider the ways in which they connect, and how these connections can impact their mental health and sense of belonging.

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

Slide 2

"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship." Brene Brown

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

Invite young people and staff to share their views.

Slide 3

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:

Connecting with others can have a positive impact on our mental health, but also bring us a sense of purpose and belonging.

Slide 4

We connect in such a wide range of ways. There are the people we see every day and have a direct connection with – family, friends, people in the community.

Then there are the connections that occur because of an event or an interest or belief. Connection where you may not meet all the people in a particular group, but you have a shared love or passion – supporting the same football team, loving the same band, playing the same computer game etc. Incredible connections can also be made between people of different ages, genders, abilities, sexualities and ethnicities etc.

These connections can have a positive impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health, the knowledge that others enjoy the same thing as you or have the same beliefs is incredibly powerful and it can lead to change.

There is a joy to being open to connection and even if some connections end, happy memories can be made and held.

Step 3

Teaching point:

Connections with others are made mainly through non-verbal actions such as a smile, facial expression, or gesture. When we connect with others online, we often don't see these non-verbal actions, which brings about its own challenges.

Slide 5

Connections with others are made mainly through non-verbal actions. A smile, eye contact, a nod, facial expressions and gestures. Most of the time, these non-verbal micro-actions occur without us knowing, but they are critical to show another person that you have respect for them and that you are connecting with them.

Show video and discuss – what was the impact of the video on the young people?

Think about the number of connections you have each minute, each hour, each day in this non-verbal way.

Slide 6

When we connect online, we can't see people's non-verbal gestures – their smiles, nods, facial expressions – which means sometimes what we say online or via text can be misinterpreted.

It's worth taking some time to think about the ways we connect with each other in real life and online.

- *Are the connections we make with people online different from those that we have in real life?*
- *Is the person we are in real life the same as the one we project online to connect with others?*
- *How many people can we connect with and have meaningful relationships?*
- *What is good about connecting online and in real life? Are the connections different?*

Step 4

Teaching point:

Feeling disconnected can have an impact on our mental health, and when connections are disrupted, this can make us feel lonely and low.

Slide 7

It can affect our mental health when important connections get disrupted, broken or lost. This disconnection can make people feel lonely and low, even depressed.

It's important to remember that all relationships change, develop and evolve over time, and that, we usually find natural ways to mend and repair the breaks in our connections. This happens all the time in our family and home life, and with friends and other close relationships.

Sometimes, we need to be the person to reach out, to say sorry, to offer forgiveness or to make amends for past wrongdoing.

Step 5

Reflection

 Slide 8

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

'We are each other's environment' Dr Denise Quinlan

- What do you think this means?
- Do you agree?

Final comment, and end with a song or poem that reinforces the 'Let's Connect' theme. We've suggested some songs on the right of this page.



Stormzy

Blinded by Your Grace

 [Watch Stormzy](#)



One Republic

Connection

 [Watch One Republic](#)



Quinn L'Esperanc

Human Connection

 [Watch Quinn](#)



Ed Sheeran

Photograph

 [Watch Ed](#)



Bruno Mars

Count on Me

 [Watch Bruno](#)

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

