

Lesson 3: Promoting emotional wellbeing

Key stage 3

This is the third of a series of lessons exploring mental health and emotional wellbeing. This lesson focuses on ways to develop 'digital resilience' to support mental health. Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.



Learning objective

Students will learn:

- about the impact of social media on mental health and emotional wellbeing
- strategies to develop digital resilience



Learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- evaluate the positive and negative impact of social media on emotional wellbeing
- analyse the reasons people post and look at online images and the impact this can have on self-esteem and body image
- describe strategies to promote emotional wellbeing online



Climate for learning

Before teaching these lessons, ensure that you read the accompanying PSHE Association document [Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) for guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, handling questions, and additional advice relating to teaching about mental health effectively and safely.



Resources required

Box or envelope for anonymous questions



Resource 1: Diamond 9



Resource 2: A digital day in the life of Taylor



Key words

Social media, 'like' culture, fear of missing out (FOMO), body image, online, digital, resilience

| Activity | Description | Timing |
|----------------------------|---|--------|
| 1. Introduction | Revisit ground rules and introduce lesson objectives and outcomes. | 5min |
| 2. Baseline assessment | Students consider the positives and negatives of being online in relation to mental health and emotional wellbeing | 10min |
| 3. Diamond 9 | Students rank the reasons why people post selfies | 10min |
| 4. Digital day in the life | Students explore the effects of social media on mental health and wellbeing through following a day in the life of a character. | 15min |
| 5. Improving Taylor's day | Students rewrite the character's day, improving the times in the day when social media had a negative impact on wellbeing. | 10min |
| 6. Endpoint assessment | Students create a leaflet providing advice for managing mental health and emotional wellbeing when online | 5min |
| 7. Signposting | Signpost students to sources of support for mental health issues | 5min |

Baseline assessment



Introduction

Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson. Ensure students know they have a right to pass and that there should be no personal stories. It is also important that students are aware of where they can go to talk to someone after the lesson, should the need arise. Remind students that they can ask anonymous questions using the question box/ask it basket throughout the lesson.

Introduce the learning objectives and outcomes for the lesson, which will focus on understanding and managing the effect being online (and using social media in particular) has on emotional wellbeing.



Baseline assessment activity

Ask students to think about all the benefits to young people's emotional wellbeing of being online (and using social media in particular). Give them three minutes to list as many positive ideas as they can.

Answers might include: meeting people around the world, sharing interests, it's fun, it's an easy/quick/cheap way to communicate, can express yourself creatively, give you confidence to be who you want to be, access to support groups, time to think about what to type/say, availability of wellbeing support (e.g. meditation apps).

Next, ask students to cover up these answers, and to make a list in the next three minutes focusing on all the challenges to young people's emotional wellbeing from being online (and using social media in particular).

Answers might include: peer pressure, cyber-bullying, expected to always be available, might feel excluded from certain groups (e.g. don't have the app), people behave differently online than they would face-to-face, can see upsetting content accidentally, fear of missing out (FOMO), jealousy caused by looking at others' social media accounts, pressure to look a certain way, sleep deprivation.

Finally, ask students to think about any interesting facts or questions they have about being online and mental health. Encourage them to write a list of these and share some ideas with the class.

Support:



Give students a range of statements (e.g. those above) and ask them to sort the statements into positive and negative categories.

Challenge



If time allows, ask students to consider: Are there any particular apps or sites which are better or worse for emotional wellbeing? Why? To support this discussion, you may wish to show the following video from the Royal Society for Public Health: www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/status-of-mind.html.

Core activities



Diamond 9



Ask students to consider why people take and post selfies. Hand out **Resource 1: Diamond 9 card sort** to small groups of two or three, and ask students to prioritise the cards – from most to least common.

(Cont.)

The most common reason should be at the top of the diamond and the least common reason at the bottom of the diamond shape. Cards placed next to each other in a row are equally common.

Remind students that there is no right or wrong order for the cards, but that the goal of the activity is to think about people's motivations for posting selfies, as a first step to managing their social media use and building their digital resilience (i.e. to benefit from the positive experiences provided by social media and minimise any negative impact).

Support:



It may be useful to play the following clip of primary school children talking about why they post selfies before doing the activity: www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/38841467.

