

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? WITH DR ALEX:

FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION POINTS & ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS



TEACHER NOTES

Using the *What's on your mind? with Dr Alex* series in the classroom

Recommended age group: 11-16 (KS3/4)

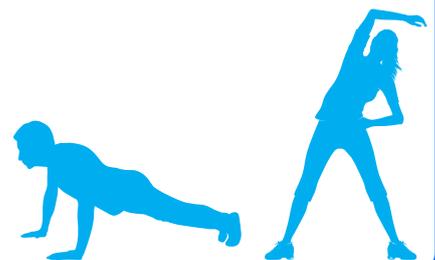
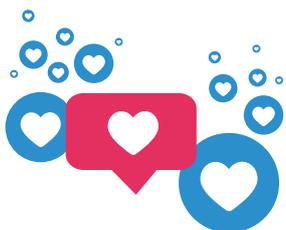
In a series of five films dedicated to mental health, the Young Mental Health Ambassador for the UK Government, Dr Alex teams up with FYI presenters, experts and celebrities including Joe Wicks MBE and Frankie Bridge to investigate simple ways to deal with the pressures of life. The areas covered are:

1. REDUCING SCREEN TIME
2. EATING WELL
3. SLEEPING
4. BEING ACTIVE
5. SPEAKING UP

Each episode highlights the importance of being physically and mentally healthy. The series will air on Sky Kids throughout the summer of 2021. The team will investigate just how important a good night's sleep is, how exercise and what you eat can have a massive impact on your mind, and the importance of speaking out when you are feeling down.

These accompanying teacher notes include follow up discussion points and activities for each episode to support teachers and explore these aspects of mental health with students in a classroom setting.

The films are freely available for all schools at [first.news/EducationTV](https://www.first.news/EducationTV)



TEACHER NOTES

FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. REDUCING SCREEN TIME

FILM: Dr Alex and teenager Xavier discover why cutting down on screen time, particularly before bedtime, calms your mind. There's a special appearance with wise words from Children's Laureate, Cressida Cowell MBE, author of the *How To Train Your Dragon* books.

Follow up activities

These ideas are taken from the PSHE Association's teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing resources: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-teaching-about-mental-health-and>

Discussion 1: What are the benefits and challenges of being online to emotional wellbeing?

- Consider – what are all the benefits to young people's emotional wellbeing of being online (and using social media in particular)? You have three minutes to list as many positive ideas as you can.

Answers might include – meeting people around the world, sharing interests, it's fun, it's an easy/quick/cheap way to communicate, can express yourself creatively, give you confidence to be who you want to be, access to support groups, time to think about what to type/say, availability of wellbeing support (e.g. meditation apps).

- Next, cover up your answers, and make a list in the next three minutes focusing on all the challenges to young people's emotional wellbeing from being online (and using social media in particular).

Answers might include – peer pressure, cyberbullying, expected to always be available, might feel excluded from certain groups (e.g. don't have the app), people behave differently online than they would face-to-face, can see upsetting content accidentally, fear of missing out (FOMO), jealousy caused by looking at others' social media accounts, pressure to look a certain way, sleep deprivation.

- Finally, think about any interesting facts or questions you have about being online and mental health. Write a list of these and share some ideas with your peers and/or the class.

Discussion 2: What advice do you have for social media companies?

- Reflect on what advice you would give to social media companies to help them promote young people's emotional wellbeing.

- What could be done to improve young people's experience of social media in general?
- How can social media be used to celebrate people's individuality and self-expression?

Discussion 3: Which apps or sites improve or worsen emotional wellbeing?

- Discuss in pairs – are there any particular apps or sites which are better or worse for emotional wellbeing? Why?

Notes for teachers/teaching staff: To support discussion point 2 and 3, you may wish to show the following #StatusofMind video from the Royal Society for Public Health: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/status-of-mind.html>

Follow up activities

PSHE Association: Promoting emotional wellbeing lesson (see Attachment 1)
(This resource is from <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing-lesson-plans>)

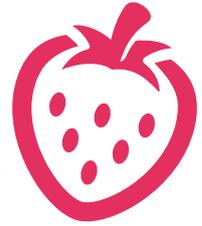


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FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

2. EATING WELL

Film: Dr Alex and young FYI presenter Xavier investigate how eating well improves your mental health, as well as your physical health. Plus they have some tips for healthy snacks.



