



Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



WHY

KINDNESS

MATTERS

Lesson

Lesson plan:

- **Welcome**
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- **Being in the moment**
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- **Building connections**
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- **Introducing the topic**
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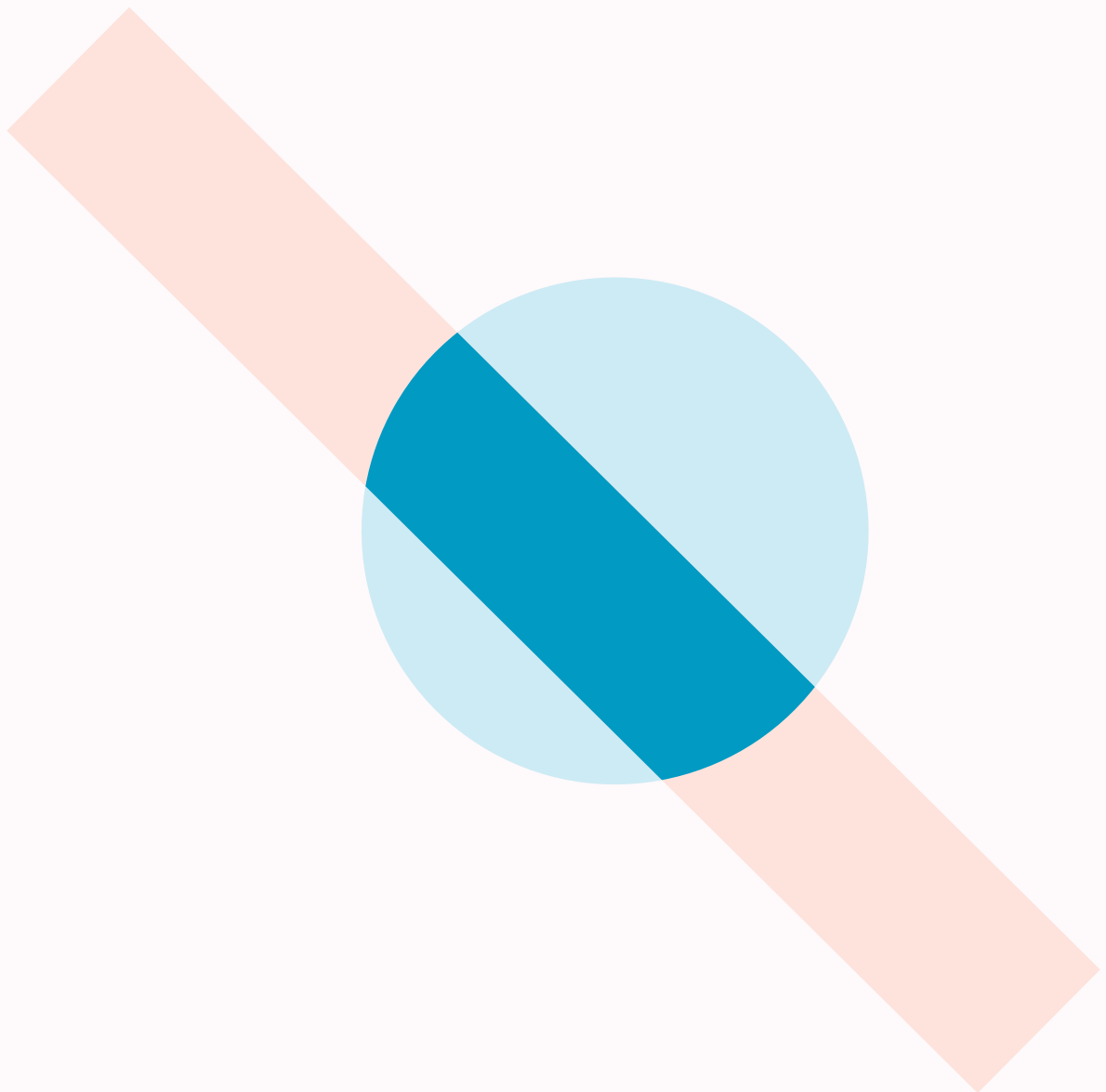
A L T E R N A T I V E A C T I V I T I E S

- **Taking action**
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This lesson 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](#).





