



HEADSTRONG

Cycle Against
Suicide's schools
programme

2020
EDITION

Schools Based

Activities

TOOLKIT



Introduction

Creating awareness of mental health issues and helping young people to take care of their mental health is an important task that requires everyone's involvement. As part of our evidence-based, peer to peer schools' programme, HEADSTRONG, it is young people who are key to promoting the mental health of students in schools.

Mental Health Promotion basically means creating an environment that promotes and sustains positive mental health for everyone. And yes, as a young person, you do play a key role in your own and other students' mental health. However, you may feel like you're not equipped to do so; after all you're not necessarily a mental health expert. The good news is that you don't have to be an expert to make a difference. Cycle Against Suicide's schools' programme – HEADSTRONG will build your knowledge and equip you with all you need to be a mental health champion, and if you have taken part in the summit, you are qualified to help others.



How to begin...

Our schools' programme is peer to peer education. A group of students are challenged to train the rest of the school population in your school. In order to do this effectively, you need to set up a larger committee of students to help in the implementation of our programme. This committee will support you in carrying out activities.

These school- based activities are part of Cycle Against Suicide's efforts to support young people in taking care of their mental health, addressing issues that young people deal with and sets out to help educate other students in your school. Some exercises can be easily implemented, whilst some require a little more work.

Commencement Exercise

To commence with Cycle Against Suicide schools' programme, your school HEADSTRONG Committee are required to present the Porcupine Map Exercise by way of introduction of our programme to all students.

Details of how to undertake this exercise are as follows;

Porcupine Map Exercise – Anti stigma Exercise.



Stigma is the result of negative and prejudicial stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours that people express towards those living with a mental health problem or a mental illness. Stigma is a major problem for people living with mental health issues. It undermines their self-esteem, well-being and their ability to recover.

Many do not seek help for their mental health struggles because they don't want other people to stigmatise them. The exercise below will help students understand the destructive and painful nature of stigma to those who have mental health struggles. This exercise highlights how damaging and hurtful language/words can be on people and the negative impact it can have, stopping people from seeking help.

This activity can be done at a school assembly.

Stigmatizing Language: The Porcupine Map

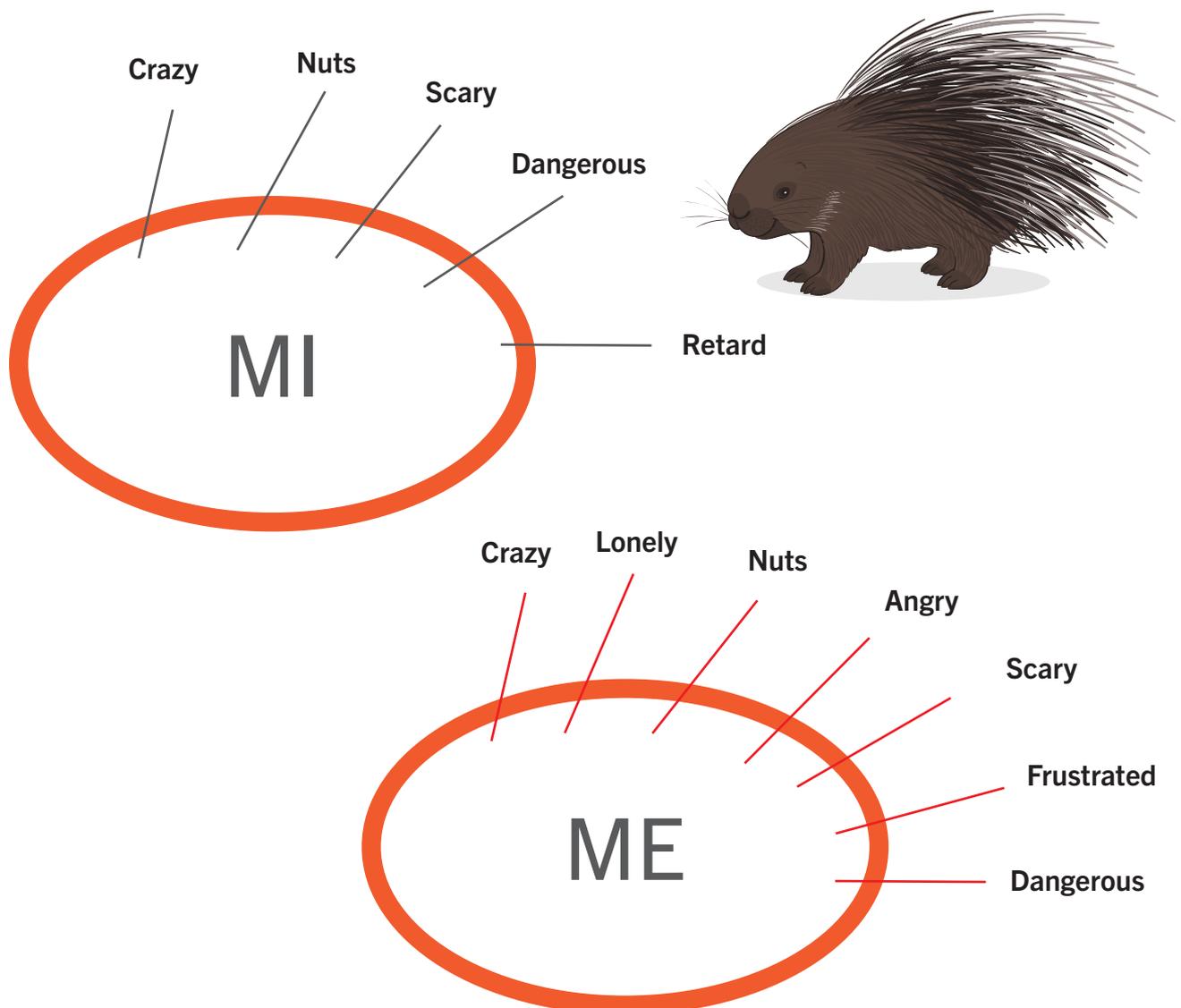
(Please also see reference video on our e-learning platform for students on how to conduct this exercise)