Follow up activities

These ideas are taken from PHE's Healthy Eating School Resources: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/healthy-eating/resources>

Discussion: Can you spot sugar?

- Discuss in groups – what foods are high in sugar? Where can you make healthier swaps to reduce your sugar intake? Why is this important?

Notes for teachers/teaching staff: the biggest source of sugar in children's and teen's diets is sugary drinks like cola, fizzy pop, juice drinks, squashes, cordials and energy drinks. There is also lots of sugar in sweets and chocolate, fruit juice, buns, cakes, pastries and fruit pies, biscuits and some breakfast cereals. Explain to the students that eating healthily does not have to mean giving up your favourite foods. It just means eating a variety of foods and cutting down on food and drinks that are high in sugar and fat. Eating a varied and balanced diet is vital for your physical health, to ensure your body grows and develops properly. And it'll help you feel good too. Healthier swaps could include porridge with berries, water, plain lower fat milk, no added-sugar drinks, natural yoghurt with chopped fruit or frozen berries, tinned fruit salad, and lots of vegetables!

Activity 1: Making healthy food

- For schools/colleges that are able to:
 - Try making one of the healthy recipes from the PHE's Change4life website: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes>
 - Or the Easy Meals app, which can be downloaded from the App Store and Google Play.

Activity 2: Checking sugar content

- For schools/colleges that are not able to do this, another activity suggestion is:
 1. Download the **Change4Life Food Scanner App** and check the sugar content of your favourite breakfast cereal or sweets.
 2. Create an infographic, poster or leaflet showing popular foods such as corner yoghurts, chocolate or frosted flake breakfast cereals, sweets, or chocolate bars alongside their sugar content in the form of sugar cubes.
 3. Try thinking of healthier alternatives and discuss or draw the sugar savings made by these swaps.

Activity 3: Promote healthy food choices

Produce a leaflet or poster which encourages your peers to make healthier food choices (and explains the benefits of healthy eating!).

Other activity suggestions

- There are a number of resources/interactive activities about the Government's healthy eating guidelines and other topics related to eating well on the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) website: <https://www.foodfactoflife.org.uk/11-14-years/healthy-eating/eat-well/>

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FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

3. SLEEPING

FILM: Dr Alex joins Braydon, 12, to find out how sleep affects your mood. What is good quality sleep and why can sleeping be difficult?

Follow up activities

These ideas are taken from PHE's School Zone KS3 Sleep lesson plan:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/sleep-KS3-KS4-lesson-plan-pack>

Discussion: Thinking about sleep

Discuss any of the following questions:

- How would you define good quality sleep?

Answers might include – length of sleep (8-10 hours) uninterrupted sleep etc.

- Why can sleeping be difficult?

Answers might include – mood, thoughts, phones, screens, noises, lights, uncomfortable, stress, substances – like caffeine or alcohol.

- How would someone know they have slept well?

Answers might include – feeling alert, rested, better mood, better appetite, memory.

- What are main factors that impact sleep?

Answers might include – health, stress, age, sleeping environment, diet, use of technology at bedtime and caffeine (caffeine can make it harder to get to sleep and decrease a person's quality of sleep).

- How might someone's sleep change with different circumstances?

Answers might include – stressful situations, new environments, new baby in the house, different seasons.

- What does a good sleep routine look like to you?

Answers might include – this will vary depending on the individual, but possible responses might include relaxation techniques, minimising use of screens, and creating a bedroom environment that helps them switch off.

Activity 1: Design an app to help with sleeping

Can you help design an app or a podcast to support young people struggling with their sleep?

- Explain that students are going to be working in small groups to create a B-E-D app or podcast to help support young people struggling with their sleep. Each group will produce a feature of the app or podcast to give advice and suggestions in one of the three areas: **B**edtime routine, **E**bedroom environment, or **D**aytime routine. Allocate one of the three features to groups or allow students to choose for themselves.

- Show the class the second half of the NHS Better Health video (1:28 - end) to give the students ideas:

<https://bcove.video/2LqyUDq>

- Encourage students to be creative. They could make up rhymes, draw images, suggest music or anything else to make an awesome app or podcast! Each group can then prepare a two-minute presentation to feed back to the rest of the class. Students can re-watch the video if needed.