Lesson aims:

- To understand what kindness is and the emotions that are connected with it.
- To understand how kindness can benefit our own and others' mental health and wellbeing.
- To learn about the different ways we can show kindness to ourselves and others.

Resources checklist:

- PowerPoint slides
- Pens and paper
- OPTIONAL: Web of kindness resource
- OPTIONAL: The [‘What’s up with Charlie?’ video](#)
- OPTIONAL: Reflection worksheet



Preparation checklist:

- Plan two ‘Being in the moment’ activities, referring to the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).
- Plan a ‘Building connections’ activity, referring to the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).



How to use the lesson plan:

This lesson plan is designed to be delivered by pupils aged 15 and upwards (known as Peer Educators) to pupils aged 11 to 14 (known as Peer Learners).

The recommended lesson plan is primarily suited for pupils aged 11 or 12 and can be delivered as a 50-minute lesson or two 30-minute lessons.

The revised lesson plan offers alternative activities related to taking social action or challenging mental health information. The revised lesson plan provides pupils, particularly those who are older or who already have basic mental health awareness, an opportunity to explore the topics in more depth.

Recommended lesson plan 50 Minutes	Recommended lesson structure 2x 30 Minutes		Revised lesson plan 50 Minutes
	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	
Welcome 5 Minutes	Welcome 5 Minutes		Welcome 5 Minutes
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes
Building connections 5 Minutes	Building connections 5 Minutes		Select either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Taking action' section; or the 'Challenging thinking' section. 25 Minutes
Introducing the topic 10 Minutes	Introducing the topic 10 Minutes		
Learning through activity 10 Minutes		Learning through activity 10 Minutes	Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes
Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes		Reflecting on the learning 10 Minutes	
Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes	Being in the moment 5 Minutes

If the lesson is being delivered by Peer Educators, as per the Peer Education Project model, each activity is recommended to be delivered either by Peer Educators or School Staff.

How to do it:

The instructions for each activity are split into these steps:



Actions required such as presenting slides or handing resources out.

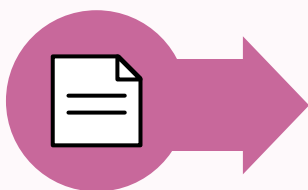


Key messages and activity instructions to be said.



Questions to be asked to extend the discussion or gauge understanding.

Notes and troubleshooting:



There is additional information to support lesson delivery such as activity adaptations, considerations for classroom management, and key preparations for the lesson.

It's not a script:

The lesson plan is not a word-for-word script. Prior to delivery, preparation time should be allocated to make key notes and plan how each activity will run.

Welcome 5 mins

Resources needed: • Slides 1 & 2



Slide 1



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Lesson



Do:

Present Slide 1.

Welcome the class and the Peer Educators to the lesson. Explain that the Peer Educators will be leading some of the activities during the lesson – an opportunity for Peer Learners to get to know them and learn from those who are similar in age.



Say:

"In this lesson, we will explore how kindness is important for our wellbeing. We will think about what kindness is, the effects it can have on ourselves and others, and learn how to show kindness."



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Ways of working



SLIDE 2

We will:

1. Respect and listen to each other, giving space for everyone to be heard.
2. Value everyone's opinion, even if it's different to yours.
3. Ask questions, especially if you are unsure about the information or activities.
4. Be kind to yourself and others, reaching out for support if you need it.

Any others? _____

Click to add text



Do:

Present Slide 2.



Say:

"It is important for us all to feel safe and confident to share our thoughts, ideas and questions in this lesson."



Do:

Read out the slide and ask the Peer Learners and the Peer Educators for any other points they would like to add. Write them directly on the slide.



Notes and troubleshooting

Variations: It can be useful to have the 'Ways of Working' list visible throughout the lesson. You could write these on a board or poster paper to display in each lesson.



Being in the moment 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slide 3
• A mindfulness activity

Slide 3

Being in the moment



SLIDE 3



Do: Present Slide 3.



Say: "We're going to start with a short exercise to bring our focus to this lesson."



Do: Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#). You may want to explain what mindfulness is to the pupils.



Building connections 5 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 4-9

- Web of kindness resource (optional)
- An ice breaker activity

Slide 4

Building connections



SLIDE 4

Hi, I'm Lucy and last night I made my mum a cup of tea before bed. This morning, I woke up late for school. My mum had kindly prepared my packed lunch for me and said she would drop me off at school on her way to work. At lunchtime, I noticed one of my friends had forgotten their lunch, so I offered to share my lunch with them.



