

Guidance for teachers

This document will address how to use the MHIS resources effectively.

Teaching

Overall guidance in PSHE teaching is provided in the following document:

https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/Mental_health_guidance_0.pdf

The following ground rules should be established before the teaching begins:

- The learning environment provided for students should be safe, non-judgemental and understanding
- Every person should feel like they are heard and respected
- Everyone should have the right to *not* answer questions
- Inappropriate language should be avoided (see material for more guidance)
- Make it clear that the conversation will be kept in the room so that students feel confident about discussing sensitive topics
- Asking questions should be encouraged. There are no stupid questions
- Students should be encouraged to seek help if they are troubled by any of the issues raised. Specific guidance is provided in the material.

Mental health helplines are provided at the end of each PowerPoint. We have added an extra blank slide so that you, the teacher, can add the mental health services that your school provides (For example, pastoral care).

Data collection

Online quizzes are available to test knowledge. These can be taken both before and after the test.

If you plan to allow students to take part in the test before and after the lessons, it is important that each student has a unique code that is remembered for **both tests**. An example of how a code could be generated would be to use some systematic sequence of letters and numbers which does NOT contain information identifying the student (for example, ABC001, ABC002 etc). Dates of birth and initials should be avoided and codes are not case sensitive (ie ABC1001 is the same as abC1001).

Students should record their codes in their planners (or in some central location, like a signup sheet) so that they can re-use them. From our experience, it is important that teachers **ALSO** record these codes in case the students forget or lose them. This has happened in the past... If the codes do not match up between the first and last session, that student's data will have to be excluded from the data set.

Students should be reassured that data are anonymised and that their answers cannot be traced back to them.

FAQs

Can I have access to individual student's data?

No. This is because student individual data is anonymous, however you can receive average data for the class cohort.

Can I use my own examples and experiences to explain mental health issues for the students?

It is sometimes difficult to judge whether personal stories or judgements are potentially harmful and we recommend not using this type of teaching practise. Even apparently benign or sympathetic accounts may be taken the wrong way or provide 'instructive' messages that could be counterproductive.

What do I do if a student seems at risk?

Withdraw them from the lesson if necessary and evaluate the best services for them, for example pastoral care. Students should be made aware of the mental health services available to them - both within the school and externally.

How do I create a safe, teaching and learning environment?

Firstly, make sure that students understand the ground rules. Students should know not to use judgemental or offensive language, and instead are encouraged to show positive and supporting behaviour. Activities and content are designed to help with this as they let students reflect on how they can make positive changes to their own lives, as well as the lives of others.

What do I do if students do not abide by the ground rules?

In rare instances, it may be best to withdraw the student/s from the classroom until you understand the motivation of their behaviour and they agree to change their behaviour to be more respectful. Try to remember that students that act out may be struggling with their own mental health, so disruptions need to be dealt with sensitively.