

WHERE'S YOUR HEAD AT?



**THE BOYS'
BRIGADE**
> the adventure begins here
Northern Ireland District



*COMPANY & SENIORS
LEADERS BOOKLET*



Important:
Our aim is to make talking about emotions normal for the boys.

You may find it useful to split the boys into smaller groups when using the booklet and chatting through the answers.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Good mental health is the ability to deal with your emotions in a way that helps you to reach your full potential.

We all struggle at times with our mental health! This can leave us unable to cope with everyday situations & prevents us from being who we have been created to be.

It is important we treat our mental health like we treat our physical health.

We cannot simply ignore any issues and hope they go away.

List 4 mental health issues we can all struggle with:

1. Stress
2. Anxiety
3. Anger
4. Depression

What do you do when you are physically sick?

- Rest
- Go to the doctors
- Take medication

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to see their mental health the way they see their physical health.



Share:
Let the boys see that you can struggle as well.

Bible:
Following Jesus doesn't mean that we won't struggle with our mental health. But Jesus can help us with our struggles.





Important:
We can all feel stressed at times. It is very normal and not something to be afraid of.

Ask:
Ask them about their answers. What is it about these things that causes them to feel stressed?

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

One common issue we can all struggle with is *stress!*

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure. It can develop when we have lots to do and don't have much control over what happens.

Stress can lead to you:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling worried
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having difficulty sleeping

What can cause stress in your life?

1. Exams
2. Family issues
3. Falling out with friends
4. Illness

What 3 ways can you de-stress?

1. Xbox
2. Sport
3. Drawing

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to talk to someone when they encounter these issues and feel stressed.

Ask:
Ask the boys what helps them to de-stress?

Share:
Share what relaxes you with the boys.



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Encourage:

Let the boys know that if they are worried about anything it is important that they share it with an adult they know and trust.

Share:

Share a time where you have been anxious / worried with the boys.

Encourage:

Encourage the boys that talking about their anxiety/ worries can help to reduce them.



COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Anxiety is common among young people and can have a negative impact on your daily life.

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat.

Anxiety can lead to you:

- Having difficulty sleeping
- Not being able to concentrate
- Becoming easily upset
- Feeling on edge

Encourage:

Encourage the boys to look out for these signs.

What 3 things can cause anxiety in your life?

1. Loss of family income
2. Sport
3. Going to school

What could you do to reduce your anxiety?

1. Drawing
2. Exercise
3. Watching TV
4. Music

Ask:

Ask the boys what they struggle with and how do they reduce their anxiety?

What do you think the Bible says about feeling anxious?

Bible:

Share Bible stories and verses to encourage the boys about anxiety/ worry.

This video contains Bible teaching.





Ask:
Ask the boys what makes them angry and why?

Share:
Share a time when you were angry.
How did you cope?

Ask:
Ask the boys how do they cope with their anger?

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

It's natural to get angry sometimes.
But there are ways to show it without hurting yourself or other people.

What can cause you to be angry?

1. People making fun of you
2. Being physically attacked
3. Failing at an activity

Anger can cause different symptoms.

Some people become aggressive towards others when they're angry. Other people hide their anger and may take it out on themselves.

Feeling angry is normal,
it's how we cope with our
anger that is important.

Important:
Being angry can sometimes be a sign
that something else is going on to
cause you stress or anxiety.

Anger can help motivate us, but it can also get out of control. There's a big difference between feeling angry and being abusive or aggressive.

What can you do to reduce your anger?

- Play sport
- Count to 10 and breath
- Stress ball / punch bag
- Talk to a friend

Ask your leader!
What do they do when
they are angry?



COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Depression is more than just feeling unhappy or fed up for a few days.

Most people go through periods of feeling down, but when you're depressed you feel persistently sad for weeks or months, rather than just a few days.

Depression affects people in different ways and can cause a wide variety of symptoms.

They range from:

- Lasting feelings of unhappiness and hopelessness.
- Losing interest in the things you used to enjoy.
- Feeling very tearful.