Success Criteria...try to include:

- An explanation of how either bedtime routine, bedroom environment or daytime routine benefits sleep.
- Suggestions on how to build opportunities for rest and downtime.
- Strategies for how someone could improve their quality of sleep.
- Advice on what to do if someone's quality of sleep does not improve.

Activity 2: Positive bedroom environment

Draw an image of a positive bedroom environment and annotate it with notes on what makes good quality sleep.

Activity 3: The importance of routine

Create a poster of ways to encourage students to use less technology in their bedtime routine that could be put up around school or published in a school magazine.



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4. BEING ACTIVE

FILM: Dr Alex joins FYI presenter Tilly to look at the benefits of exercise on your physical and mental wellbeing. Plus there's a message from the one and only Joe Wicks MBE.

Follow up activities

These ideas are taken from PHE's School Zone KS3 Physical and Mental Wellbeing lesson plan: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/physical-mental-wellbeing-ks3-ks4-lesson-plan>

Activity 1: Physical and mental wellbeing: true or false?

Complete the 'True or false?' statement activity sheet (see Attachment 2) (This resource is from: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/physical-mental-wellbeing-ks3-ks4-lesson-plan>)

Discuss the correct answers in pairs.

Note to teachers/teaching staff: Highlight to students that there are a lot of myths around wellbeing and quite often people do not know how they can make their bodies and minds feel better.

Activity 2: Strategies to support mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing

Following completion of activity one, use two different coloured pens to group the 'true' statements from activity one into strategies that support:

- Mental wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing

In pairs explain your choices and answer the question:

- Were your choices the same?

Note to teachers/teaching staff: There are a variety of answers that could be given for this activity – the task is to highlight the difficulty in trying to separate strategies which promote mental and physical wellbeing – as the two are very closely linked.

Activity 3: The benefits of exercise on physical and mental wellbeing

Working in small groups, create a blog post or poster to show your understanding of the following benefits of exercise on physical and mental wellbeing.

Note to teachers/teaching staff: Answers from the physical and mental wellbeing: true or false? activity sheet can be printed off for students to help with their task. To increase the challenge students can undertake the task individually or students can be chosen to share their work with the rest of the class.

Follow up physical activity sessions

A list of suggested physical activities to do before, during, and after the school day can be found at Your School Games: <https://www.yourschoolgames.com/active-recovery/>



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5. SPEAKING UP

FILM: Former girl band member, Frankie Bridge, joins Dr Alex and teenager Tilly to discuss why it's important to speak up if you're feeling down.

Follow up activities

These ideas are taken from Young Mind's resources for schools: <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/helloyellow-secondary-lesson-plan/>

Discussion: What self-care techniques help you?

- Discuss in pairs what self-care techniques involving other people you find helpful when you are feeling a bit low. Are they the same self-care techniques Dr Alex and Frankie use?

Activity Part 1: Starting conversations to support friends

- In groups – think of conversation starters you might use to support a friend who you think is worrying about something. How do you show a friend you are there for them and can listen?

Key things to remember:

- *When listening to a friend, it is not your job to try to make everything ok. Just listening is often enough.*
- *If you think your friend needs some help, ask which trusted adult they would like to tell – perhaps you could volunteer to go with them.*
- *Remember that you might have to tell a trusted adult if you worry that your friend could be in danger. So do not promise your friend that you won't tell a parent or a teacher.*
- *If you are worried about your own or a friend's wellbeing then it is always best to tell a trusted adult, so that they can help. This could be a parent, carer, teacher, football coach etc.*
- *Safe sources of support also include Childline: childline.org.uk and Shout 85258: giveusashout.org*

Note to teachers/teaching staff: Feed back and make a list of conversation starters that students agree might be helpful such as: You don't seem yourself; do you want to talk? Do you want me to talk to your mum/Ms X or Mr X?

Activity Part 2: Starting conversations to help yourself

- Then, think of something that has been on your mind – **you will not have to share this with anyone in the room.**
- Think about who knows about this. For example, you might have told a friend, parent, boy/girlfriend, cousin etc.
- Then ask yourself – who do you know who is good to talk to?
- Are there any of the same people in both groups? It is common to be able to identify people who are good to talk to, yet they are sometimes not the ones you always approach.

It might be worth repeating this exercise if you need to share something on your mind.

