



**loudmouth**  
education & training through theatre

# LESSON PLAN E-BOOK FOR KS3 & KS4 Mental Wellbeing



# Anxiety & Relationships

## Age Range:

11-16, Years 7+,  
KS3 & KS4

## Topics Covered:

Mental Wellbeing

## Time:

30 minutes

## Equipment needed:

A clear space to work in.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Children have an increased understanding of the importance of good emotional health and mental wellbeing.
- Children have an increased empathy for those who have anxiety and poor mental wellbeing.
- Children have increased knowledge of relevant and appropriate services that can support children on mental wellbeing.

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles

**An exercise to explore the feeling of anxiety and the impact it can have on someone's life and their relationships.**

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and reflective learning to look at how feeling anxious can affect someone's life and their relationships.

## Exercise

Have the group sat in a circle and start the exercise by reading out the following statement:

**'Daz is 15 years old. He hasn't been feeling himself recently and is worrying about things he doesn't usually worry about. He is unsure why he is feeling this way and doesn't know what to do.'**

Ask the following question:

- **'How might this be affecting Daz?'**

Go around the group for answers.

Ask each person to create the name of a character and what relationship that person has to Daz e.g. Kay, his best mate from school, or Mrs Bree his form tutor. Ask the group to think from that character's point of view. Go around the group and ask each person to say the name of their character, what their relationship is to Daz and one fact about their relationship e.g. how long they have known each other, what they do together, etc.

Go around the circle again and ask each person to answer the following question as their character:

- **'How do you think Daz might be feeling and why?'**

As an additional question to the characters:

- **'How is this impacting your relationship with Daz?'**

Once you have gone around the group and heard everyone's responses, explain that Daz might have something called anxiety, which is a condition that causes you to feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than one specific event.

Run a discussion on the impact that feeling anxious regularly might be having on Daz, his mental wellbeing and his relationships, answering as themselves. Ask the group, who could Daz talk to about his feelings? How might Daz feel after speaking to one of these people? How might this help his mental wellbeing?

## Summary

Recap on all the people and places that could offer support to young people who may experience feeling anxious regularly, including those that might not have been mentioned such as Childline, other staff at their school and services in the local area.

# Body Image and Self Esteem

## Age Range:

11-16, Years 7+,  
KS3 & KS4

## Topics Covered:

Mental Wellbeing

## Time:

30-40 minutes

## Equipment needed:

A clear space to work in

**An exercise to explore how negative comments can lead to negative body image and result in poor mental wellbeing.**

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and reflective learning to develop an understanding of how negative comments can affect a young person's body image and mental wellbeing.

As an introductory exercise, split the group into smaller teams and ask them to spend 5-10 minutes researching different services that provide mental health support for young people.

## Exercise

Explain that you are going to explore a situation involving a young person called Charlie. Read out the following information – **'Charlie is 14 years old. Recently some of their friends at school have made some negative comments about the way they look.'**

Ask the group to stand up and create two lines of equal length facing each other, with a gap between the two lines to allow someone to walk through. This technique is known as Conscience Alley and uses the 'alley' or gap in the middle to explore different feelings and develop strategies.

Ask for a volunteer from the group and say that they are going to be 'Charlie'. It is not important whether the person is male or female. Explain that in a moment you will ask 'Charlie' to zig zag their way through the 'alley' approaching everyone in the two lines. Explain that as 'Charlie' approaches people in the lines that they are to say out loud how 'Charlie' might feel about these comments or how the comments might be affecting 'Charlie'. They can repeat answers that have already been said if they agree or say pass if they can't think of a response. Once the volunteer 'Charlie' has been down the alley ask them what thoughts or feelings they can remember. The group can help 'Charlie' out by reminding them of the suggestions if any were missed. Ask 'Charlie' to be themselves and to re-join the lines. Then discuss the different feelings and impacts.

As a group, discuss what 'Charlie' could do. To focus on support, run the 'alley' exercise again asking for a new volunteer to be 'Charlie'. This time the people in the alley should, as themselves, offer 'Charlie' some advice on who they think 'Charlie' should tell or talk to about this situation. Use the research task from the start to ensure services such as Childline, Young Minds and others are mentioned and which members of staff at their school can also help.

## Summary

Explore the importance of getting help and support around these issues and recapping the main people and places for support on mental health. Explain that if someone like 'Charlie' is struggling with low self-esteem and body confidence, they should tell an adult they trust or a service like Childline.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an increased understanding of the importance of good emotional health and mental wellbeing.
- Young people have an increased awareness and empathy of the impact that bullying can have on someone's mental wellbeing.
- Young people have an increased knowledge of the support services available for mental health.