- › Draw an oval in the middle of the flipchart (or a porcupine if you are a good artist).
- › In the circle write the letters MI (in capitals) to signify Mental Illness.
- › Ask the class “What words does society use for describing people living with a mental illness? (i.e. crazy, psycho etc.).
- › As each student comes up with a name, draw a line from the circle outwards and write down their word at the end of the line (see example). Use a black coloured marker for this part.
- › After obtaining a large number of words (around 16), change the letters MI to ME.
- › Ask the group how they would feel if the words already obtained were used to describe them. Some might say “angry”, “sad”, etc.

- › Using a red marker, draw a line from the circle to enter the feeling words. Each feeling line should be shorter than the description lines and you should put a feeling line in between each description line.
- › When you have gone around the circle with the shorter feeling lines in between the longer, description lines, you will have a porcupine map.

Key learning:

- › The words in black are hurtful, just like a porcupine’s quills. The words in red also cause damage because if people feel “ashamed”, “worthless” or alone they end up believing that this is who they are. The fear is that if they do go to speak to someone, that person could use the words in black when talking to them. Stigma is a major barrier to seeking help.
- › Emphasise that we are seeking to get to a time when positive words are used when we talk about mental illness – e.g. courageous, hopeful, resilient etc.
- › **Note:** Briefly reflect that since 1 in 4 will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, it wouldn’t feel so good if they or a family were the recipient of stigmatising language.



After completing the Porcupine Map Exercise, the HEADSTRONG Student Committee are then, throughout the school year, required to complete the following:

3 Compulsory Themes

1 Optional Theme

1 Mental Illness

Please note: the 'Youth Mental Health' toolkit contains information on each of these topics/themes.

Exercise – Outline and Themes

Compulsory Themes – Do all three

- › Coping with Stress as an adolescent
- › Bullying
- › Look out ... How to talk about it.

Optional Themes – Choose 1

- › Eating Disorders
- › Physical Health
- › Social Media
- › LGBTQ+
- › Sport
- › Grief
- › Peer Pressure
- › Elderly

Mental illness – Choose 1

We have listed some examples of mental illness but you may choose any mental illness and can use the ‘Youth Mental Health Toolkit for these exercises. Our ‘Youth Mental Health’ toolkit provides information that will help you understand mental health generally, as well as specific mental illnesses.

- › Depression
- › Anxiety
- › Schizophrenia
- › Personality Disorder
- › OCD
- › Bipolar Disorder
- › Paranoia
- › Addiction
- › PTSD
- › Other

The essence of each theme is to promote resilience and stamp out stigma. Hence, each theme must include those 2 core ideas. Once each school has sufficiently completed their 5 themes, they will again be awarded the Cycle Against Suicide Ambassador School Award.

The core idea behind HEADSTRONG is to: Be Brave, Reach Out, Speak Up. We would hope that these core values will be embedded throughout each of the themes covered during the school year.

The following section of this Toolkit lays out examples and suggests several practical activities to aid the completion of each of your chosen themes and monthly exercises in our schools’ programme. They can be adapted as necessary to fit your specific school situation.

Examples of exercises

The following are examples of themes and activities undertaken by school/students last year. These can be used as a guide on how to complete exercises.