Recommended ice breaker



"Today's welcome exercise is designed to get us thinking about how even the smallest acts of kindness can have a knock-on effect and inspire others to be kind. We will look at stories of kindness and see how those people then shared that kindness with others."



Present Slide 4.

Continued...



Building connections (continued)



Do:

Present Slides 5-9.

Ask the Peer Learners to write down the order they think the stories go in, starting with Lucy.



Ask:

“Who comes after Lucy?”



Do:

Once agreed, ask pupils to share who comes next. Continue until the story chain has been completed.

Here is the order of stories: Lucy, Sam, Isiah, Joseph, Anita then Jenny.



Say:

“We have seen how one small act of kindness can end up inspiring more acts of kindness and reaching more people than we intended.

Continued...



Building connections (continued)



Say:

Kindness can be shown and felt by people of all ages, not just to those of a similar age to us. An important part of kindness is that we take the time to understand what the other person truly needs, not just what we want to show or give them and that we express gratitude for their kindness."



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: This recommended ice breaker activity is directly relevant to the lesson content. However, you can select an alternative activity from the [Ice Breaker Activities Pack](#).

Variations: Use the resource Sheet.



Do:

Allocate the Peer Learners into five groups and hand out one individual kindness story to each group. Invite the Peer Learners to read their story in their small groups.

Read out the first story (Lucy).



Ask:

"Put your hand up if you think your group has the story that follows on from Lucy's?"

Hint: the stories span across a day.



Do:

Invite the group linking to Lucy's story to read out their story and ask the remaining groups to put their hand up if they have the linking story. Continue until all the stories have been read and the links between them identified.

If you have glue or tape, you can ask Peer Learners to create a paper chain once they have read their story out. This will demonstrate the knock-on, chain effect of kindness and show how 'kindness circles' are formed.

Introducing the topic 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 10-12

Slide 10

Introducing the topic



SLIDE 10

Kindness is choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings.



Do:

Present Slide 10.



Say:

"There are many definitions of what it means to be kind, but it can be described as choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings."



Introducing the topic (continued)

Slide 11

Introducing the topic



What does
kindness mean
to us?

Click to add text

SLIDE 11



Do:

Present Slide 11.

Invite the Peer Learners to share words and phrases for what kindness means to them. Write their ideas on the slide.

Time to share: 5 minutes.



Introducing the topic (continued)

Slide 12

Introducing the topic



Why is kindness good for our mental health and wellbeing?

Click to add text

SLIDE 12



Do:

Present Slide 12.



Say:

"It can sometimes be easier to see how kindness helps other people, but there are many benefits for our own mental health and wellbeing."



Ask:

Invite pupils to share ideas on the benefits of acts of kindness to someone's own mental health and wellbeing. Write their ideas on the slide.

Time to share: 5 minutes.



Learning through activity 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 13 & 14
• Pens and paper

Slide 13

Learning through activity



SLIDE 13

Kindness can be shown in many ways and tends to look different for everyone. Finding what works for us, and for others, is key to making sure our acts of kindness have the greatest effect.



Do:

Present Slide 13.



Say:

"Kindness can be shown in many ways and tends to look different for everyone. Finding what works for us, and for others, is key to making sure our acts of kindness have the greatest effect."



Introducing the topic (continued)

