

MAKING A GRAFFITI WALL

Use this activity in tutor time or a PSHE lesson to help students understand the difference between mental health and mental illness.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Two sheets of flip chart paper.
- Sticky notes.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write 'MENTAL HEALTH' at the top of one sheet of flip chart paper and 'MENTAL ILLNESS' at the top of the other.
2. Divide the class into two and give each group one of the sheets. Don't tell the students what is written at the top of the other group's sheet.
3. Give each group a set of sticky notes and ask students to write any words – positive or negative – that come to mind when they see the phrase at the top of the sheet. Tell them that:
 - a. Everyone must contribute at least one sticky note.
 - b. They can't cross out something they don't agree with or think is wrong.
4. Ask them to stick their group's notes onto the flip chart paper and display it at the front of the room.
5. As a class, discuss the phrases on the sheets and the words that have been added. Which terms do students think are appropriate? Which do they think are inappropriate?
6. Ask students if there are any other words they might use with their friends when discussing mental health and mental illness.
7. What are the main differences between the words students have come up with in relation to mental health compared to mental illness?

KEY MESSAGES

When discussing this activity with the students, make sure you draw out the following key messages.

- We **all** have mental health.
- YoungMinds, the UK charity for children's and young people's mental health, defines mental health as:
'The capacity to live a full, productive life as well as the flexibility to deal with its ups and downs. In children and young people, it is especially about the capacity to learn, enjoy friendships, meet challenges, develop talents and capabilities.'
- How does this differ with what they have come up with?
- Most young people will understand that we all have physical health, that some people become unwell and that there are things we can all do to look after our physical health. Mental health is exactly the same.