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles



# Reframing Unhelpful Thoughts

**This exercise can be used to reinforce key messages about positive, healthy thinking.**

## Age Range:

11+, Year 7+,  
KS3, KS4

## Topics Covered:

Mental Wellbeing

## Time:

30-40 minutes

## Equipment needed:

A clear space. Paper,  
pens.

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and reflective learning to understand how to identify unhelpful thoughts and reframe them into healthier thoughts and positive thinking.

## Exercise

In a large circle have a brief discussion on how negative/unhelpful feelings and opinions might impact someone's life.

Read out the following statement: **'Nat is 15 years old and regularly struggles to think positively about her day to day life, including her upcoming GCSE's, the time she spends on social media and her relationships.'**

Discuss Nat and her feelings with the group:

- **What kind of things might be going on in Nat's day to day life?** *E.g. GCSE exams, social media, relationships (e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend, family, friends). 'etc.'*
- **How might these negative / unhelpful thoughts affect Nat?** *Explore the impact on her education, relationships etc.*

Explain to the group that when people have unhelpful thoughts, there is opportunity to reframe them into healthier thoughts and feelings. It may not necessarily change the situation, but it can put things into a healthier perspective which may change someone's experience of the situation.

Hand out the worksheet or complete this exercise on an interactive whiteboard as a class. On the left-hand side there is a list of events that have happened in Nat's life. In the next column are some short and simple statements which use unhelpful language. In the third column, ask the group to reframe these unhelpful statements into healthy ones or to find more positive possibilities. In the final column, discuss the possible impacts these changes could have on Nat's mental wellbeing. There is a blank sheet for the group to think of their own events and reframe any unhelpful thoughts into healthy, positive ones. These could be things that the group have experienced themselves; or statements you wish to explore.

## Summary

Sum up by asking the group how reframing unhelpful thoughts could improve someone's mental wellbeing, and people/places that someone could go to for help and support around their mental wellbeing.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an **increased understanding of the importance of good emotional health and mental wellbeing.**
- Young people have an **increased ability to identify a range of effective strategies for looking after their own mental wellbeing.**

**This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:**

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles

# Healthy, Happy, Helpful Thoughts

Event	Unhelpful	Healthy	Impact
Something has happened in Nat's life	Nat's first thoughts (can be more than one)	Possible healthy thoughts (can get as many as possible)	How might reframing her thoughts help Nat's wellbeing?
Nat gets a bad grade in her first mock exam	<p>"There isn't enough time in the day to revise everything"</p> <p>"There is no point trying"</p>	<p>"It was a mock so I've got time to improve"</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"I could ask a friend to revise together"</p>	By spending time with friends, Nat might find that others are facing the same stress and be able to help each other.
Nat's new Instagram post hasn't got many likes	"I look terrible"		
Nat's boyfriend/girlfriend isn't texting back	"They're obviously not happy, I must have done something wrong"		
Nat's parents have told her she needs to get a part time job	"They don't understand how much I've got on at the moment"		
Nat has accidentally lost her sisters bracelet	"She is going to hate me. I'll lie and say it was stolen"		
Nat often has music rehearsals at lunchtime	"I can't be bothered to rush to the canteen, so I'll just skip lunch"		

Event	Unhelpful	Healthy	Impact
Something has happened in Nat's life	Nat's first thoughts (can be more than one)	Possible healthy thoughts (can get as many as possible)	How might reframing her thoughts help Nat's wellbeing?

# Man up!... Men and Mental Health

## Age Range:

11+, Years 7+,  
KS3+

## Topics Covered:

Mental Wellbeing, Men's  
Health

## Time:

20-30 minutes

## Equipment needed:

Copies of the worksheet

**An exercise to explore the myths and stereotypes around males and mental health.**

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking to explore how stereotypical views about men and mental health might affect people and cause unrealistic expectations.

## Exercise

Handout the grid provided below to the young people either individually, or in 2s or 3s to create more discussion and team work.

Ask the group to fill in the grid, where they change unhealthy myths around men and mental health into more truthful, helpful statements. Use the example as a guide to follow and complete the rest.

Once this has been completed, the group can start to make up their own myths/statements around men and mental health (if internet access is possible, they may want to look online for ideas). Then swap with other people/teams to try resolve them.

