



Defining Mental Health: Facilitator Note

Encourage the group to think about the whole person when they are trying to describe a mentally healthy young person, encourage them to think about their lifestyle as well as looks and feelings.

For younger young carers it might be an idea to get them to draw or cut out pictures to portray the words or meaning they are trying to say.

You can also encourage discussion by asking young carers to create a story about a mentally healthy person. What attributes would that person have? How would they behave? Why is it important that they have these attributes etc? All of this helps to get the young person thinking about what makes up mental health.

In the columns you could have phrases like:

Mental Health	Physical Health	Social Health
Enjoys life	Feeling fit	Good relationships – family, friends
Looking forward to future	Energetic	Feels valued
Optimistic	Free from pain and disease	Feels able to make an impact on the world
Sense of achievement	Enough to eat	Feels able to be creative and expressive
Happy	Good sleep	Able to learn, work and succeed
Able to deal with crises		
Sense of fun		
Ability to laugh at self		

This shows young people that we need a variety of things in our life to maintain our mental and physical health. The idea is to get them to see the whole person and how good mental health is as important as good physical health. Social health is about how we interact with others and our community. It is important in helping us feel valued and able to contribute.

A mentally healthy young person is one who has the ability to:

Develop psychologically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually.

Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying relationships

Use and enjoy solitude

Become aware of others and empathise with them

Play and learn

Develop a sense of right and wrong

Face problems and setbacks satisfactorily and learn from them.



Whilst you will not be looking for this type of language in the feedback the themes of the above should be discussed. For instance it is important that young people learn who they are and what is expected of them and what they can expect from others; they learn a sense of right and wrong. They understand that things happen which they cannot always control but they can learn how to deal with challenges in a healthy manner.