Completed Example 1

COMPLUSORY THEME / OPTIONAL THEME

TITLE OF THEME: Look out... how to talk about it

SCHOOL NAME: Donate Community College



WHAT WE DID:

The idea we had was for a safe space students could go to when feeling overwhelmed. We felt this was missing from our school. We floated the idea to our link teacher and the other teachers involved in the Headstrong committee and they loved it. We consulted the guidance department who asked to be involved and offered a room fit for purpose.

HOW WE DID IT:

We raised funds, designed the room and then decorated the space ourselves. We also formed a relationship with a large business who offered funding and also donated furniture to be used. The name 'Suaimhneas' was decided on as the name for the room.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The room is now used as a meeting space for the committee, as a shelter for overwhelmed students during the school day and as a space for the guidance counsellors to use for counselling sessions. It has been a huge success.

Completed Example 2

COMPLUSORY THEME / OPTIONAL THEME

TITLE OF THEME: Bullying

SCHOOL NAME: Adamstown Community College



WHAT WE DID:

Tree of Hope

Positive-i-tree Door Decoration

HOW WE DID IT:

We had a tree of hope which tied in with the theme of bullying. Students learned about bullying in class. Then they had to write a positive message on their ornament and hang it on the tree. We also had a door contest and my door was a "Positive-i-tree Door." Students learned about the importance of being kind to one another and this was a nice activity to finish the term and recap what they learned. The students wrote a positive affirmation on the decorations on the door. There was also key word vocabulary that linked in with what they learned in class that pertained to wellbeing

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Both of these activities were great visual reminders of how important it is to create a kind atmosphere in the school community. The Headstrong Team organised the supplies and it was a student lead initiative where they helped younger students to participate in both activities.

Completed Example 3

COMPLUSORY THEME / OPTIONAL THEME

TITLE OF THEME: Coping With Stress

SCHOOL NAME: Adamstown Community College



WHAT WE DID

Stress Awareness Wall

Life Hacks Wall

HOW WE DID IT:

The Headstrong Team compiled a list of tips for dealing with stress in the lead up to the house exams and the mocks. They made a visual display at the main entrance of the school for all students to see and take note of. The team also organised a wellbeing class for sixth years to help them deal with stress. They had a relaxing time coming up with a funny and unusual 'life hack' and adding them to the wall.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The stress awareness wall was a great activity for helping the whole school community to learn about different ways to combat stress.

The life hacks activity was a great way for students to take a break from the stress of exams and be creative in their hacks.

Exercise Template to be Completed on Our E-Learning Platform

Please complete this exercise template in the appropriate section on our e-learning platform for each of the themes chosen by you. This template records the exercises completed by your school and your attainment of our Ambassador School status and Award.

COMPLUSORY THEME / OPTIONAL THEME	
TITLE OF THEME:	
SCHOOL NAME:	
IMAGE 1	IMAGE 2
WHAT WE DID:	
HOW WE DID IT:	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	

Section Two – Exercise Examples

This section of the toolkit presents exercises that can be used as part of the programme or as suggested ideas.

Part 1: List of Exercises/ideas compiled by Cycle Against Suicide Student Leader Ambassadors

Part 2: Exercises compiled by Cycle Against Suicide.

Exercises compiled by Cycle Against Suicide Student Leader Ambassadors.

Compulsory Themes- Do all 3:

1. Coping with stress as an adolescent

- › 'You me and cup of tea' or Tae agus Caint.
- › Mindfulness.
- › Guest speakers.
- › Backwards sticky notes - write what you are worried about on the sticky side. Post it on classroom wall, only the teacher sees the back. Blank to the rest of the class.
- › Ice breaker event with 1st year and 6th year to increase inclusion.
- › 'Time out and look forward'- goal setting.

2. Bullying

- › Invite guest speakers on privacy on social media.
- › Presentation/Project on Cyberbullying and how to deal with it.
- › Set up a 'one good adult' system for a certain cohort of students.
- › Create a social hub at lunch where HEADSTRONG committee members can be to promote inclusion of all.
- › Promote the 'Granny rule' on social media - if it is not suitable for your granny to see it – it is not suitable for social media. This could be promoted after a presentation/project on the social media, its impact, the dangers associated with it and how it can therefore negatively impact mental health.

3. Look out... how to talk about it

- › A problem shared is a problem halved - any project/presentation with this idea at its core.
- › Teach students about confidentiality involved with sharing; boundaries.
- › Discuss 'what do you do if you think your friend is struggling?' - perhaps pick a year group/SPHE class to centre this on.
- › Make a designated teacher list- teachers available for students to reach out to in school.
- › Monthly/fortnightly catch up with form teacher - could use surveys to keep anonymous.
- › Buddy system with seniors and juniors.

