WHY KINDNESS MATTERS

Assembly

Assembly script:

Overview

This assembly has been developed from the Mental Health Foundation's Peer Education Project (PEP) - a secondary school-based, educational programme that aims to give young people the skills and knowledge they need to safeguard their mental health and that of their peers.

PEP is a carefully researched, effective approach to mental health education whereby older pupils within school or college deliver mental health lessons to younger pupils.

For more information about PEP and how your school can get involved, click here.

Assembly aims:

- To understand how kindness is defined and the emotions that are connected to it.

- To understand how kindness can benefit our own and others' mental health and wellbeing.

- To explore how we can show kindness to ourselves and others.

You will need:

- Assembly script

- PowerPoint slides

- OPTIONAL: **Why kindness matters video**

Estimated delivery time:

- 20-30 minutes

- The assembly script can be divided into smaller sections and delivered across multiple assemblies, form times or lessons to fit into your timetable.

To ensure the content is most relevant, update the assembly script and PowerPoint slides to share support options in school or college and the local community with your pupils.

WHY KINDNESS MATTERS

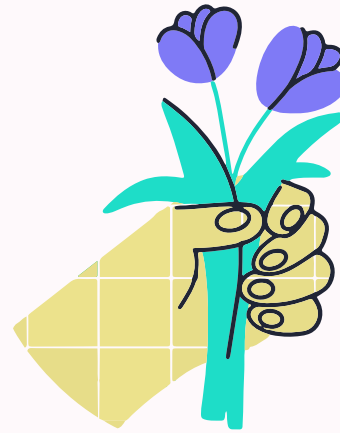Assembly

Script

Welcome to today's assembly on kindness.

Introduction

This assembly will cover:

✳ What kindness is and the emotions connected to it.

✳ How acts of kindness can benefit our own and others' mental health and wellbeing.

✳ The ways we can show kindness to ourselves and others.

SLIDE 2

Script

OPTIONAL: Play this **Why kindness matters video**

This assembly is an opportunity to:

- understand what kindness is and the emotions connected to it,

- how acts of kindness can benefit our own and others' mental health and wellbeing; and

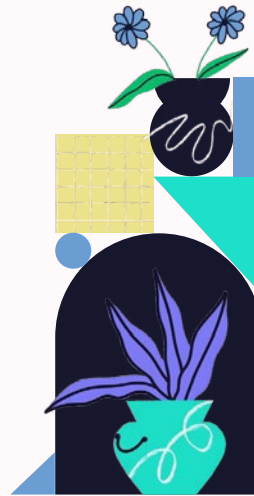- the ways we can show kindness to ourselves and others.

What do we mean by kindness?

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Kindness is:

* Considering our feelings and needs, alongside those of others.

* Showing acceptance, respect, and love towards ourselves and others.

* Behaving fairly towards ourselves and others.

SLIDE 3

Script

Kindness is often described as choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, and is closely related to altruism and compassion.

Altruism refers to an action that provides a benefit to someone else but at a cost, or no benefit, to oneself.

Compassion is similar to kindness in that it involves feeling empathy and a desire to help, but specifically in situations of distress or difficulty.

There are many ways to show kindness towards ourselves and others in our everyday lives and it doesn't need to take much time or money. In fact, acts of kindness can be as small as smiling at someone you pass in the corridor, taking time out of the day to do something you love or listening to someone as they talk about their day.

Finding what works for us, and for others, is key to making sure our acts of kindness have the greatest effect.

Continued...

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So, with this in mind, we can describe kindness in three ways:

- Considering our feelings and needs, alongside those of others.

- Showing acceptance, respect, and love towards ourselves and others.

- Behaving fairly towards ourselves and others.

What is mental health?

Moods

Thoughts

Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours.

Behaviours

Feelings

SLIDE 4

Script

Mental health is made up of our thoughts, feelings, moods, and behaviours. Mental health is not fixed throughout our lives. Just like physical health, mental health can change depending on experiences and circumstances, as people move through different stages of life.

Mental health is something we all have and need to look after. Each of us will find different things helpful for our mental health.

Encouraging kindness in our everyday lives is one way to improve the mental health and wellbeing of ourselves and others.
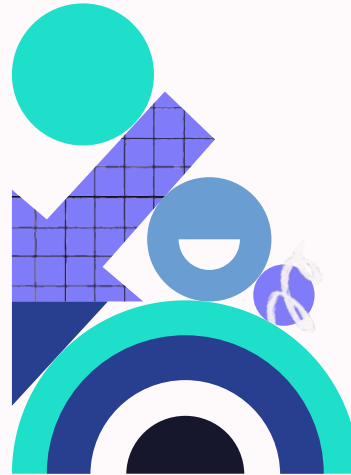
Why is kindness good for our mental health?