Alternatively, students could organise a Diamond with just 5 cards to sort.

Challenge



Use a set of blank cards and ask students to create and prioritise their own reasons. During feedback, compare the ideas they have suggested with the existing cards; how similar or different are they?



A digital day in the life of Taylor



As a class, read **Resource 2: A digital day in the life of Taylor**. Students should identify how Taylor's emotional wellbeing changes throughout the day based on experiences of social media; when was Taylor having good experiences? When did Taylor have challenging or negative experiences?

To further develop the learning from this story, ask students to discuss (or write) their responses to the following questions:

1. Thinking back to your 'Diamond 9', which reasons might Taylor have given for posting on social media?
2. Overall, is Taylor enjoying using social media or not? Why do you think this?
3. What evidence is there that Taylor's behaviour is being impacted upon by social media?
4. What gender do you think Taylor is? What makes you think this?
5. To what extent do young people of different genders experience different pressures on social media?

Take feedback, highlighting the following key learning:

1. Students are likely to identify the reasons 'To get attention, likes and comments', 'because they are bored', 'because everybody else does it'. This would allow an opportunity to discuss why relying on other people's reaction/approval to posts might be damaging to self-esteem in the long term.
2. Students may have different views, but it is important to draw out that there are key indicators that Taylor is not happy in some parts of the day, both in the way Taylor reacts to social media (feeling jealous of other's posts, deleting selfie, logging off from the forum) and in Taylor's 'offline' behaviour (skipping lunch, intensive exercise, poor sleep).
3. Taylor is clearly worried about the way they look and is regularly making comparisons with the appearance of others (especially celebrities) so is being influenced by a potentially unachievable ideal of body image. Evidence includes: adding filters to own photo, skipping lunch, intensive exercise, staying up late to look at posts.
4. Students may have different ideas, although they may be more likely to assume Taylor is female. Remind students that social media puts pressure on all genders.
5. Students may raise ideas such as females being under more pressure to look a certain way, or more likely to experience harassment online. Whilst this is often the case, point out that the issue of body image and pressure on appearance is on the rise for people of all sexes and gender identities.

Support:



Students could highlight the positive and negative experiences for Taylor using two different colours. Resource 2 could be adapted into a comic strip to help students access the story.

Challenge



Ask students to reflect on what other challenging experiences young people have online, that weren't included in Taylor's story. How could these be managed?



Improving Taylor's day



Ask students to work in pairs to rewrite any 'low' parts of Taylor's day demonstrating how the day might have been improved. They could consider:

- Is it social media that might need to change, or Taylor's attitude towards it?
- How has Taylor been influenced by others throughout the day? Was this mostly positive or negative?
- What could everyone do to make the experience of social media more positive for everyone?

Support:



Chose just one part of Taylor's day to rewrite.

Challenge



Ask students to imagine that they were Taylor's friend and they were starting to get worried about Taylor's use of social media, particularly Taylor's feelings about their body. What would they recommend that Taylor should do? Who could Taylor go to for help?

Plenary/ Assessment of learning



Endpoint assessment

Ask each student to suggest one good idea for managing mental health, emotional wellbeing and self-esteem when online. These could be written on post-it notes and displayed at the front of the class. To encourage a range of responses, ask half of the class to focus on "Things a young person can/should do" and the other half to focus on "Things a young person should avoid" in order to promote emotional wellbeing.



Signposting support



Remind students that they can access support at home, and both in school (e.g. through their form tutor, head of year, or school nurse) and out of school, through local and national organisations.

Explain to students that there are lots of different ways that young people can seek help from reputable organisations, including text-based support, digital chat support and online counselling, as well as face to face or via phone. Share the following websites and phone numbers with students:

Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Childline - www.childline.org.uk Phone: 0800 1111

Samaritans - www.samaritans.org Phone: 116 123

Shout - a 24-hour text service for someone experiencing a crisis and needing immediate help: 85258

Extension activities →

Advice for social media



Ask students to reflect on what advice they would give to social media companies to help them promote young people's emotional wellbeing.

- What could be done to improve young people's experience of social media in general?
- How can social media be used to celebrate people's individuality and self-expression?