Optional Themes – Choose 3:

1. Eating disorders

- › Awareness needed on the multitude of eating disorders - noticeboard, assembly presentations.
- › Bodywhys offer amazing guest speakers.
- › Bodybuilding- idea behind micros and macros and impact on the body. Also, the impact on the body if someone ceases to train at that level and the impact it can have on their mentality.
- › Research project on celebs that have had an eating disorder and beaten it.
- › Project to stamp out Home Economics 'only for girls' stereotype.

2. Physical health

- › Clan competition (similar idea to Hogwarts houses) - award points system via form groups. Not all students want to play GAA, soccer and the 'classic' sports. This way inclusion is promoted for all. Does not have to be based on sport but the layout and structure is fantastic.
- › Set up walking train/park and stride - links in the green flag also - to link in with the positive impact exercise has on mental health.

- › Assembly on exercise and its benefits.
- › Downfalls of sports - pressure, expectations, stigma associated with it and also ways to promote resilience.

3. Social media

- › No phone in school for a week event.
- › Set up a meeting space at lunch for 2 years' groups to meet and socialise face to face. 'Meet someone new'.
- › Online safety talk – Gardaí.
- › Social media detox.
- › Encourage turn off active status on social media.

4. Body image

- › Project on/noticeboard about the idea of 'Appearance vs Reality'.
- › Can use before and after video of Photoshops.
- › Celebrate individuality.
- › Poll and discussion on Instagram's new setting that hides likes from others.
- › Project on body awareness and the stereotypes associated with it.

5. LGBTQ+

- › Awareness noticeboard of the terminology used and what it means.
- › Discussion on how most people isolate groups e.g. gay bar, straight bar.
- › Brainstorm how parental and societal awareness can be created.

6. Sport

- a. Benefits to mental health.
- b. Guest speakers (male and female sport stars).
- c. Event: 10 at 10 (10 minutes of exercise at 10am).
- d. Increased awareness of Special Olympics and Paralympians.
- e. Introduce other sports/games to the school outside of the 'classic' sports - less competition, more fun!

7. Grief

- › Create a board about the 5 stages of grief.
- › Learn about the types of grief - not always the same, not always about death.
- › Provide info on support groups/helplines.
- › How to treat someone going through grief.
- › Support outside of those directly affected - sensitivity in school on this matter.
- › Light bulb for anyone that has passed - a display, such as fairy lights, in school.



8. Peer pressure

- › Underlying problem that links to all other issues.
- › Links to drugs and alcohol and their impact on mental health.
- › Create situations that young people relate to and how to react and deal with such a situation.
- › Quote idea: shape life on morals not on materials.

9. Elderly

A lot of elderly people may not have family to visit to them. This has a negative impact on their mental health and small gestures that we do can make a huge difference. Examples:

- › Gardening lessons.
- › Trade of skills e.g. young people teach the elderly how to use a mobile phone/internet and the elderly could teach the young people a different skill like knitting.
- › Silver Surfers idea (IT for seniors, taught by young people).
- › Festive events - Christmas shoe boxes.
- › Elderly make a wish - students try to grant it.

Many nursing homes are more than happy to link in with schools on an idea like this!

Mental Illnesses - Choose 2

- › Depression
- › Anxiety
- › Schizophrenia
- › Personality Disorder
- › OCD
- › Bipolar
- › Paranoia
- › Addiction
- › PTSD
- › ADHD
- › Other

Can be used for all of the above:

- › Mind maps of what people think it is - sticky notes for people to place on noticeboard.
- › Mind map of what it actually is.
- › 3 things that make you feel better and display.
- › Create artistic representation of the term to enhance creativity.
- › Worksheet in wellbeing class:
 - » 3 things you like about yourself.
 - » 3 hopes/dreams.
 - » 3 things that make you feel strong.
- › Wall in school with a massive mindful colouring sheet, students can colour at breaks/lunches or at times of stress.
- › Anonymous box near staff room - keeps staff aware of any issues without a student having to identify themselves directly.

Part 2: - Exercises compiled by Cycle Against Suicide

Activity 1: Stand Against Silence

The stigma associated with mental illness causes people to remain silent rather than seek help. Having someone reach out can make a big difference. This exercise is designed to help people see that it is OK to seek help, it is OK to offer help, and it is OK to speak up for mental health.

- › Have students get into three groups.
- › Group One develops a campaign to encourage students to speak up when they are going through a tough time or struggling with their mental health.

Suggested slogan: Talk to me. Silence isn't the answer.

- › Group Two works on a campaign that encourages students to initiate conversation with someone they are worried about.

Suggested slogan: If you're worried about me, ask me how I'm doing.

