

Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education



Did you know?

Just like our physical health, our mental health will fluctuate throughout our lives? If you saw Lewis Capaldi's performance at Glastonbury, you were lucky enough to witness one of the most beautiful examples of acceptance and inclusion. Lewis struggled to perform all his songs and the crowd sang for him in collective support. He has since made a statement thanking everyone for their support. What happened on that day was the result of at least some of the crowd having the right knowledge and feeling the right emotions. So, what makes someone feel that they want to include everyone and embrace their differences? How can we help children develop this level of empathy and kindness?

1 Teach that mental health and wellbeing is on a continuum

Statistics show that 1 in 4 people experience mental health issues each year. Using the analogy of physical health can be useful for young people in understanding that sometimes we can look after our mental health with self-care, like we would if we had a cold; however, sometimes we need professional support to look after our mental health, like we would if we had broken our leg. Stigma can play a big role in preventing people seeking support and schools play a central role in helping children and young people to normalise conversations about mental health.

2 Help children and young people to celebrate their own difference and uniqueness

The idea that there are potentially more atoms in the human body than there are stars in the entire universe is a concept that can be very powerful when talking to young people about differences. How can we be the same with this potential for variability? It is the things we share in common combined with our differences that make the human race so incredible. Helping children and young people to be aware of the elements that contribute to their identity is the first step in helping to understand what makes other people who they are.

3 Show examples of compassion and kindness

Showing appropriate clips from Lewis' act and asking children to talk about what people who were there may have been feeling can help model the qualities people demonstrated. One of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' promoted by the NHS is to 'Give to Others' and the reason for this is that there is a strong evidence base that the act of giving has a positive impact on subjective wellbeing – that is we develop healthy self-esteem by being able to provide value to others. Being able to give beyond our own immediate friends and family is something that children and young people can develop through experience once they have practised in their closer circle.

