



Mental Health C19

**DISCOVER 1: What is Mental Health?
Teaching Resources for Secondary Age Students**



**Epping Forest
District Council**
www.eppingforestdsc.gov.uk

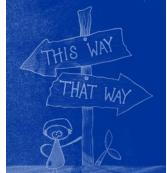
EFYC 
Epping Forest Youth Council



MiLife C19 RESOURCE OVERVIEW

MiLife C19 includes ten sessions that are designed to be used in a classroom setting or through home learning platforms. Sessions can last from 30-60 minutes depending on how much of the material is covered and/or whether the 'Do Next' activity happens during the contact time or as homework.

There are six sessions in the **Discover** section which cover an overview of emotional wellbeing issues commonly associated with traumatic experiences or global incidents like COVID19 and how young people can effectively respond to them in order to achieve positive mental health outcomes. Each session is split into five elements:

| Outcomes | Way In | New Ideas | Landing It | Do Next |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |

Setting learning objectives Introduction/ice breaker activity Communicating new information Discussion and reflection Practical application tasks

There are additionally four **Explore** sessions included that are more focussed on practical activities that young people could engage in to benefit their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Explore sessions might be set as homework/home learning activities or completed within education settings but may require additional resources or larger spaces than usually available in a standard classroom. They can work well when deployed in between the third and fourth Discover sessions.

All resources referenced in this leaders guide (videos, presentations, etc.) are downloadable from www.milife.org.uk in the Teachers area. The member of the EFDC team who introduced you to the resources will be able to provide you with any passwords required.



DISCOVER 18 WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?



Outcomes: Knowing Myself

After completing this session, students should be able to:

- ⇒ Describe what mental health is
- ⇒ Appreciate the impact of traumatic incidents on mental health



Way In: Mental and Physical

Complete the quiz in the session presentation.

"Knowing what MiLife C19 is about, is there anything that surprises you about the content of the questions...?"

Explore with the group that our physical and mental health are two parts of one whole—if we think about our physical body, we are usually unafraid to seek help and to take preventative steps to ensure we have good physical health. We need to be equally confident to deal with our mental health in the same way.

Discuss or think about...

- ⇒ What are three things we know we can do to look after our physical health?

Examples might be eating the recommended portion of fruit and vegetables each day; regular exercise; refraining from smoking, etc.

- ⇒ What are three physical problems we would feel confident that we know how to treat?

Examples might be putting a plaster on a cut; putting a cold compress on a sprain; taking over the counter medicines like paracetamol for a headache.

- ⇒ What if we asked those questions again but for mental health? How do we look after our mental health? What are three mental health problems you would feel confident you know how to respond to?

Do not go into great detail at this stage, but this should demonstrate the point that we are often underequipped or uncertain how to care for, and respond to, our mental health compared to our physical health.



New Ideas: My Brain Matters

Watch the video content "**My Brain Matters**"

"*My Brain Matters*"...

1. Gives a working definition of mental health as "how well our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are balanced and regulated."
2. Explores that there is a mental health spectrum stretching from mentally healthy to mental ill health, and that we are always somewhere on that spectrum depending on factors which include:
 - ◊ Increased stress
 - ◊ Bad experiences
 - ◊ Genetic factors
 - ◊ Brain chemical imbalances
3. Describes the effect of traumatic incidents on the brain, specifically the working of the limbic system and how this can eventually function very differently to a neurotypical person after experiencing multiple or sustained traumas.



Landing It: My Mental Wellbeing

Discuss or think about...

- ⇒ What is one new thing you learned about how your brain works from watching that video?
Focus on what they can remember about the effects of repeated traumatic experiences on the brain.
- ⇒ Can you recognise any of the effects of repeated traumatic incidents in yourself or in other people you know?
Encourage the group not to name names but to share honestly. Do they perceive that they or others have a 'shorter fuse' than usual? That their feelings or emotions seem to escalate more rapidly from something that is easy to deal with to something that is harder to cope with?
- ⇒ Thinking back to the before the period of the COVID19 outbreak, is there anything else that you notice is different about your mental health or the mental health of other people you know?
Explore how unless we have an awareness of our own mental wellbeing it can be hard to respond when things are tough. When you start to exercise, you need to know something about your physical health before you begin and our mental health is just the same—before we can build it up, we need to understand it better.



Do Next: Wellbeing Journal

"Just like our physical health is likely to suffer if we never think about what we eat, the exercise we take, etc., one of the reasons that people can struggle to maintain positive mental health is by just never really thinking about it. Before your next MiLife C19 session, have a go at keeping a note of:

- ⇒ Three particular feelings you experience each day;
- ⇒ What caused the feelings you experienced;
- ⇒ The effect those feelings have on your mood;
- ⇒ How long the effect lasts for.

Your list can be very simple, but the very fact you are thinking more about your emotions is a great starting point for making an impact on your mental health."

A wellbeing journal might look a bit like this...

| What I Felt | What Caused It | Effect on Mood | How Long |
|-------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Tired | Couldn't sleep last night | Negative | Around 4 hours |
| Happy | Got test result back and did better than I thought | Positive | 1 Hour |
| Confused | Maths! | Negative | 1 Hour |
| Angry | Little sister woke me up hours earlier than I needed to get up | Negative | 2 Hours |
| Frustrated | Still can't complete mission on the game I'm playing | Negative | 2 Hours |
| Nervous | Heard Uncle Alex has to stay in hospital another week | Negative | All afternoon |