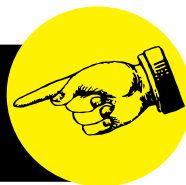


Topic 24 – Mental health

Learning Intention Hey, why this lesson?

To comprehend the term 'Mental Health' in relationship to the term 'Physical Health'



**** Be aware to warn students that this is maybe a sensitive topic and they will not be forced to read out or volunteer information. Also offer information about Beyond Blue, Lifeline: Dial 13 11 14 or Visit Kids Helpline: Dial 1800 551 800 or Suicide Call Back Service: Dial 1300 659 467. Also discuss counselling the school offers.

- To give some meaning to the term 'mental illness' and the way mental health patients are often treated in our society. Refer to Jesus' treatment of the lepers.
- To focus on 'mental health' and to understand its connection to 'physical health'.

Hint: Ask the students what are their impressions of social media first. This will help connect to this topic.

Scripture

The Good Shepherd

– John 10 11-15

The Good Shepherd on page 103 is about being passionate about those in your care. Ask the students where they have seen such devotion before. For example family, coaches, teachers etc. Why do they do it?

ACARA Connection RE Key Understanding

Connect to your own State/ Territory's key understandings of Religious Education e.g. Christian Living, Religion and Society

Health and physical education / Year 7 and 8 / Personal, Social and Community Health / Being healthy, safe and active

Curriculum content descriptions

Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073).

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Search/?q=ACPPS073>

Virtues

- **acceptance** – acquiring, obtaining, receiving when it is offered
- **understanding** – comprehend, have an awareness of
- **loyalty** – being supportive, faithful, trustworthy

The three virtues are strongly linked to mental health. Why? Discuss with the class (or it may be easier for the students to do this in smaller groups) which one they feel is the most important. Again, stress the need for them to speak with someone if they feel they are having difficulties.



Warm Up Activity

1. Ask the students to discuss in pairs, groups or to think individually about
 - i) What is mental illness?
 - ii) What is mental health?
2. Read the excerpt by James Clear at <https://jamesclear.com/chosen-ones>
3. Once you find out who the article is referring to, Google this person and write what you admire about her.



Main Activity

It can happen to anyone. (Before exploring the main activity, please warn students about this eating disorder story.)

Anorexia is considered to be a mental illness. It is a very misunderstood eating disorder that affects many people in our society. A young woman who recently recovered from this illness, wrote the following letter:

From : One who survived
To: The 'Outside' World
Time: A Better One
To Whom it may Concern,

Though scary, diagnosis was the best thing that ever happened to me as it forced me to let those who really cared about me in to the petrifying world I was originally trapped in alone.

To my friends,

Thank you for not judging me. Thank you for never letting my outbursts scare you, or push you away.

Thank you for understanding when I just couldn't muster the strength to go out. Thank you for knowing that the voices in my head had worn me out too much and that I might feel up to something tomorrow.

Thank you for being an empathetic ear. Thank you for educating yourself around my illness and for listening even when my challenges may not have seemed relatable to you.

To my little sister,

Thank you for never forgetting who I was before I was sick. Thank you for reminding me of that girl through a song or an inside joke.

Thank you for not complaining once when the attention was shifted off you. Thank you for putting up with my illness impacting upon family holidays and special occasions without a hint of resentment.

Thank you for loving me when I was my least lovable, but needed your love the most. Thank you for never making me feel as though I let you down, but rather that it was your chance to build me up.

To my Mum,

Thank you for holding me as I cried because the noise in my head was so overwhelming. Thank you for dropping everything to pick me up from school after I had a panic attack, and making me feel safe and secure.

Thank you for waiting with me, and distracting me at countless doctors' appointments that I know were as terrifying for you as they were for me. Thank you for always being strong, though I know how much pain it caused you to lose your healthy, happy daughter.

Thank you for knowing that my anger was never at you, that it was my eating disorder. Thank you for understanding that my irritability was never me trying to hurt you, but rather my eating disorder trying to maintain control.

To my Dad,

Thank you for trying to understand why I couldn't 'just eat' the sandwich you sat in front of me. Thank you for not losing your temper or rolling your eyes, but rather looking at me with empathy – knowing that it was my eating disorder causing me to refuse food that you'd lovingly made.

Thank you for taking the time to research what was happening to me, for trying with everything you had to learn more about my struggles, rather than assuming from a stereotype. Thank you for using that extra layer of knowledge you sought to make me feel understood and valid.

Thank you for encouraging me to question my demons with love and support, rather than anger and impatience. Thank you for fighting for my recovery, even when I had no energy to do so myself.

Thank you to everyone who made the isolating world I was living in a little bit less isolating and ultimately allowed me to escape and rather exist, achieve and truly live a life free of mental illness.

1. What do you make of this letter? This person's recovery took over 18 months, but some people with mental illness take years to recover, while some never fully do. Ask the students to write some reflections on page 104.

Jesus Connection

Jesus Connection Activity

Jesus repeatedly talked about love. Ask the students what part love plays in recovering from mental illness. Go to page 103 (bottom right hand corner) and get them to write a reflection.

Prayer/Reflection

Write the following sentence on the board and ask the students to reflect on it.

THE WORLD ISN'T FAIR! Relate this to mental illness. Also bring in the three virtues to this reflection with a comparison about Mental Health and Physical Health – this is a major learning point in this topic. Why is one seen as positive and the other negative?

Reflection Questions

Reflection Activity

On page 103 it asks the students to look at the word 'Loyalty'. It is one of the most crucial words when mental illness is involved. Why?

How has this topic touched your heart? Allow them to take their time to write their feelings.

Go to page 104 (or in the back of their journal) and complete their reflections.

Success Criteria

The students can ...

- explain why mental health was compared to physical health
- explain the difference between mental health and mental illness
- reflect and write about THE WORLD ISN'T FAIR! And relate this to mental illness
- share their feelings about either someone who they know/suspect has a mental illness OR about their reaction to the letter.

Take Away Bag



Ask the students to write ONE statement about this topic in the take away box.

Extensions

Extension Ideas

1. Look at Christopher Robin from *Winnie the Pooh* quote. What do the students make of it? Why is it included in this topic?
2. 'Mental health is about wellness rather than illness.'

Go to

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au>

and discuss.

Relatable Quote

Promise me you'll always remember — you're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.

– Christopher Robin from *Winnie the Pooh*