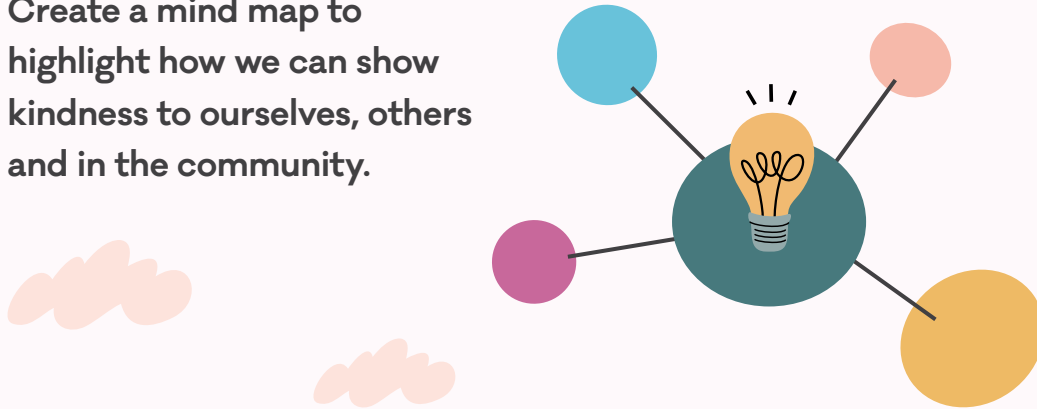
Slide 14

Learning through activity



SLIDE 14

Create a mind map to highlight how we can show kindness to ourselves, others and in the community.



Do:

Present Slide 14.



Say:

"We are now going to think about the different acts of kindness we can show ourselves, others and in the school community."



Do:

Divide pupils into small groups and hand out paper and pens.



Ask:

Ask pupils to create a mind map of different ways pupils can show kindness to themselves, others and in the school community.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Do:

Invite each group to share a few ideas from their mind map.

Time to share: 5 minutes.

Continued...



Introducing the topic (continued)



Notes and troubleshooting

Follow-up: Collate the mind maps. The ideas could be used to create an 'acts of kindness' display board or poster, or as part of an 'acts of kindness' challenge for pupils and staff.



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Reflecting on the learning 10 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 15-19 • Pens and paper (optional)
• Reflection worksheet (optional)

Slide 15

Reflecting on the learning



SLIDE 15

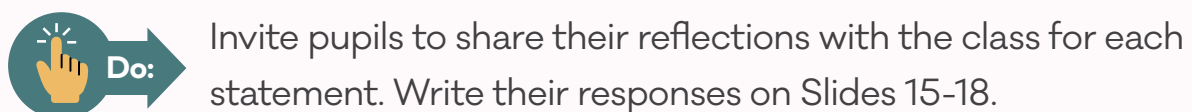
One thing I have learned.

One thing I will do differently.

One question I would like an answer to.



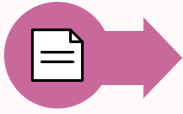
- One thing I have learned.
- One thing I will do differently.
- One question I would like an answer to."



Continued...



Reflecting on the learning (continued)



Notes and troubleshooting

Prepare: If using the worksheet, print copies ahead of the lesson and hand out to Peer Learners for this activity.

Classroom management: Their comment, question or thought doesn't have to be about mental health – it can be about the lesson itself, the activities, how it went, etc.

If using the worksheet, ask pupils to write down their responses to the reflection statements.

Follow-up: Collate any questions that weren't answered, and follow-up with responses to the pupils in the next lesson.



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Reflecting on the learning (continued)

Slide 19

Lesson summary

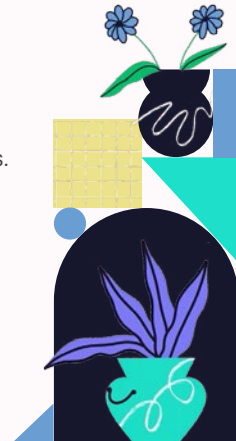


SLIDE 19

Kindness can be described as:

- Considering our feelings and needs, alongside those of others.
- Showing acceptance, respect, and love towards ourselves and others.
- Behaving fairly towards ourselves and others.

Kindness can be shown in many ways and tends to look different for everyone. Finding what works for us, and for others, is key to making sure our acts of kindness have the greatest effect.



Do:

Present Slide 19.

Read out the lesson summary.



