

TEACHERS NOTES

REHABILITATION AND INJURY

FINDING OUT

Increasing media coverage of mental illness has begun to raise community awareness of mental health issues and break down the barriers of stigma and misunderstanding. Sensitive and helpful classroom discussion of mental wellness alongside dialogue about physical health will increase children's mental health literacy, promote help-seeking and develop resilience.

Children should already be familiar with types of physical injury and the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining physical health and fitness. Assess their prior knowledge by asking children to turn and talk with a partner to identify three ways they can stay physically fit and healthy. Record some key words from these discussions so they are visible to the children.

Now display two contrasting pictures: one showing a child who appears smiling and happy and another showing a child who appears sad or upset. Ask children to turn to their partner and suggest three ways they can stay positive and healthy in their mind. Again, record key words.

SORTING OUT

Before viewing the animation (rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Health-and-Wellbeing/years-3---6/Rehabilitation-and-Injury), explain to students that they will hear about two types of injury. They will hear stories of three people with injuries. Ask them to think, while they view, about what steps are taken to assist recovery.

Provide sticky notes or paper and encourage students to record any questions that occur to them while they are viewing. After viewing, students can contribute their questions. Group and collate the questions and guide discussion and investigation around helpful areas of enquiry.

Ask children to draw or write about a time in their life that they suffered a setback (students may opt to choose either physical or emotional setbacks) and what steps they took to move forward or recover. Model one or two examples and have children share an example of their own with a partner if they wish.

Related content:

- Animation rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Health-and-Wellbeing/years-3---6/Rehabilitation-and-Injury
- Rehabilitation and Injury Activity rsleducation.com.au/Themes/Health-and-Wellbeing/years-3---6/Rehabilitation-and-Injury



Here are two examples you may use:

“Once I injured my back while playing sport. I found it very difficult to do even simple tasks or to enjoy any of the things I used to do for fun. The physical injury began to affect my mood. I went to see a physiotherapist who gave me some exercises to strengthen my back. As my physical health improved, so did my mood. Now I practise yoga every few days to maintain strength and flexibility.”

“I was given a puppy for my tenth birthday. She was my constant companion. A few years ago, she died suddenly. I was very shocked and sad. For a few days I felt lost as what to do as my routine had including feeding her, walking her and playing with her in the afternoons. My close friends visited and talked with me. They took me out for a coffee and we walked along the beach. Doing alternative activities and talking about it helped me understand my feelings. I hung a photo of my dog and her collar on my bedroom wall. I see it every day and I’m reminded of the happy times we shared. I still miss my dog but soon I will feel ready to welcome a new puppy into my life.”

TAKING ACTION

After viewing the animation, you may wish to use one or more of the following ways to deepen and extend children’s knowledge and understanding:

Read a suitable picture book or fiction novel about a child’s experience of conflict or the mental health issues that may be associated with defence service. One excellent example is Operation Green Heart by Anne Kerr and Dr Katelyn Kerr. Talk about the effects of trauma on mental wellbeing. Ask your local librarian for suggestions of other suitable children’s literature which deals sensitively with health and mental health issues.

Older students may research one or more of RSL’s partner organisations that supports people recovering from mental or physical injury. The Mental Health Support page on RSL’s website will be helpful here rslqld.org/Our-Services/Mental-Health-Support Alternatively, prepare a list of organisations that support children’s mental well-being, such as Lifeline, Kids Helpline, Beyond Blue, Black Dog Institute and Headspace. Have students investigate one of these. Use a retrieval chart that includes details such as:

- name of the organisation
- who they target for assistance
- how to contact
- who launched or currently manages the organisation
- how this organisation supports the community

Have students examine advertisements, news articles or posters that promote physical health and fitness. Help students identify common themes, values and interpretations.



Have students collect similar examples dealing with mental health and wellness. How do these representations compare and contrast with those targeting physical health?

Ask students to reflect on what makes them feel good about themselves. Make a list to display in the classroom, of positive ways to deal with challenges, failure, and unhelpful or negative emotions. For example: self-talk, seeking help from trusted friends and family members, persistence, positive thinking, relaxation strategies or physical activity.

Have students design and create a poster (hard copy or digital), internet meme, collage artwork, short trailer or video clip that promotes strategies for good mental health.

