

Learning Objectives

- * To understand the influence of the media on people's opinions and beliefs
- * To understand the term stigma and how the media contributes to it
- * To understand the consequences of discrimination on emotional health.

Total Time
45 mins
+15 mins
extension
activities

Teacher's Notes

This is the third in a series of three lessons in citizenship on the theme of social inclusion and challenging discrimination. Ground rules: The lesson may touch on personal issues for students, please read the ground rules at the beginning of the lesson and ensure these are respected.

Resources

- * Collect copies of recent media stories or articles about mental health to use as examples
- * Optional: Bring copies of DEAL fact sheets for further information and statistics on emotional health
- * Photocopies of Worksheet 1– 'See Me' article - enough for each student
- * [optional] Photocopies of Worksheet 2, 3 or 4 depending on choice of extension activity.

Introduction

Ground rules: "In this lesson we will be covering some sensitive issues. You may be affected personally by one of the topics that we are discussing today, or you may know someone else who is. Please be respectful and thoughtful of others, and treat the subject responsibly. If you would like to talk to someone after the lesson, you can go to ... (please either give the contact person in the school, for example a school counsellor, or an outside number, for example Samaritans).

Ask: Put up your hand if you think you usually have strong opinions on things? Put up your hand if you don't have strong opinions yourself but prefer to hear a balance of views.

Thought storm on the board: How do you form an opinion about something?

Reflect: We base our opinions on what we see, hear and read and we get different viewpoints from different sources e.g. media, family, friends, and education.

Recap: We previously covered topics of personal identity and how we make people feel included. We've looked at discrimination and how it can make people feel excluded. This lesson is about the media, how it influences the way people think and act, and how sometimes this can add to discrimination and stigma.

Time
10 mins



Mental health and the media

Hand out: Photocopies of recent articles about mental health in the media (if you don't have any articles use some of the information on the Robbie Williams extension activity in this lesson plan).

Check understanding of the terms:

- * **What is mental health?** Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 (World Health Organisation).
- * **What are some examples of mental illness or mental health problems?** Depression, anxiety, phobias, eating disorders, schizophrenia, self-injury, suicide, drug and alcohol addictions.

Time
10 mins



Explain: In pairs, read through the media articles which refer to mental health, and answer the following two questions:

1. Where have you seen, heard or read about both mental health and mental health problems in the media? Think about TV, Radio, Film, Newspaper, Magazines, and Internet.

Examples might include:

- * Celebrities with drug addictions
- * Post natal depression
- * Suicide on the railway
- * Stories about new types of counselling or therapies
- * Magazine articles about people overcoming their fears
- * Music lyrics about coping with a difficult time in a person's life.

2. What are some of the negative words you hear people use to describe people with mental ill health? [For example, nutter, crazy, schizo].

Take some feedback: In general, do people think the media portrays a positive or negative image of mental health?

See Me Campaign

The aim of this exercise is to improve understanding of the impact of stigma on people with mental health problems.



Handout: Worksheet 1

Explain: This article was published as part of the See Me Campaign, a media campaign held in Scotland held to raise awareness and de-stigmatise mental health. Read this worksheet and in groups answer the questions below it.

Take feedback:

1. What does STIGMA mean?

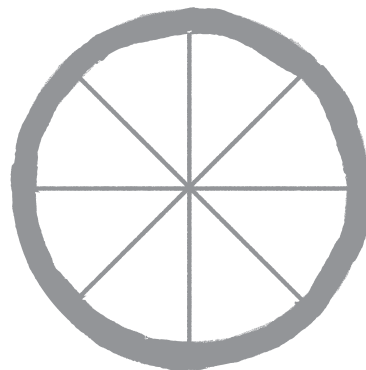
One definition is "Severe disapproval for behaviour that is not within cultural norms".

2. Can you think of another example of stigma in the community?

Examples include abortion which is against the norms of some religious and cultural groups, there is a stigma associated with women who have an abortion. Similarly, in some cultures divorce is stigmatised, and women who are divorced by their husbands are shunned by the community.

3. What are the consequences of social stigma on people with mental health problems?

Fill in the life balance wheel with what you imagine the consequences might be. Write a consequence in each segment of the wheel.



Time
10 mins



Optional Extension Activities

1 Celebrity Mental Health

Use Worksheet 2 which has 4 reports about Robbie Williams and his reported struggle with depression (if this story becomes out of date, please replace it with something more current).

Ask students to read the articles, and then to work in pairs to answer the following questions:

1. What have you have learned about depression by reading the articles.
2. How has your opinion of depression been changed by the way that it is reported.

Ask students to feedback to the whole group. Draw out any points about how the media influences what we know and think about mental health. Does it make us feel more positive or negative about depression knowing that a celebrity is suffering from it?

OR

2. Depression caused by Acne drug?

Handout: Worksheet 3.

