




**Do Now**


# What is mental health?

## An introduction lesson



Rachelle is usually a very happy and laid-back student. This week, however, has been tough. Rachelle's cat died on Monday, she later received a low grade on an art project and now she's had a row with her sister. She can't sleep and today she cried when she missed the bus. She couldn't face eating her favourite sandwich at lunchtime. Her friends say Rachelle has been acting very differently.

**Discuss: How and why is Rachelle acting differently?**



What do we mean when we talk about 'mental health'?

*I think when we talk about mental health, we mean...*

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## An introduction lesson



### **Learning outcomes:**

Describe what we mean by 'mental health'. Identify the symptoms of poor mental health.

Describe possible ways for us to retain good mental health and how we can recognise the symptoms of poor mental health.

Explain why we sometimes suffer from poor mental health and how we may be able to improve our mental health.

### **Mental health :**

*Like physical health, a measure of how well a person is, just in their mind instead of their body.*

# Watch the following clip and choose a set of challenge questions to complete on your answer sheet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxIDKZHW3-E>

- Is it normal to experience negative emotions?
  - Why did Sasha break down crying?
  - How does Andre use a simile to describe his feelings?
  - What does he compare his thoughts to?
  - Why was Andre worried about talking to his friends?
  - Who can suffer from mental health problems?
- 
- What does good mental health mean?
  - How did Sasha improve her mental health?
  - How does Andre feel when he wakes up?
  - What was the first step that started to make Andre feel better?
- 
- What is mental health? Explain.
  - What else did Andre find that helped him to improve his mental health? How?
  - Where did Sasha turn when she became worried about Andre?
  - Why?





Is it normal to experience negative emotions? YES.

Why did Sasha break down crying? She performed badly on a test.

How does Andre use a simile to describe his feelings? What does he compare his thoughts to? A flowing river and a waterfall.

Why was Andre worried about talking to his friends? He didn't think they'd understand.

Who can suffer from mental health problems? Anyone.

What does good mental health mean? Also experiencing the negative emotions.

How did Sasha improve her mental health? She took a break to do something she enjoyed.

How does Andre feel when he wakes up? Low on energy, with negative thoughts.

What was the first step that started to make Andre feel better? Speaking to someone.

What is mental health? Explain. Like physical health but the status of your emotions.

What else did Andre find that helped him to improve his mental health?

How? Exercise, talking to people.

Where did Sasha turn when she became worried about Andre? Why?

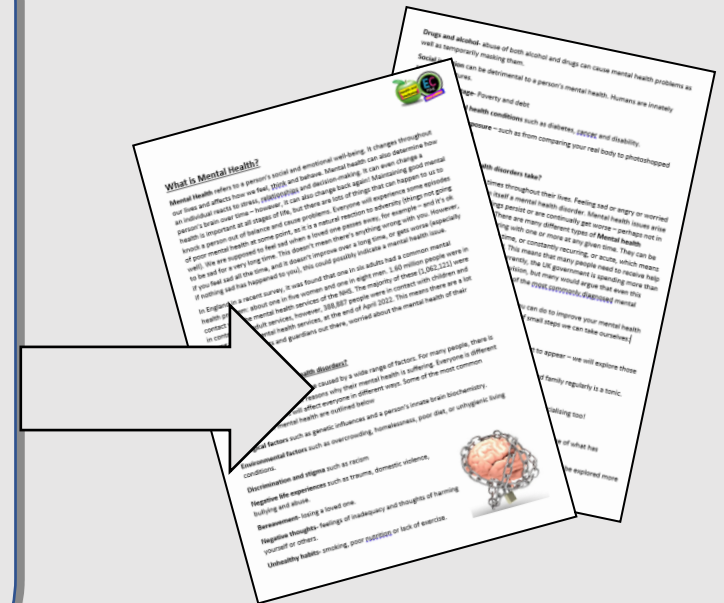
Her Head of Year. She thought he'd have some good advice.

# What is mental health? An introduction lesson



We will now find out more about what exactly mental health is and why it's so important to be aware of it.

Use your guided rulers / bookmarks to  
Follow your tutor



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## What is Mental Health?

**Mental Health** refers to a person's social and emotional well-being. It changes throughout our lives and affects how we feel, think and behave. Mental health can also determine how an individual reacts to stress, relationships and decision-making. It can even change a person's brain over time – however, it can also change back again! Maintaining good mental health is important at all stages of life, but there are lots of things that can happen to us to knock a person out of balance and cause problems. Everyone will experience some episodes of poor mental health at some point, as it is a natural reaction to adversity (things not going well). We are supposed to feel sad when a loved one passes away, for example – and it's ok to be sad for a very long time. This doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. However, if you feel sad all the time, and it doesn't improve over a long time, or gets worse (especially if nothing sad has happened to you), this could possibly indicate a mental health issue. In England in a recent survey, it was found that one in six adults had a common mental health problem: about one in five women and one in eight men. 1.60 million people were in contact with the mental health services of the NHS. The majority of these (1,062,121) were in contact with adult services, however, 388,887 people were in contact with children and young people's mental health services, at the end of April 2022. This means there are a lot of concerned parents and guardians out there, worried about the mental health of their children.