Being in the moment 5 mins



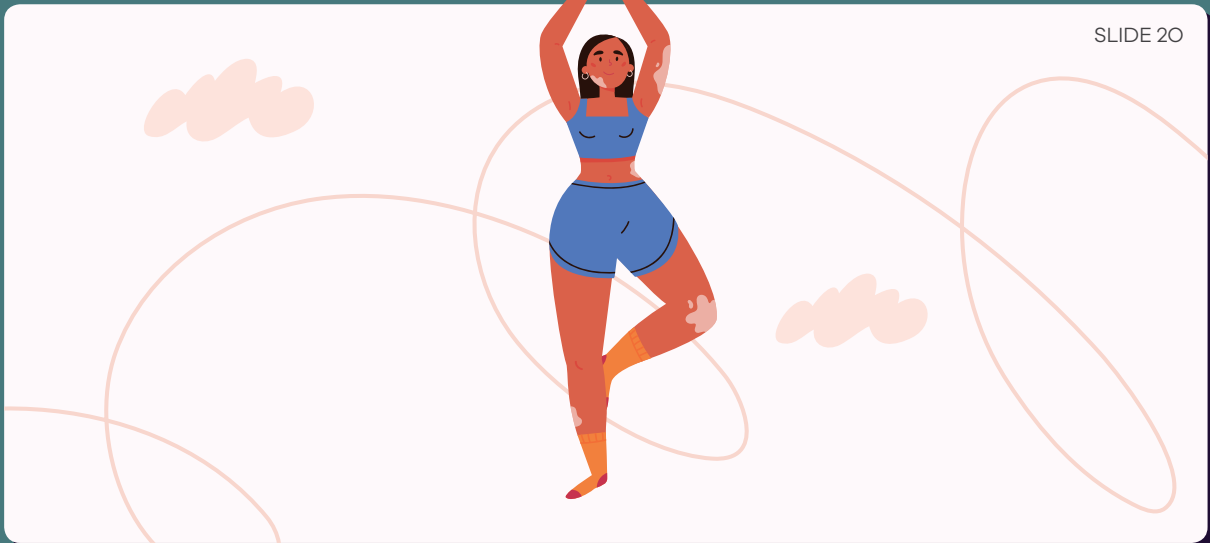
Resources needed: • Slide 20
• A mindfulness activity

Slide 20

Being in the moment



SLIDE 20



Do:

Present Slide 20.



Say:

"We'll finish the lesson with another short mindfulness exercise."



Do:

Read out the mindfulness activity you have chosen.



Say:

"That's the end of the lesson. Thank you everyone for your contributions."

Continued...



Being in the moment (continued)



Notes and troubleshooting:

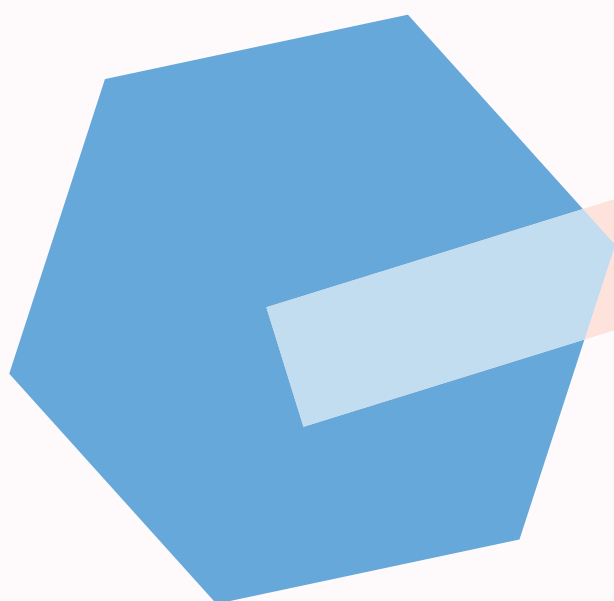
Prepare: Select a mindfulness exercise from the [Mindfulness Activities Pack](#).





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Alternative activities



Taking action 25 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 22-25
• Pens and paper

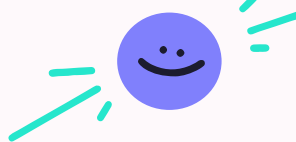
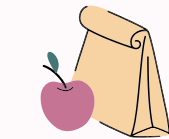
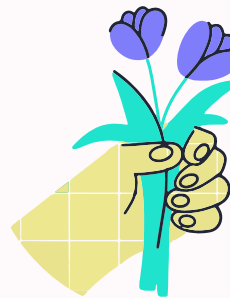
Slide 15

Taking action



SLIDE 22

Acts of kindness



Do:

Present Slide 22.



Say:

"When we think of 'being kind', a few things might come into our minds. Maybe we think about offering our seat on a bus to someone who might need it more, or putting time aside to do something you enjoy, or maybe we think about someone we know we can rely on for comfort and support."