- › Group Three works on a campaign to eradicate stigmatising language.
- › Come up with posters that educate on the meaning of often-misused mental health terms, e.g.:
 - » When someone you know misuses a mental health term (for instance saying "I'm OCD" to describe a simple preference for something, or referring to indecision as schizophrenia), let them know and educate them about the correct meaning.
 - » When someone says something negative about a person with mental

illness, tells a joke that ridicules mental illness, or makes disrespectful comments about mental illness, let them know that it is hurtful.

Suggested slogan: My mental health is not a joke.

- › Designate one day as Stand against Silence Day. At assembly have each group share the focus of their campaign. At the end of the Assembly, encourage everyone to “shout for mental health”.

Key Learning: The exercise normalises the act of reaching out to others who may be going through tough times

Activity 2: Coping with stress

Stress is quite common among teenagers, especially during the school year. If it persists at high levels for a long time, it can cause damage to a person’s mental health, so it is important to manage stress. The following activity can help students cope with stress better.

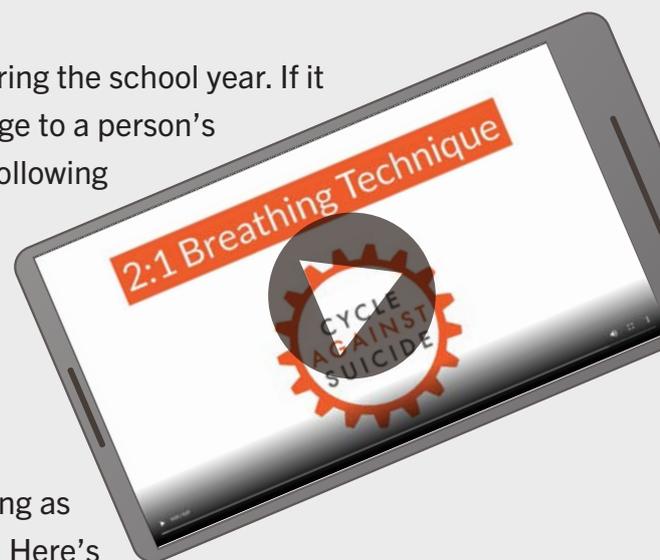
Deep Breathing

Play Breathing video for students:

http://www.cycleagainstsucide.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2-1-Breathing-Technique_v3.mp4

Introduce and demonstrate the concept of deep breathing as a stress reduction strategy that can be used at any time. Here’s how to do it:

- › Stand with a comfortable space between each other or seated in a chair.
- › Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart.
- › Relax your body.
- › Close your eyes.
- › Focus on your belly and imagine a small balloon inside it.
- › Breath in slowly and deeply through your nostrils and imagine the balloon inflating.
- › Place one hand over your belly to feel it go up, and make sure you’re not breathing with your chest.



- › Hold the balloon in that inflated position for a few seconds.
- › Slowly exhale through your mouth and imagine the balloon gently deflating. Keep your hand over your belly to feel it go down, and make sure you're not breathing with your chest.
- › Blow out of your mouth as if blowing out a candle.
- › Repeat at least 10 times.

Ask students how different their bodies feel after the exercise.

Stress Wall

- › Have your school designate a wall in the school as a stress management wall.
- › Place a massive mindful colouring sheet on it that students can colour at breaks/lunches or whenever they feel under stress.