It makes us feel good!

Being kind:

* Increases feelings of happiness

* Increases wellbeing

* Reduces stress

SLIDE 5

Script

There are many ways that acts of kindness can help us look after our mental health and wellbeing.

It makes us feel good!

We can often see that being kind towards other people makes them feel good. However, there is also evidence that helping others supports our own mental health and wellbeing too.

Studies have found that being kind is linked to increased feelings of happiness, wellbeing, and life satisfaction and reduced feelings of stress. There is even some evidence that just remembering the kind things we have done in the past might improve our wellbeing!

Why is kindness good for our mental health?

It creates a sense of belonging and reduces loneliness.

Showing kindness to others is one way that we can create, maintain, and strengthen our social connections.

SLIDE 6

Script

It creates a sense of belonging and reduces loneliness

Showing kindness to others is one way that we can create, maintain, and strengthen our social connections, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation.
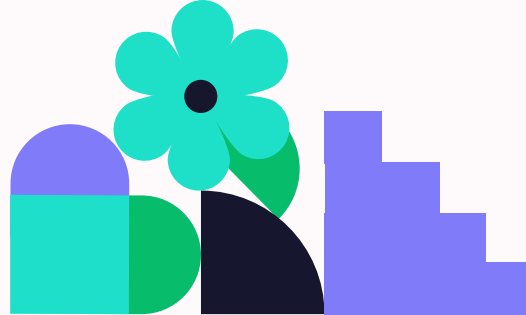
Why is kindness good for our mental health?

It keeps things in perspective.

Being open to acts of kindness, and reflecting on what we are grateful for, can help us reframe our attitude to life.

SLIDE 7

It keeps things in perspective

By being open to the different viewpoints and experiences of others, we can reflect and reframe our outlook towards life. Being aware of when we are kind to others and recognising the things we are grateful for in life, can help us to feel more positive about where we are and what we're doing both now, and in the future.
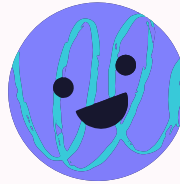
Why is kindness good for our mental health?

It makes the world a happier place!

Acts of kindness can motivate others to show kindness, creating a ripple effect.

SLIDE 8

It makes the world a happier place!

Being kind to others can often have a knock-on effect and begin a ripple of kindness. Think about when someone shows kindness towards us. Their act of kindness might make us feel more confident or ready to tackle the day, which leaves some space and motivation for us to show kindness to someone else. In turn, the person we have shown kindness to is then more likely to be kind to another person – and another and another – showing how just one act of kindness can lead to many more!

An important part of the kindness ripple effect is 'gratitude'. Gratitude means showing appreciation for and returning acts of kindness.

Continued...

Slide 8 Script cont.

When we express gratitude to someone who has been kind to us – like writing a thank you note or telling them how their kindness made us feel – this helps the other person feel valued and will motivate them to act kindly again in the future.

In fact, even just the feeling of being grateful towards someone or something they have done can improve our own mental health and wellbeing. So, there are benefits to practising gratitude for ourselves.

How can we show kindness to ourselves?

Being kind to ourselves is sometimes even harder than being kind to others, but it is just as important for our mental health and wellbeing.

SLIDE 9

Script

Being kind to ourselves is sometimes even harder than being kind to others, but it is just as important for our mental health and wellbeing.

Try imagining that we each have a teapot full of kindness. When we are being kind to others, we pour some of our kindness into their cup. But, if our teapot is almost empty, we won't be able to pour kindness out for other people or ourselves. So, while it might feel difficult at first, we need to make sure we top our own teapots up with self-kindness from time-to-time.

How can we show kindness to ourselves?

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We can show kindness to ourselves by:

* Spending 30 minutes every day doing something we love

* Praising ourselves

* Practising 'thought-swaps'

* Being patient with ourselves

* Practising mindfulness

* Being kind to others

SLIDE 10

Script

There are many ways we can show kindness to ourselves.

Spend 30 minutes every day doing something we love

This could be listening to a favourite song, reading a favourite book, playing a sport, spending time outdoors, speaking with friends, or anything else that you find enjoyable.

Praise ourselves

Sometimes, it can feel challenging to be kind to ourselves. We could try practising writing down one thing to compliment or congratulate ourselves on each day – maybe something we are proud of or a quality we have. By engaging with kind thoughts towards ourselves regularly, we are more likely to express them more freely and often.

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Practise 'thought-swaps'

Sometimes, it can feel easier to speak kindly of others than ourselves. It is useful to practise replacing critical thoughts of ourselves with thoughts that are less critical and more kind in tone. For example, instead of thinking 'I'm not good enough', try swapping it to 'I'm doing my best'.