As an optional addition, share ideas as a whole group and discuss why there might be these myths around mental health and why it is less commonly talked about in men.

## Summary

Recap the groups ideas to finish. Run a discussion on where someone can go to for help and support around mental health and the importance of talking to someone about it, for example Young Minds and Childline.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an increased understanding of the importance of talking about mental health and wellbeing.
- Young people have an increased ability to identify a range of effective strategies for looking after their own mental wellbeing.
- Young people have increased knowledge of relevant and appropriate services that can support children on mental health and wellbeing.

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles

# Myth Busters!

<b>Myths about men and mental health:</b>	<b>How might someone with poor mental wellbeing feel hearing these?</b>	<b>Change these myths into more truthful statements:</b>
<b>Example:</b> Real men do not cry	<b>Example:</b> Lonely, trapped, like they can't express themselves, emotionless, holding things in.	<b>Example:</b> Anyone of any gender cries, it is a natural response that humans have to a range of emotions. Crying may also ease both physical and emotional pain- it can help reduce pain and promote a sense of wellbeing.
Poor mental wellbeing is a sign of weakness		
Real men do not ask for help		
A man should be able to control his feelings		
Talking about your mental wellbeing won't help		
Poor mental wellbeing makes you a burden on others		
Men with poor mental wellbeing need to man up		
It is childish to feel depressed or anxious		
There's something wrong with men who have poor mental wellbeing		
A man is not fit to work if he has poor mental wellbeing		



# Self-harm: The Facts Quiz

## Age Range:

13+, Years 9 +,  
KS3, KS4

## Topics Covered:

Self-harm, Mental  
Wellbeing

## Time:

20 - 40 minutes

## Equipment needed:

Copies of the 'Self-harm  
– The Facts Quiz' and  
answers.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have increased knowledge of the key facts around self-harm
- Young people have increased awareness of the impact of self-harm.
- Young people have an increased empathy for people affected by self-harm.

## An exercise to explore key facts about self-harm.

### Introduction

This exercise uses team working and reflective learning to look at the facts around self-harm.

### Exercise

Hand out copies of the 'Self-harm– The Facts Quiz' found on the next page. This contains 10 questions with true or false answers to help the group to understand some of the basic facts on self-harm and the effects it can have. The answers are supplied below.

The quiz can be done as a worksheet but can be more fun in teams. Teams can swap papers to mark at the end.

After the quiz ask the group to recap on the main facts they learned from the activity.

A more active and complex version is to clear a space in the room and to make one wall as 'true' and the opposite wall as 'false'. You could ask people to move to the end of the room that they think matches their view. This can be interesting as people may be unsure and stand closer by varying degrees to their view. Someone who was unsure but thought it was more likely to be true might stand closer to the 'true' end of the room. Basically, the more confident they are in their answer the closer they stand to that end of the room.

After reading out each statement ask people to move into their chosen position. Ask people why they thought the statement was true or false depending on where they have stood. Ask those who have stood in the middle, why they chose their positions.

After discussing the different views, reveal the answers (shown below).

### Summary

Sum up by asking the group to recap on the main facts they have learned about self-harm. Allow discussion and them to ask questions.

# Self-harm – The Facts Quiz

**Please mark whether you think each statement is true or false.**

1. It is thought that around 13% of young people aged 11-16 will self-harm at some point

TRUE / FALSE

2. Punching a wall could class as self-harm

TRUE / FALSE

3. 90% of young people who are treated in A&E for self-harm are admitted to hospital because of severe cuts

TRUE / FALSE

4. Girls are more likely to self-harm

TRUE / FALSE

5. Someone who self-harms is always diagnosed with a mental illness

TRUE / FALSE

6. Around 25% of people who have an eating disorder will also self-harm

TRUE / FALSE

7. Young people who have divorced parents are recognized more at risk of self-harming

TRUE / FALSE

8. Self-harm always leads to suicide

TRUE / FALSE

9. The UK have one of the highest rates of self-harm in Europe

TRUE / FALSE

10. 30% of young people in the LGBTQ community have self-harmed

TRUE / FALSE

# Self-harm – The Facts Quiz (Answers)

## **1. It is thought that around 13% of young people aged 11-16 will self-harm at some point**

TRUE - It's almost impossible to say how many young people are self-harming. This is because very few teenagers tell anyone what's going on, so it's incredibly difficult to keep records or have an accurate idea of how many people are struggling. ([www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk))

## **2. Punching a wall could class as self-harm**

TRUE - Self-harm is often understood to be a physical response to an emotional pain of some kind. There are lots of different forms of self-harming, including someone punching a wall to hurt themselves. The bottom line is that anything that causes someone harm – even slight harm – which in some small way makes them feel better emotionally, can fall under the umbrella of self-harm. The important thing isn't to focus too much on the labelling, but to recognise when help is needed and find some support as soon as possible.