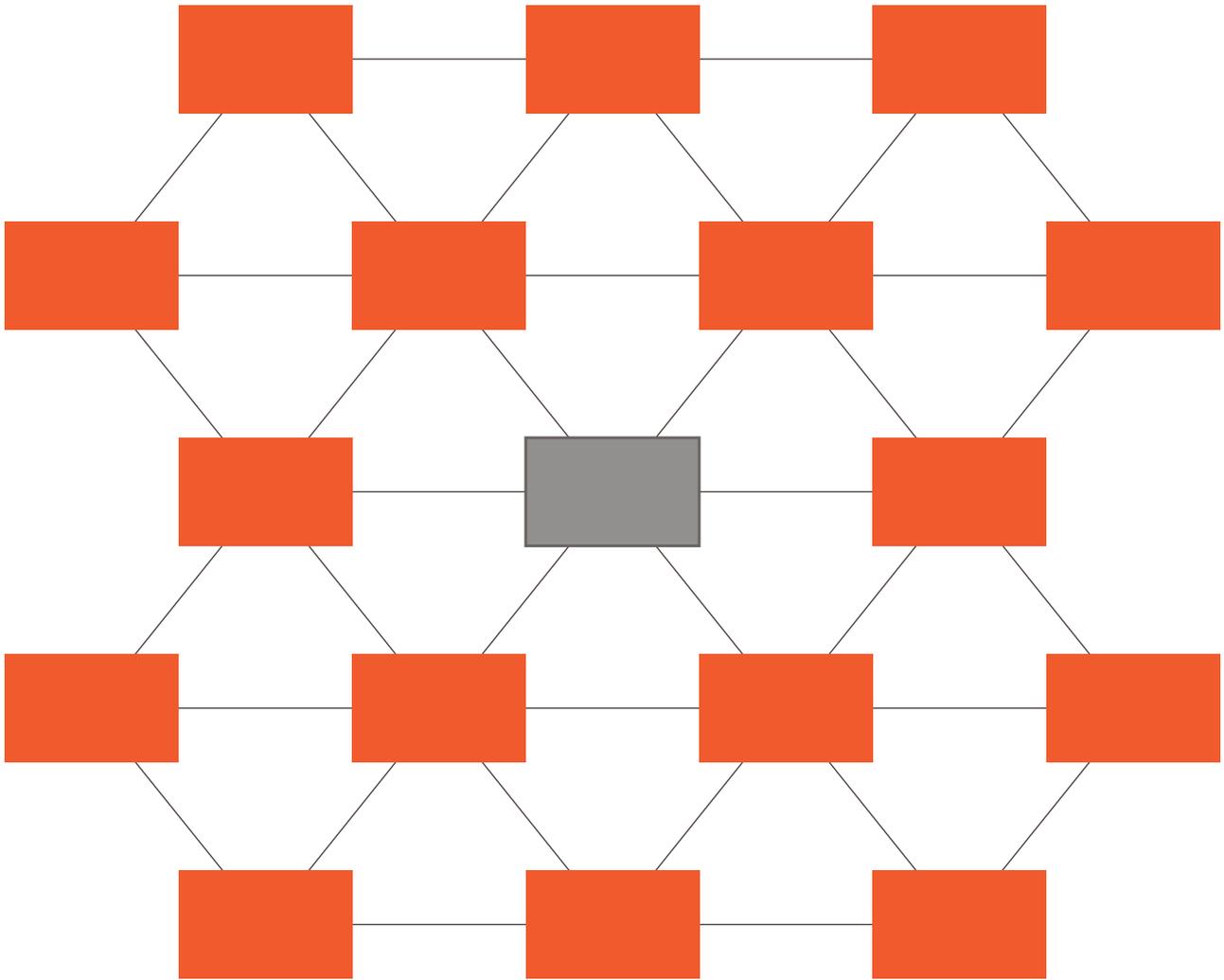
Activity 3: What is...?

There are many different mental illnesses (see accompanying toolkit for types and descriptions of mental illnesses). A lot of attitudes towards mental illnesses comes out of ignorance, but when people get to understand what the illness is, they can seek help or provide support to those suffering from it. This activity is meant to help students better understand particular mental illnesses.

Instructions:

Pick an illness from the toolkit and do the following exercise around it.

- › Create a mind map of what people think the illness is. You can write the name of the illness on a notice board and have students write on sticky notes what they think the illness is.
- › Have them place the sticky notes around the word.
- › You can also create the mind map by printing out a large chart like the one on the following page:



- › Next create a mind map of what that illness actually is, using words that describe its characteristics, who can suffer from it and that it can be treated.

Key learning:

- › Were students surprised to learn a particular fact about the illness that they didn't know before?
- › Ask how this new information changes how they see people who suffer from that illness.

Activity 4: Managing Your Emotions

Emotions are powerful indicators of what is going on deep inside us. Being in touch with your emotions is one of the best ways to manage your mental health. The following exercise will help students to be aware of their emotions throughout the day, so they can recognise patterns or any red flags.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is being conscious or aware of something. You can be aware of your mental state by focusing on your emotions in the present moment. How are you feeling right now? What are you doing? Are you experiencing any particular body sensations? What thoughts are coming to your mind? Asking yourself these questions will help you figure out where you are mentally and whether it's a state you like being in or you want to do something about.

Throughout the day, use emojis to track how you are feeling. If you find that your moods follow a disturbing pattern, e.g. if you feel sad or anxious most of the time, speak to an adult. Show them this tracker so they can help you find the right help.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

I feel...



Happy



Sad



Anxious



Calm



Angry



Worried



Excited



Fearful



Crying



Hyper



Confused



Tired

Backwards sticky notes

- › Write something that you are worried about on the sticky side of the sticky note. Post it on your classroom wall. Only your teacher will see the back, while it remains blank to the rest of the class.

Activity 5: Resilience

Resilience can refer to the ability to recover after suffering a setback. It includes one's ability to handle life's ups and downs in positive ways. Resilience is important for your mental health as it can help you maintain your wellbeing in difficult circumstances. It can also protect you from mental health problems like depression and anxiety (see accompanying toolkit for more information). The following activities are great ways to build resilience:

I'm grateful for...