Explain: Working in pairs, read the news report in Worksheet 3, and to try to answer the questions on the sheet.

Feedback as a whole group to discuss.

OR

1 Most Likely

Handout: Worksheet 4, the "most likely to" grid.

Explain: This exercise is to look at how different types of media influence our opinions on different aspects of life. To show how strong you think the media influence is, fill in crosses XXX in each box of the grid. The more crosses you put in the stronger the influence.

Take feedback: Which is the most powerful medium. Is this different for different age groups? Do you think your age group is heavily influenced by the media?

15 mins
each
activity



#

Opinions lines

Explain: Imagine there is a line at the front of the classroom, on one end is strongly agree, the other is strongly disagree. I am going to read three statements. Stand somewhere along the line to show how much you agree or disagree.

- * The See Me article says 48 % of people wouldn't want anyone to know they had a mental health problem. Would they get similar results if they did a survey in their school?
- * The media reinforces stigma and prejudice about mental health
- * The media manipulates public opinion
- * Public opinion influences the media.

Reflect: The media can have a negative impact on people's perceptions and opinions and this can have serious consequences for people suffering mental health problems. The media should recognise their responsibility and encourage inclusion rather than exclusion. There are now media guidelines around covering certain issues such as suicide, to ensure the coverage is done sensitively. Consumer power is still important, as was shown in the reportage of Frank Bruno's mental health problems:

Read out: 'In 2004, Frank Bruno, world class boxer, was taken into hospital suffering from depression. One news paper headline read, "Bonkers Bruno in mental asylum".

There was public outcry at this stigmatising coverage. The strength of complaint was so great that the newspaper gave in and by the mid day edition they had withdrawn the headline.

Time
10 mins



Summary

- * Closing discussion and feedback. Ask students what they have learned. (If they have a KWL sheet from the previous lesson they may wish to add to the third column.)
- * Ensure that they know where to go for help either in school or out of school if they want to talk further about any issues raised.

Time
5 mins



WORKSHEET

Worksheet 1: Mental health and the Media



The following article was published as part of the See Me Campaign, a media campaign held in Scotland held to raise awareness and de-stigmatise mental health.

In January 2005 the results were published from research conducted among young people in Scotland. Of 488 school pupils aged 12-18 who completed a questionnaire in Orkney, Barrhead and Dunfermline in October-November 2004, 48% said if they were suffering from a mental health problem they would not want people to know.

Lack of understanding and fear of other people's reactions were found to be the major barriers to seeking help. As a result a campaign called 'See Me' was created to try to educate young people about mental health, and to reduce the stigma associated with it.

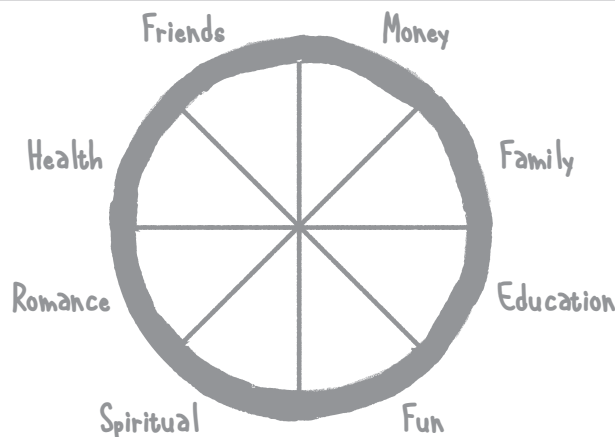
The "See Me" campaign, which was run in alliance with a number of mental health bodies, found that although school pupils have a high awareness of mental ill-health, there is a lack of information about where to find help.

Answer the following questions

1. What does STIGMA mean?

2. Can you think of another example of stigma in the community?

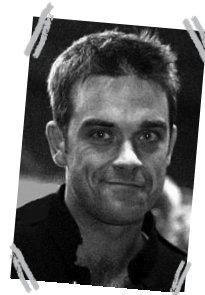
3. What are the consequences of social stigma on people with mental health problems? Fill in the life balance wheel with what you imagine the consequences might be. Write a consequence in each segment of the wheel.



WORKSHEET

Worksheet 2: Celebrity Mental Health

The following reports relate to the mental health of Robbie Williams, who is said to be suffering from depression. Read them through and think about what you have learned about depression by reading the articles. Think about how your opinion of depression has been changed by the way that it is reported.



1. September 23, 2006 by Daniel Kilkelly

Robbie Williams is being treated for depression, The Mirror reports today. The singer has visited The Priory clinic in South West London for sessions with top doctor Mark Collins after struggling to cope during his world tour. A source told the newspaper: "He's suffered from depression before but feels things are getting worse and the tour was too much. He's determined to get the very best treatment." Robbie recently decided to cancel the Asian leg of his tour, with officials stating that he was suffering from "stress and exhaustion".

