

ASSEMBLY OR CLASS SESSION FOR 7-11 YEAR OLDS

AIM

- To introduce children to the idea of connection, and the different ways that we can connect.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Laptop / projector (if using slides).

STEP 1

TEACHING POINT:

Connection can mean different things to different people.

Slide 1

Hello everyone. Welcome to our Place2Be Children's Mental Health Week Assembly. The theme this year is 'Let's Connect'.

Slide 2

Ask the children what 'connecting with others' means to them.

STEP 2

TEACHING POINT:

We can connect with others in different ways.

Slide 3

Ask the children who have they already connected with today? E.g. family, friends, classmates, teacher etc. How did they connect?

Emphasise here that connection is not just through words, it is also about eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, touch such as shaking hands, high five etc.

Invite staff and children to connect with someone else in the room without speaking.

Slide 4

Read the poem 'Together' by Matt Goodfellow (or a poem with a similar theme) – or watch this video of Matt reading the poem (youtu.be/bOsbofgusak )

Discuss the poem with the children, using the following questions as prompts if necessary:

- When we connect together, is it always to celebrate something?
- When else is it good to connect together?
- Do you agree with the poet when he says 'together we are one'? Why/why not?
- What happens when we feel alone and disconnected from others? How do we feel? Who might feel disconnected or on the outside? What can we do to include them better?

Ask the children to think of things they can do when they feel disconnected from others (e.g. tell a grown-up at school or home; contact the student council; sit on the buddy bench etc.).

STEP 3

TEACHING POINT:

By connecting with others we can do good, and even change the world.

Introduce the idea of people who have changed the world by thinking about others and connecting with others to do good. Can the children call out the names of people – maybe people they know or famous people, such as Marcus Rashford.

Slide 5

Ask the children whether it is always grown-ups who change the world? Show pictures of young people who have done amazing things for others – such as Malala Yousafzai, Jazz Jennings, Anne Frank, Greta Thunberg, Louis Braille. For inspiration you may want to visit the UNICEF website (unicef.org.au/blog/stories/five-child-activists )

Have a discussion about how we can all change the world by doing small, everyday things that help people feel valued and connected.

Gather ideas for how they can connect more to others – can they say hello to someone or talk to someone new today? Can they ask someone how they are feeling? Gather these ideas and display them. Ask children to commit to doing one thing that will help them connect with others – and ask the staff too (e.g. I will message my cousin in India who I've not spoken to in ages, I will wave at my neighbour, I will greet the bus driver etc.).

STEP
4

REFLECTION: End with a moment of calm and connection

Invite the children and staff to listen as you read the following:

Close your eyes and picture the space you are in; can you see yourself sitting in this hall/classroom?

With your eyes still closed, can you imagine the other children and adults sitting around you? Your classmates, teachers (etc.). We are all connected.

Now picture the school building as you see it when you come into school. Imagine the building filled with our whole school – all the different children of different ages. That's a lot of people isn't it? So many children in **X** class and **X** class and **X** class and so on. Then there are all the grown-ups who help us to learn, think of your teachers or support assistants, then think about **X** who cook our meals, who take care of us at playtime, who run the office (etc.). We are all connected because we all belong to this school.

Now imagine the neighbourhood around our school, the people who you pass on your way to school. All the old people, the young people, the people in the shops, in the parks, walking on the street, driving their cars, the people on the bus (etc). We are all connected because we live in the same neighbourhood.

Depending on the needs of your children, you may wish to continue the visualisation (as below), or invite them to open their eyes and show some slides of a map of the UK, a map of Europe, a globe, photos of children in schools all over the world, view of Earth from space etc.

Now imagine the whole of the UK (or wherever you are!) and all the children in all the schools, all the grown-ups going about their busy lives...all the people of many different races, cultures and religions. We are all connected.

Imagine all the people who help us – many of whom we will never meet. The people who make the clothes we are wearing, the people who grow the food we eat, the people who write the books we read. We are all connected.

Finally picture all the people in all the different parts of the world. In places that are hot and sunny and places that are cold and snowy. We are all connected.

Whenever you feel lonely, you can remember that we are all connected. How do you cope when you feel lonely? Is being alone the same as being lonely? What do you do to help yourself when you feel lonely, and what can you do to help others?

(Step 4 continued)

OPTIONAL FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY:

Connecting with other young people all over the world

Invite the children and staff to listen as you read the following:

Discuss with the children whether friendships and connections must be with people who are the same as us? Is anyone exactly the same as us?

Talk to the children about making more connections with children in other schools – perhaps even in other countries.

Ask them about 'pen-pals' – have they ever had a pen pal? Have they ever sent a card or a letter to a family member or friend in a different country?

Look at the PenPal schools website (penpalschools.com) to see if there is a way you would like to connect with children in other schools – or, if you are 'twinned' with another town, contact a school there to let them know a bit about Children's Mental Health Week and the theme of 'Let's Connect'.

(NB talk to children about stranger danger)

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



- 1 Hold a 'Dress to Express' day to raise vital funds for children's mental health childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/fundraise
- 2 Watch our video activities, and explore the theme of connection through art and creativity childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/schools
- 3 Share our tips for parents and carers with your school community childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/families
- 4 Spread the word by sharing how you plan to take part on social media! Don't forget to use #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/socialmedia
- 5 Add yourself to the Children's Mental Health Week map! childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/map