Be patient with ourselves

Often, we put a lot of pressure and expectations on ourselves. It is important we are patient with ourselves and learn to give time and space to our thoughts and feelings.

Practise mindfulness

It is important to create time in the day to focus on ourselves and reconnect. Mindfulness is one way of making time to pay attention to what is happening in our minds and bodies right now, without judgement.

Be kind to others

As we have already mentioned, being kind to others makes us feel good and has positive effects on our own mental health and wellbeing. So, when we feel able to, being kind to others is another way we can be kind to ourselves.

How can we show kindness to others?
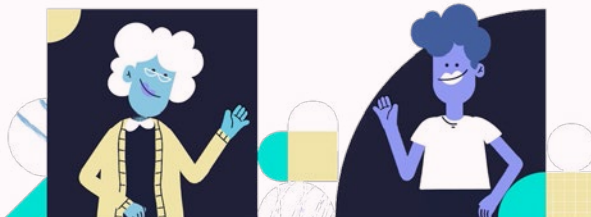
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We could:

* Chat with a friend
* Smile and say hello to others
* Offer our seat on public transport to someone
* Recycle

* Volunteer in our community
* Donate food to a food bank

SLIDE 11

Script

We can show kindness to others in many ways.

For example, we could:

- Call or have a chat with a friend.

- Smile and say hello to other pupils and staff in the corridor.

- Offer our seat on public transport to someone who may need it more than us.

- Buy recycled and recyclable products.

- Volunteer in our community.

- Donate food to a food bank.

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How can we show kindness at home?

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We could:

- ✳ Help a sibling with their homework or teach them a new skill

- ✳ Help with the gardening or housework

- ✳ Help a neighbour with their shopping

- ✳ Set up a random acts of kindness challenge with people at home

- ✳ Create a gratitude jar at home

SLIDE 12

Script

We can also show kindness to others at home.

For example, we could:

- Help a sibling with their homework or teach them a new skill.

- Offer to help with the gardening or housework.

- Find out if a neighbour needs any help with shopping or bringing the bins in.

- Set up a random acts of kindness challenge with people at home.

- Create a gratitude jar for everyone at home to contribute to.

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How can we show kindness as a school community?

We could:

* Take part in an activity we enjoy

* Invite someone to sit and eat lunch together

* Help a classmate with their schoolwork

* Say thank you

* Congratulate someone for something they have achieved

SLIDE 13

Script

School is a great place to start showing kindness to ourselves and others.

For example, we could:

* Take part in an activity we enjoy at lunchtime.

* Invite someone to sit and eat lunch together.

* Help a classmate with their schoolwork.

* Write a thank you note to a classmate, teacher, or another member of school staff.

* Congratulate someone for something they have achieved.

At school, we can also encourage kindness in a bigger way by getting everyone involved – pupils, staff and even caregivers!

Continued...

For example, setting up activities for awareness weeks such as Mental Health Awareness Week, organising events to benefit the community such as charity donation collections or litter picks, or designing a kindness poster board display.

Include any kindness initiatives or campaigns in place at school or in the local community.

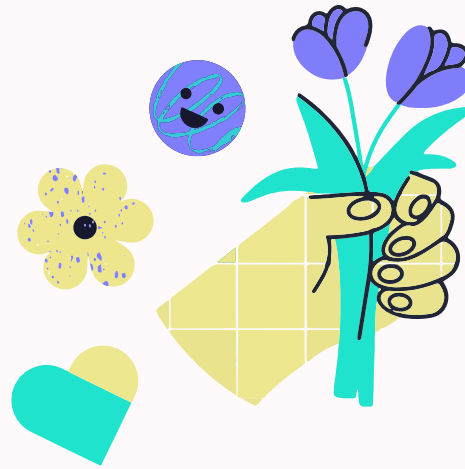If you have ideas on ways to encourage kindness within your class, or across the whole school, let a member of staff know.

Final thoughts

Kindness is about considering our feelings and those of others, showing acceptance, respect, and love, and behaving fairly towards ourselves and others.

SLIDE 14

Script

Kindness is about considering our feelings and those of others, showing acceptance, respect, and love, and behaving fairly towards ourselves and others. We have shown that kindness has lots of benefits for our own and others' mental health and wellbeing, and there are lots of little ways we can show kindness to ourselves and others. So, we encourage you to try and bring these into your daily life, both at home and at school.

Further information and support

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MHF Tips for Young People on Kindness by the Mental Health Foundation

SLIDE 15

Script

If you are worried about yourself or a peer, it is important to reach out to a trusted adult – this could be a member of staff at school, someone at home, or another person in your life.

Add information about the support options within your school and local area.

You can also find out more tips for ways to show kindness to yourself and others by reading the MHF **Tips for Young People on Kindness by the Mental Health Foundation.**

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