Research shows that being grateful for what you have is one of the best ways to build resilience. Focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of your life will improve your well-being. The following exercises will help you with that.

- › Download a gratitude journal for your phone. Believe it or not, there are actually gratitude apps for both iOS and Android that you can download! Some even incorporate pictures, emojis and allow you to sync with your calendar.
- › Every day for the next week, write down 3-5 things that you are grateful for.
- › If there are people in your life that you are grateful for, especially if they keep coming up every day in your gratitude journal, write them a letter of gratitude and let them know they are special to you.

Activity 6: What Mental Health Means to Me

The subject of mental health as a whole is important for young people. By creating an atmosphere that focuses the attention of everyone in your school on the same subject, you can get people to pay attention to their mental health. This school-wide activity will encourage people to come up with creative ways of talking about mental health, and thus generate more interest.

Creativity competitions

- › Host a whole school competition for a song that describes “what mental health means to me”.
- › Host an art competition in which students discuss mental health using images, including photography. They can also create documentaries and vlogs.

Let’s talk about it – with respect

- › Get students in groups to discuss “what do you do if you think your friend is struggling?” with their mental health.
- › Write the word ‘**CONFIDENTIALITY**’ on the board and ask students to say what they think it means and why it is important when discussing mental health.
- › Create a “Designated Teacher” list, i.e. a list of teachers available for students to reach out to in school.

Have a teacher come and discuss the concept of confidentiality with students. We all want our friends to open up to us about their problems, but we must respect boundaries and their privacy by not gossiping, joking about or make light of their problems to other people.

Activity 7: Bullying

Research shows that 1 in 2 young people will, at some point, experience bullying. As a result, 1 in 3 will self-harm, grades will drop and 14% will develop eating disorders.

- › Hold a school assembly to discuss bullying. The assembly can be led by students as part of an Anti-Bullying Week or at any time of the year.
- › Visual activities make a stronger impact on people, so show a video that demonstrates the impact of bullying.

140-character posters

- › Have students design anti-bullying posters to place around the school. The catch is that each poster cannot more than 140 characters on it, so students need to choose their words wisely. This can be done either in pairs or as a group task.

Social media and bullying

- › Invite a guest speaker to make a presentation on Cyberbullying and how to deal with it.
- › Hold a week-long campaign called the ‘GRANNY RULE CAMPAIGN.’ The campaign focuses on what is acceptable to post on social media – if it is not suitable for your granny to see it, it is not suitable for social media.
- › During the Granny Rule Campaign, hold other mini-events for each day, e.g.:
 - » Inter-grade school debate on the pros and cons of being able to turn off the “like” buttons on social media.
 - » A social media detox day, where all students turn off their active status on social media.
 - » “Speak Up For Me” Day. For one hour of the school day, students tape their mouths shut and can’t talk to their friends. Explain that the reason is to understand how it feels to be bullied and not be able to tell anyone about it. This is why it is necessary for us to speak up when we see others being bullied because they may be too afraid or shy to tell anyone.

Key Learning

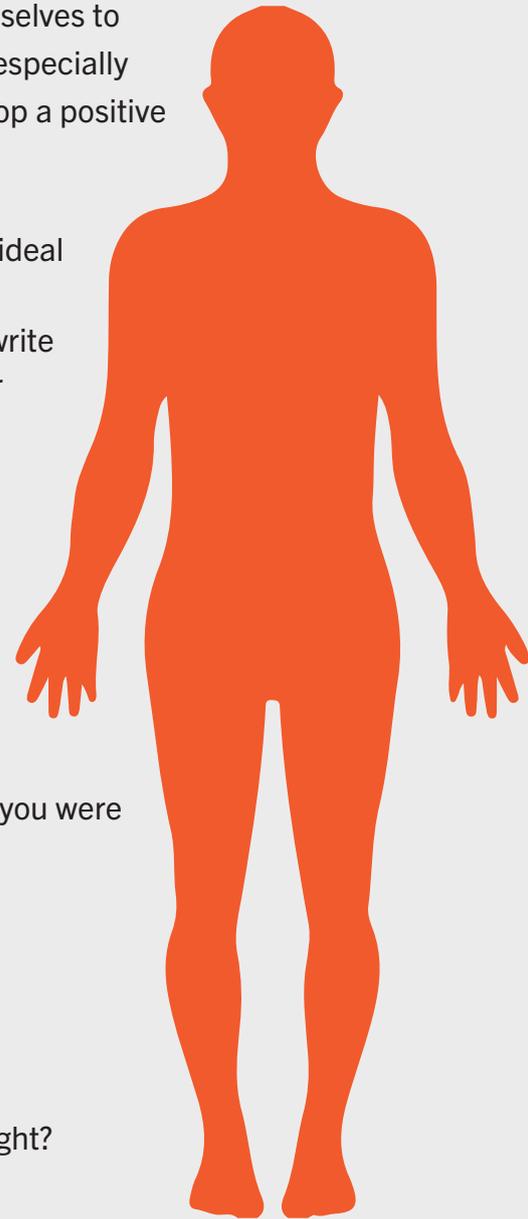
These activities encourage students to check their own behaviour when it comes to bullying and offers them guidance and encouragement to intervene in bullying situations, when appropriate.