Taking action



SLIDE 23

Kindness is choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings.



Do:

Present Slide 23.



Say:

“There are many definitions of what it means to be kind, but it is often described as choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings. By understanding our own feelings and needs, as well as those of others, and putting those needs first when we feel we are can, we can show care and compassion.

It can sometimes be easier to see how kindness helps other people, but there are many benefits for our own mental health and wellbeing.”

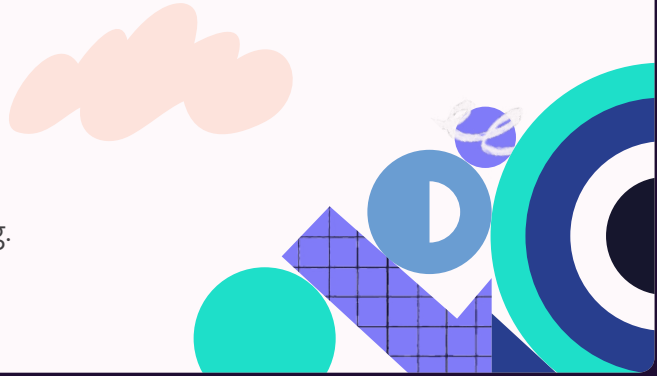
Taking action



SLIDE 24

Acts of kindness can have many benefits for our mental health and wellbeing, such as:

- Reduces stress.
- Improves mood.
- Increases self-confidence.
- Creates a sense of belonging.
- Makes us feel less lonely.



Do:

Present Slide 24.

Read the benefits listed on the slide.

Ask pupils to share their ideas of benefits to acts of kindness.

Time to discuss: 5 minutes.



Taking action



SLIDE 25

Designing a kindness campaign:

- The overall aim of the campaign.
- The activities and timings.
- The materials needed.
- The people involved in campaign set up.
- How the campaign will be promoted.



Do:

Present Slide 25.



Say:

"Kindness can be shown in many ways – to ourselves, to others, and to larger communities. We are going to think about how to encourage kindness in a bigger way in our school by designing a Kindness Campaign. This could be anything from an activity day, a themed week, a school challenge, or an after-school event – anything that encourages kindness either within your class or across the whole school."



Do:

Divide the class into small groups and hand out poster paper and pens.

Continued...



Taking action (continued)



Do:

Encourage them to think about what the campaign will involve, how long it will run for, and what they would need to set up the campaign.

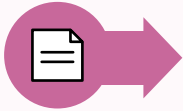
Time to complete: 10 minutes.



Do:

Invite each group to present their campaign to the class. Allow the class to ask questions or comment on the campaign idea following each presentation.

Time to present: 10 minutes.



Notes and troubleshooting

Classroom management: Explain that this exercise is helping the class to think about how they can impact their school environment.

Follow-up: It is recommended that Peer Educators could take on some of the ideas and run a Kindness Campaign in school. If Peer Learners are struggling to come up with ideas, encourage them to use the examples as inspiration:

- Charity events.
- Buddying or mentoring schemes.
- A dedicated day or week to celebrate differences (e.g. in religion, ethnicity, culture, language etc.).

Challenging thinking 25 mins



Resources needed: • Slides 26-29 • Pens and paper
• What's Up with Charlie video

Slide 26

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 26

Kindness is choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings.



Present Slide 26.



"There are many definitions of what it means to be kind, but it is often described as choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, which is motivated by genuine warm feelings. By understanding our own feelings and needs, as well as those of others, and putting those needs first when we feel we can, we can show care and compassion.



"Why is it important to be kind to ourselves?"



Invite pupils to share their thoughts.

Time to share: 5 minutes.



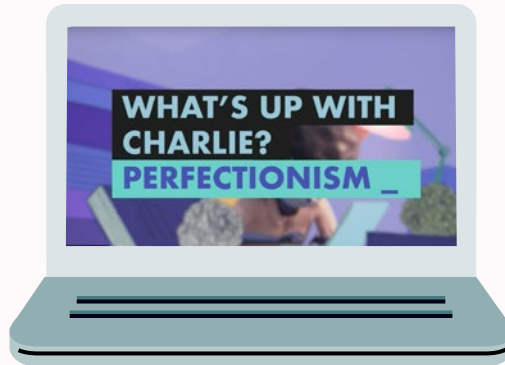
Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 27

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 27



<https://www.whatsupwitheveryone.com/perfectionism.php>



Do:

Present Slide 27.