2. October 2, 2006 by exposay.com

After Robbie Williams' mom recently noticed her son had been spinning out-of-control towards a downhill spiral, she became increasingly concerned for his mental health and decided to do something about it. The 32-year-old British star left fans disappointed when he cancelled the Asian leg of his tour due to "stress and exhaustion." Now his mom Jan, a 56-year-old drug counsellor, has persuaded him to seek help at a psychiatric practice in Chelsea.

The singer suffers from bipolar disorder, the clinical term for manic depression, and before cancelling his tour had been struggling to get out of bed before 3 p.m. and said he couldn't face going on stage. In a BBC documentary about manic depression, Robbie told actor Stephen Fry, "I only get the manic highs when I'm on stage, it's downhill after that."

3. October 2006, by Michael Duffy of the Sunday Mirror

She is a humble barmaid earning £16,000 a year. He is an international rock icon with an £80million record deal. Yet away from the stage lights and his army of fans, Robbie Williams has been having a secret relationship with Charlotte Austin for the last 18 months. Charlotte said she had previously suffered from depression, which was something she spoke about regularly with the troubled star. She said: "It had been a big deal in my life and he understood what I was talking about".

Earlier this month Robbie was spotted wandering around the lobby of a luxury golf resort in a seemingly dazed state, sparking fears for his mental health. But Charlotte said apart from bouts of depression, he is generally happy. She said: "Imagine being in that world, being under scrutiny 24 hours a day and every woman who sleeps with you ends up in a newspaper. Then imagine the bizarre lifestyle of travel, money and fame he has."

4. September 2006, by Eva Simpson of the Mirror

Pop star Robbie Williams is reportedly being treated for depression at top London clinic The Priory after cancelling the Asian leg of his world tour earlier this month. The Angels star, who has battled depression in the past, is struggling in the charts with new single Rudebox and is facing legal action from ex-manager Nigel Martin-Smith over a song Williams wrote about him on his new album. Williams told a BBC documentary this month: "I could get up in front of 35,000 or 40,000 people and go, 'Look at me, I'm ace'. Then I'd get in the tour coach, go back to my bedroom and pull the duvet over my eyes."

WORKSHEET

Worksheet 3: Depression Caused by Acne Drug?

The following article describes new research that 'proves' that Roaccutane – a drug used to treat severe acne, also causes depression.

Depression fears over acne drugs: By Fiona MacRae 18th September 2006

The first scientific proof that an acne drug taken daily by thousands of British teenagers can cause depression has opened its makers to threats of fresh legal action, it was revealed yesterday.

Roaccutane, which is used to treat severe acne, has been blamed for hundreds of suicides around the world, including at least 15 in the UK. However, its manufacturer, Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche, has always rejected claims that the drug was responsible, claiming that severe acne can lower self-esteem and cause depression.

Dr Bailey looked at how adolescent mice - picked because they were in a similar stage of development to teenage children - reacted to regular doses of Roaccutane. The creatures took part in two experiments, the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* reports. In the first, they were placed in a tank of water that was slightly too deep for them. Usually, mice try to escape, either by swimming or trying to climb out of the tank. But, these mice spent more time than expected completely still. A second experiment, in which the creatures had to try to right themselves after being placed upside down, confirmed they had lost their will to fight.

Dr Bailey urged teenagers not to stop taking the drug. Instead, they should tell their GP if they start to feel depressed and parents should watch out for any mood changes in their children.



1. What affect does the phrase 'scientific proof' have on the way that you read the rest of the article?

2. How does the description of the experiments on mice affect your opinion of the drug?

3. What do you think of what the manufacturing pharmaceutical company said about the low self esteem associated with acne causing depression?

4. When you read the reports below from two mothers, do they change your opinion of the drug? Why?

WORKSHEET

Mrs K, Cornwall - My son's acne was terrible, his face was covered in deep cysts that would explode when he was talking, and he couldn't sleep from the pain. This drug changed my sons life for the better, we were aware of the risk and received the best medical care with monthly check ups.

Elaine, Bournemouth, UK - My son had depression due to severe acne. Taking Roaccutane cured his acne (he'd tried MANY other medications which were useless) and lifted his depression. I think it is more likely that the acne causes the depression and not this fantastic drug!

WORKSHEET

Worksheet 4: Most Likely To ...

Rate how much influence different areas of the media have on what you think about the issues listed below.

Use the following score rating:

- XXX = A lot of influence
- XX = Quite a bit of influence
- X = A bit of influence
- O = No influence at all

	Violent Crimes	Health Service	Marriage and Family Life	Global Warming	The Government
TV					
Newspapers					
Radio					
Internet					
Magazines					
Film / DVD					

Our opinions about a whole range of topics are influenced by what we see and hear, by what other people tell us, by what we read in magazines and newspapers, by what we see in films and on TV.

We need to be aware of how our opinions are formed, whether they are positive or negative. The media has a large part to play in influencing what we think.