## **3. Around 90% of young people who are treated in A&E for self-harm are admitted to hospital because of severe cuts**

FALSE - 90% of young people who are treated in A&E for self-harm are admitted to hospital because of an overdose.

## **4. Girls are more likely to self-harm**

TRUE - While the majority of recorded incidents of self-harm are by females (26% in those aged 16-14), 10% of boys in the same age group will self-harm too. ([www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk))

## **5. Someone who self-harms is always diagnosed with a mental illness**

FALSE - Self-harm is not a diagnosis so is not a mental illness. However some people may be diagnosed with a mental illness which is associated with self-harm.

## **6. Around 25% of people who have an eating disorder will also self-harm**

TRUE. The prevalence of self-harm in people with eating disorders is thought to be about 25%. For many, self-harm and an eating disorder co-exist, but for others self-harm can develop to replace an eating disorder or vice versa. ([www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk))

## **7. Young people who have divorced parents are recognised more at risk of self-harming**

FALSE - There are no statistics that suggest that people are more at risk of self-harming because of their family background

## **8. Self-harm always leads to suicide**

FALSE - People who self-harm normally do not wish to kill themselves. Suicide is a way of ending life, but many self-harmers see hurting themselves as a way of coping with life and being able to continue with living. For some, experiencing the pain of self-harm reassures them they are still alive – this might be because they are experiencing emotional numbness or feeling disconnected with the world around them. ([www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk))

## **9. The UK have one of the highest rates of self-harm in Europe**

TRUE. (<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/self-harm/>)

## **10. 30% of young people in the LGBTQ community have self-harmed**

FALSE - The statistics for young people in the LGBTQ community who have self-harmed is 48% while those who have considered suicide is 59%. ([www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk))

# Self-esteem: What would they say?

## Age Range:

13+, Years 9+,  
KS3, KS4

## Topics Covered:

Self-esteem, Mental  
wellbeing

## Time:

20 - 40 minutes

## Equipment needed:

A clear space

**An exercise to look at self-esteem and how issues around self-esteem can affect people.**

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and team work to help groups to think about self-esteem and develop empathy for those who may experience low self-esteem.

## Exercise

Ask the group to form a circle with their chairs. Read out the extract below and ask the group to imagine the scene.

**This scene takes place at school. Maz is 14 years old** (gender/age can be adapted depending on the group) **and enjoys acting. Maz's drama teacher is encouraging her to take part in the school's play. Maz becomes upset as she believes that she is not good enough. Maz also says she would forget her lines and embarrass herself in front of the whole school. She then refuses to join in with the rest of the drama class.**

Ask the group to imagine that they are in that classroom and can see and hear what is going on. Ask them to think about what other people in the room might be saying about the incident as it is happening.

Go round the circle and ask each person to say what they heard. Ask each person to start by saying **"I heard someone say..."** as it should be very clear that it is not necessarily their own opinion. You can also give the opportunity to pass or to repeat a comment.

Run a discussion that explores why the people in the situation might have made the comments. What attitudes or views came through from the overheard conversations? Why might she have acted this way? Push for low self-esteem.

Explore the role of the bystander;

Did anyone say they were going to speak to Maz?  
What could someone say to help improve Maz's self-esteem?  
Why might it be a good idea to help Maz?  
What else could Maz's classmates do to help boost her self-esteem?  
Who would be the best person for Maz to talk to about her self-esteem?

## Summary

Sum up by recapping that there is support available for people who experience low self-esteem, including staff at school, family, friends, doctors, counsellors and help lines such as ChildLine (0800 1111, [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org)) and Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)).

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an increased understanding of the effects of low self-esteem
- Young people have an increased ability to identify signs of low self-esteem
- Young people have increased empathy for people who have low self-esteem



**Loudmouth Education and Training is a highly respected and innovative theatre in education company. The company has been delivering quality Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programmes since 1994 and has reached over three quarters of a million children, young people, professionals and parents.**

**Loudmouth provides a flexible and diverse range of educational programmes that can support your safeguarding and relationship education. Loudmouth's work aims to ensure a future where all children and young people are healthy, happy, safe and resilient.**