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## What can trigger mental health disorders?

Mental health problems can be caused by a wide range of factors. For many people, there is a complex combination of reasons why their mental health is suffering. Everyone is different and different factors will affect everyone in different ways. Some of the most common causes of poor mental health are outlined below

- 1. Biological factors** such as genetic influences and a person's innate brain biochemistry.
- 2. Environmental factors** such as overcrowding, homelessness, poor diet, or unhygienic living conditions.
- 3. Discrimination and stigma** such as racism
- 4. Negative life experiences** such as trauma, domestic violence, bullying and abuse.
- 5. Bereavement-** losing a loved one.
- 6. Negative thoughts-** feelings of inadequacy and thoughts of harming yourself or others.
- 7. Unhealthy habits-** smoking, poor nutrition or lack of exercise.
- 8. Drugs and alcohol-** abuse of both alcohol and drugs can cause mental health problems as well as temporarily masking them.
- 9. Social isolation** can be detrimental to a person's mental health. Humans are innately sociable creatures.
- 10. Social disadvantage-** Poverty and debt
- 11. Long term physical health conditions** such as diabetes, cancer and disability.
- 12. Social media over-exposure** – such as from comparing your real body to photoshopped bodies on social media



## What forms can mental health disorders take?

People will often face difficult times throughout their lives. Feeling sad or angry or worried in response to problems is not in itself a mental health disorder. Mental health issues arise when those perfectly natural feelings persist or are continually get worse – perhaps not in response to anything in particular. There are many different types of **Mental health disorders** and a person may be suffering with one or more at any given time.



They can be chronic; an illness persisting for a long time, or constantly recurring, or acute, which means an illness which is severe but short-lived. This means that many people need to receive help and treatment - and that costs money. Currently, the UK government is spending more than £14.31 billion pounds on mental health provision, but many would argue that even this huge amount of money is not enough. Some of the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorders are outlined below:

Remember though, there are many things that you can do to improve your mental health too keep it positive too. Here are a few examples of small steps we can take ourselves:

### **Ways to maintain positive mental health:**

Seeking professional health when the warning signs start to appear – we will explore those shortly.

Connecting and speaking with others – seeing our friends and family regularly is a tonic.

Staying positive – talk yourself up!

Getting physically active – playing sports in a team also covers socialising too!

Helping others – this makes us feel good about ourselves.

Getting enough sleep – this helps the brain repair itself and make sense of what has happened recently.

Developing resilience and coping skills – these are very important and will be explored more throughout this PD unit.

Use the mind map, image clues and your information sheet to add as many symptoms of poor mental health as you can.

Add as many symptoms of poor mental health as you can to a mind map in your book. Underneath each symptom, write one idea about how this could affect your wider life as a consequence.

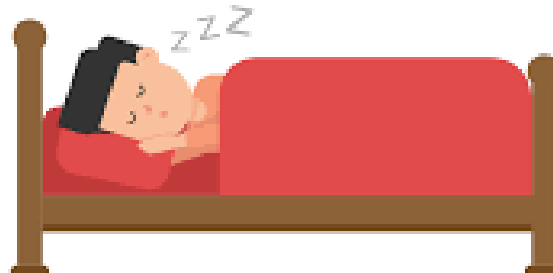
**Finished?** Explain one way a person with each symptom could possibly try to improve their mental health, in a practical way.



What symptoms could indicate a person has poor mental health?



What symptoms could indicate a person has poor mental health?



What other warning signs are there which we could have included?

Other warning signs which we could have included.

**Eating or sleeping too much or too little**

**Pulling away from people and usual activities**

**Having low or no energy**

**Feeling numb or like nothing matters**

**Having unexplained aches and pains**

**Feeling helpless and hopeless**

**Smoking, drinking, or using drugs**

**Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared**

**Yelling or fighting with family or friends**

**Experiencing severe mood swings**

**Having persistent thoughts or memories that won't go away**

**Hearing voices or believing things that are not true**

**Thinking of harming yourself or others**

**Inability to perform daily tasks.**



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# Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



## **Mental Health & Low Mood**

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>  
Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>  
Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

## **Talk to Someone**

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.  
Wellbeing Team and School Nurse  
Report a Concern on Satchel  
Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

## **Healthy Lifestyle**

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>  
Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

## **Apps That Can Help**

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.  
Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.  
Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people).  
MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

## **Eating Concerns**

Beat Eating Disorders –  
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>  
NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –  
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>