Say:

"We are going to watch a short video about someone called Charlie, who is struggling to show self-kindness."



Do:

Play the 'What's up with Charlie?' video.



Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 28

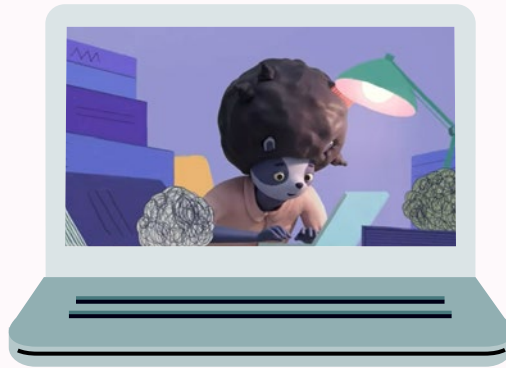
Challenging thinking



SLIDE 28

What could Charlie do to be more kind to himself in the moment, and in future situations?

What could you say or do to support Charlie?



Do:

Present Slide 28.



Ask:

Following the video, ask pupils to discuss in pairs:

- “What could Charlie do to be more kind to himself in the moment, and in future situations?”
- “What could you say or do to support Charlie?”

Time to discuss: 5 minutes.



Do:

Invite pupils to share their ideas for each question with the class.

Time to share: 5 minutes.



Challenging thinking (continued)

Slide 29

Challenging thinking



SLIDE 29

Receiving a lower-than-expected mark in an assignment.

Sitting an exam at 9am.

A friend is ignoring you at lunch time.

You want to try out for the school football team.

You feel worried about starting a new school.



Do:

Present Slide 29.



Ask:

Ask pupils to work in small groups to write top tips for showing self-kindness in one of the scenarios listed on the slide. Allocate one scenario per group.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.



Do:

Invite each group to share their scenario and top tips with the class.

Time to complete: 5 minutes.

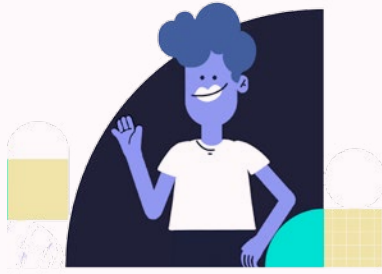


Notes and troubleshooting

Follow-up: Collate the top tips. These could be used to create an 'acts of kindness' display board, or the ideas to be used as part of an 'acts of kindness' challenge for pupils and staff.



Web of kindness resource - page 1



Lucy

Hi, I'm Lucy and last night I made my mum a cup of tea before bed. This morning, I woke up late for school. My mum had kindly prepared my packed lunch for me and said she would drop me off at school on her way to work. At lunchtime, I noticed one of my friends had forgotten their lunch, so I offered to share my lunch with them.

Sam

My name is Sam. My friend was very kind to me today and shared their packed lunch. It gave me lots of energy for my football match in the afternoon. A new pupil started with the team today – I've been the new person before, and it can be scary! So, I asked the new pupil to be partner for the drill sessions. The new pupil is really good at football!

Isiah

Hey, I'm Isiah. I joined the school's football team today. I was really worried about joining because I'm quite shy and not always very confident with making friends. But the team were so friendly, and I chatted lots with my partner for the football drills. I went home and told my dad about the team whilst we cooked dinner together.



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Web of kindness resource - page 2

Joseph

Hi, my name is Joseph. I love to cook dinner with my son and hear about his day. This evening I cooked Isiah's favourite food from a recipe my friend gave to me as she knows we love to eat anything spicy.

Anita

My name is Anita. I've been attending a local cookery class at the community centre. They recently had a recipe for a spicy chicken casserole that I knew my neighbours would want to try! The classes are run by a local café owner. She always gives me lots of encouragement with my cooking, so now I am starting to feel confident enough to share my ideas.

Jenny

Hi, my name is Jenny. I love owning my little café and passing on my cooking skills to others. I hope one day my daughter will take the business over – she is very good at making a cup of tea!



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Reflection worksheet



One thing I have learned:

One thing I would do differently:

One question I would like an answer to:





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