

Understanding mental health

Mental health is like physical health

Some days we feel great.

Sometimes we're not feeling at our best but we're OK and we can carry on with day to day activities.

Sometimes we have wounds we need to take special care of.

Occasionally we feel really bad and might need to seek help from others

This week we are looking at

Stay Connected - How to support a friend

- If a friend is having a hard time it can be difficult to know if we're saying or doing the right thing
- If the problem is serious, or if we do not feel okay in ourselves, then the best thing to do is let other people help. But a little support might be all your friend needs
- Helping others is good for our own mental health – we see them feeling better and feel good about ourselves
- When a friend opens up to us it can be easier for us to open up to them

Emotional Check-in

Notice your emotions

Notice your mood and what makes you feel better or worse



Build Skills

Set yourself a challenge – now is a great time to learn a new skill

Choose a set time and place to complete school work



Be Healthy

Keep to a healthy routine

If you're feeling sluggish and tired you probably need to move!



Talking to a friend having a hard time

- When chatting about how they are doing, try to empathise with the way they are feeling first
- Be a good listener, allow them to talk without jumping in to offer advice straight away
- If you're worried about them, try to be calm but be honest with them that you're concerned. This might be all they need
- If they don't want to talk about why they are having a hard time, don't push them to talk. Just being there for them and giving them time might be enough
- If it seems like they are really struggling and you're not sure what to do, or you're worried about them, encourage them to talk to an adult

Looking after yourself so you can be a good friend

- Remember, it isn't your responsibility to 'fix' your friend or their problems. But you can be a part of what helps them
- Make sure you have people you can go to if you feel overwhelmed
- Look after yourself by doing things you enjoy, being healthy (eating well, exercising and sleeping), and having time with other friends and family who aren't having such a hard time
- Ask yourself whether the friendship seems balanced - do they still ask about you, do you feel able to talk to them about you and what's happening in your life? If it isn't balanced, is this a new thing or is there a problem in the friendship?
- Know when you've reached your limits – don't feel guilty telling them you think they need to talk to someone else

Stay Connected

It's really important to stay connected with friends, social groups and family - online, phone or post

Check out *Thinkuknow* or *Own It*



Be In the Moment

Calm your body and mind - it's important to take a break from our thoughts even only for a few minutes

The more you practice the more it will help when you most need it



Please contact your GP if you are concerned about your own mental health or someone within your family

Also visit www.epicfriends.co.uk