Activity 8: Body Image

Negative body image can have a harmful impact on people. They feel they are “less than” if they don’t look a certain way, especially if they compare themselves to celebrities. But appearance can be quite different from reality, especially with photoshop. This activity is designed to help students develop a positive self-image.

My ideal man/woman

- › Ask students to mention names of individuals who look the ideal way a man or woman should look.
- › Using a blank silhouette like the one below, have students write in some general characteristics as to ideal race, height, hair colour, body shape, etc.



How's Your Body Image?

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you find yourself obsessing about your body? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you ever put off activities or relationships until you are a certain size? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Would losing or gaining weight make you feel like you were a better person? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you see certain foods as “good” or “bad”? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel guilty after you eat? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel uncomfortable in your body? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you used unhealthy ways to gain or lose weight? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel like you can only be happy if you are a certain size? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you find yourself thinking negatively about your body? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you think changing part of your body would make parts of your life better? |

If you answered yes to 4 or more questions, you may have an unhealthy image of yourself. Try instead to look at the things that are great about you. List four things you like about yourself.

Three things

This activity is designed to help students recognise that people are different in many ways, including physically. We can change some of these differences, but others cannot be changed. Changes in our physical bodies during puberty are natural and we cannot control them. We need to focus on accepting others and ourselves and being the best that we can be, including maintaining our health.

- › Have students sit together in groups to discuss what they think about body image. After the discussion, students list:
 - » Three ways different people are unique or different from each other.
 - » Three stereotypes associated with different people.
 - » Three things that are wrong with stereotypes.
 - » Three things they can do that will promote acceptance in your school and help other students appreciate the unique qualities in others and within themselves.

Build self-esteem exercise

- › Each student starts with a large sheet of coloured construction paper taped to their backs.
- › Each person moves around the room and writes at least one positive comment on every other person's paper.
- › Comments should draw attention to that person's strengths or what they like about that person.
- › When finished, ask students to remove the paper and read what others have said about them.
- › Open discussion should follow based on the comments shared.

Key Learning

We are different and we can celebrate our differences, rather than feeling we have to be like other people.

Activity 9: Substance abuse/addiction

- › Designate a week as Drug Awareness week and carry out awareness raising activity about drug abuse and its problems.
- › Have students sign up for and take the free interactive online course the Truth about Drugs https://www.drugfreeworld.org/course/lesson/the-truth-about-drugs/?start=1&utm_source=bottom-block
- › The programme helps young people to understand:
 - » Scientific facts about how drugs work and how they affect the body and mind
 - » The truth about the most commonly abused drugs and what they do
 - » The lies drug dealers will tell you to turn you into a customer
- › After the online course, have students create posters about what they learnt.
- › What do they think are the underlying issues that cause people to take drugs and alcohol?
- › Discuss the impact of peer pressure.

In need of support

If you or someone you care about has a mental health issue, know that you are not alone. There are people and organizations that can provide the support you need. A full list of support agencies is available at: <http://www.cycleagainstsucide.com/help-in-your-area/>

Cycle Against Suicide

Cycle Against Suicide is a national awareness charity that strives to break down the barriers around mental illness and works to increase awareness of the supports and treatments that are available to empower those affected. We have been at the forefront of building resilience in young people by providing evidence-based, youth-focused programmes in schools and communities.

For further information on getting your school involved in Cycle Against Suicide's schools programme, please contact: info@cycleagainstsucide.com

Photography throughout is courtesy of Unsplash. With thanks to photographers, in order of appearance: Tim Mossholder, Helena Lopes

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Supporters - Thank You

One in three young people in Ireland will experience some form of mental health issue in any given year. It is important therefore to empower young people with the tools they need to recognise, understand and deal with mental health issues.

Cycle Against Suicide Secondary School's Programme – HEADSTRONG supports mental health education in schools, reduces stigma and promotes resilience.

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HEADSTRONG

Cycle Against
Suicide's schools
programme

2020
EDITION

Schools Based

Activities

TOOLKIT