



Mental Health Week



10th - 16th May 2021

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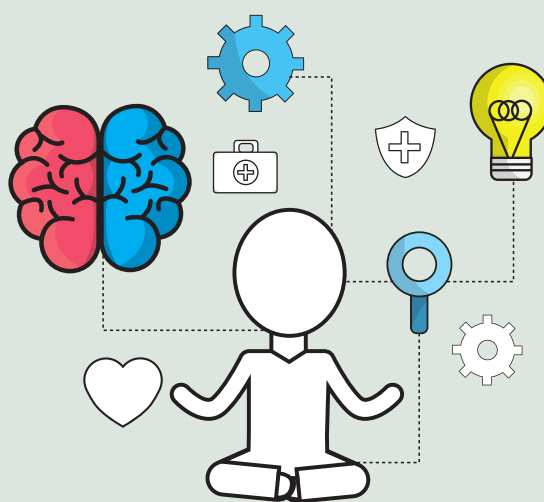
MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



Highlands School proudly supports mental health awareness week and fully understands the challenges the pandemic has raised, and the impact this may have had on our mental health and wellbeing. We care deeply about all of our students and we want all students to know that we are here to help and support. Mental health week is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and advice.

The theme for mental health awareness week this year is '**nature and the environment**'. The theme was chosen in part because of evidence from the Mental Health Foundation's ongoing research into the coronavirus pandemic. Access to nature has been one of the main ways people have supported their mental health during lockdowns. In fact 45%, nearly half of people in the UK, reported that visiting green spaces, such as parks, helped them to cope throughout the pandemic.

For mental health awareness week this year, Highlands School has put together ways that even small contacts with nature can reduce feelings of social isolation and be effective in protecting our mental health, and preventing distress.



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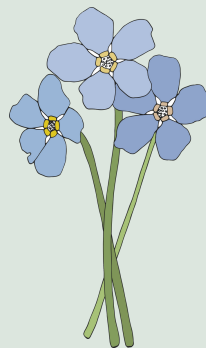
Mental Health

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health, defined by the World Health Organisation, is 'a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'

Positive mental health allows people to:

- Realise their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities



Ways to maintain positive mental health include:

- Getting professional help if you need it
- Connecting with others
- Staying positive
- Getting physically active
- Helping others
- Getting enough sleep
- Developing coping skills

What does the research tell us?

- Studies have found that wellbeing can be linked, in part, with how close we live to nature spaces and street trees or private gardens, in both urban and rural settings
- Spending time in blue spaces and green spaces is linked to improved life satisfaction, reduced anxiety and increased happiness
- Contact with nature generates an increase in positive emotions and feelings of vitality, and a decrease in negative emotions; it also provides relief of from mental tiredness, and an improvement in our attention span.
- 65% of people agreed that they experience positive emotions from being in nature (e.g. calm, joy, excitement or wonder)
- 44% of people said that being close to nature makes them less worried or anxious

Nature

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Connecting with nature is about building a relationship with nature by noticing and becoming sensitive to the environment around us.

This has benefits for our physical and mental health.



Feeling happier



Being more environmentally aware and engaged



Feeling less stressed, angry or worried



Improving attention and concentration



Having more and better quality sleep



Increasing self-esteem and self-confidence



Encouraging participation in physical activities



Increasing social contact with other people and animals



Click [HERE](#) to watch this year's mental health awareness video

Connect With Nature



HOW CAN WE CONNECT WITH NATURE?



Take a moment to pause for thought.

Reflect on your time in lockdown, and over the past year.

- In what ways did you connect with nature during that time?
- In what ways did you feel this benefitted your mental health?

Now that life is beginning to return to more normal routines, consider how you can continue to connect your connection with nature.

Finding your own space in nature: **Bring nature in**



Eat breakfast in front of the window, observing the nature outside.



Watch a wildlife programme.



Grow vegetables from your windowsill.



Open a window and listen to the different sounds.

Connect With Nature

HOW CAN WE CONNECT WITH NATURE?

Connect with others: outdoors



Play sports with friends



Visit local heritage spots



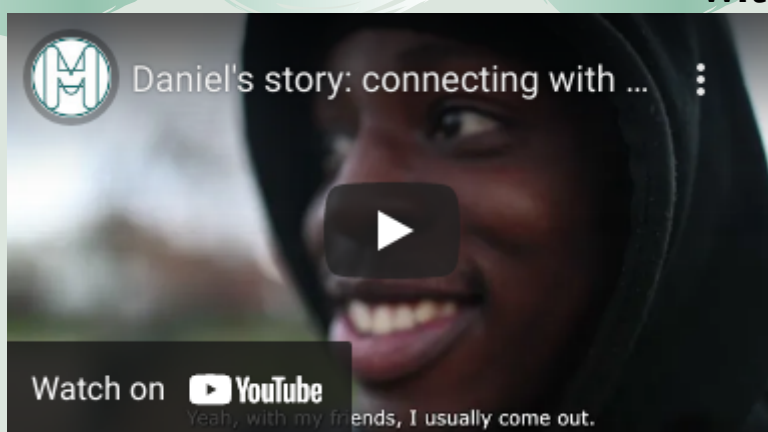
Have a picnic



Go for a group walk.



Spend time in a garden with friends or family



Click [HERE](#) to watch this video

Protecting Nature



PROTECT NATURE

Taking care of something can be a really great way to feel good. Nature is truly amazing – do what you can to look after nature - in your actions and choices. Taking care of nature can help you feel that you're doing your part, and that can make you feel more positive all round.

- Use reusable drink bottles
- Recycle as much as possible
- Walk or cycle rather than travel in a car or bus to reduce emissions
- Turn off lights when you leave the room
- Donate old clothes to charity or the clothing bank
- Grow flowers on your windowsill that are good for bees
- Pick up litter when you are out for a walk
- Sign up and share a petition or campaign about protecting our environment

What can you do...

TODAY

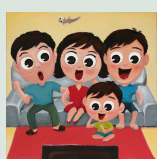
THIS WEEKEND

NEXT WEEK

To connect with nature?



WHERE CAN I GET MORE SUPPORT?



Speak to your parents/carers.



Contact Childline (0800 1111).

You can speak to someone over the phone or online.



Join Kooth - Online mental wellbeing community



@mentalhealth



@mentalhealthfoundation



#ConnectWithNature

#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek



To visit the official Mental Health Week website, go to:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week



Speak to a member of staff at Highlands School. You can also email our safeguarding team at staysafe@highlearn.uk