

Physical activity and mental health

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Learning objectives

- Increased knowledge of:
 - Links between physical activity and mental health
 - Building emotional resilience
 - Ideas for promoting mental wellbeing through physical activity in school

Discussion

What is mental health?

Mental health

- We all have mental health; it is a positive concept
- Mental health relates to how we think, feel and behave
- Mental health problems are disturbances in those things
- 11% 5-15 year olds with diagnosable mental disorder

Links between physical activity and mental health

- Mental health impacted by physical health and vice versa
- Physical activity linked to reduced anxiety and happier moods, partly due to production of endorphins
- When fitter, body can better regulate cortisol (stress hormone), reducing risk of anxiety and depression
- Increased self-esteem
- Treatment for depression
- Social benefits

Resilience

Resilient children 'can resist adversity, cope with uncertainty and recover more successfully from traumatic events or episodes'.
(Newman, 2002)



Resilience strategies

- 5 ways to wellbeing
- Gratitude
- Mindfulness
- Character strengths



Character strengths



Activity

How to incorporate emotional resilience building into physical activity

Some ideas

- Notice: how we feel, emotionally and physically, before and after physical activity
- Notice: (outdoors activities) the weather, natural environment
- Learn: a new physical activity e.g. ultimate Frisbee
- Give: help another child with an activity
- Gratitude: name 3 things you liked about the physical activity
- Mindfulness: body scan before and after an activity
- Character strengths: which are useful for sport and physical activity, and how

Thank you for attending

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