Important:
Everyone is different and can be affected in different ways.

Important:
It is important that the boys check in mentally and ask themselves how long have they felt sad / down for.

Encourage:
It is important you encourage the boys to speak to someone they know and trust if they're struggling.

If you think you are struggling with depression it is important to you let someone know and visit your doctor.

1 in 4 adults in the UK suffer from depression!

One of the best ways to help someone with depression, is to let them know you care and are there to listen.

Important:
Remember to let the boys know you are there for them if they need to talk.

This link takes you to the childline website for more details



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Ask:
Ask the boys who they would
speak to and why?

Share:
Share with the boys who you would
speak to when you are struggling.



*IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH POOR MENTAL HEALTH,
TALK TO SOMEONE YOU KNOW & TRUST ABOUT
HOW YOU ARE FEELING!*

Who is the one person you could talk to?

Why do you think some people don't talk
about their mental health struggles?

Talking about your feelings isn't a sign of weakness. It's part of taking charge of your wellbeing and doing what you can to stay healthy. Just being listened to can help you feel supported and less alone.

Important:
It is really important to hit home that
the boys need to have one
person they know they can turn to.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE
> the adventure begins here
Northern Ireland District

The logo for The Boys' Brigade Northern Ireland District, featuring the text 'THE BOYS' BRIGADE' in a bold, sans-serif font, with '> the adventure begins here' underneath. To the right is a stylized anchor with the letters 'B', 'A', and 'B' on its crossbar, and '1879' on the shank. Below the anchor is the motto 'SEEK FIRST'.

SCAN ME





STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU COPE

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to use these strategies every day to help them cope.

1. Build a routine
A routine can help you take control of small aspects of your day. This can reduce stress & anxiety.

4. Breathe
Sometimes just taking 60 seconds to stop & breathe can reduce stress & anxiety. Focus on your breathing & counting.

2. Check-in
Have someone you know and trust to check-in with regularly. A quick chat every few days prevents things from building up & getting out of control.

5. Learn Verses
Learning Bible verses that encourage you can really help when you are feeling down.

3. Pray
We have been created by God for a relationship. He wants to hear from you. Throughout your day pray to God & ask Him for strength, guidance & peace.

What strategies do you already use to help you cope?

Ask:
Ask the boys about any coping strategies they currently use already.



Share:
Share with the boys any strategies you use to help you cope with your mental health.

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5 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

1. CONNECT

2. BE ACTIVE

3. LEARN
A NEW SKILL

4. GIVE TO
OTHERS

5. BE
MINDFUL

THE STEPS ARE
QUICK & EASY!

YOU WILL ALREADY
DO SOME OF THEM
NATURALLY.

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Northern Ireland District



SCAN ME





Important:
Remind the boys that BB is all about connecting with others.

Ask:
Ask the boys who they like to connect with and why.

1. CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing.

Good relationships can:

- Help you build a sense of belonging
- Give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and allow you to support others

Who are your go-to people to connect with?

1. Jonny from football
2. Kyle from BB
3. Dad

Is there anyone in your life that you think needs someone to connect with? Could that be you?

How can you connect with people everyday?

- In school - hanging out
- Text / phone / snapchat
- Playing sport

What can we learn from Jesus about connecting with people ?

Challenge:
Ask the boys who they could talk to / connect with who might be lonely. Maybe a classmate or a grandparent.

Bible:
Jesus was always connecting with people. He always had time for others. Share a Bible story to highlight this.



Important:
It doesn't always have
to be playing a sport.

2. BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing.

Physical activity can:

- Boost your self-esteem
- Help you to set goals and challenges
- Cause chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood

What physical activity do you currently do every day?

Walking

Cycling

Football

Ask:
Ask the boys how they like to be physically active and why.

Share:
Let the boys know what physical activity you like to do. How does it make you feel?

You should aim to do 30 minutes of exercise every day.

What new ways could you aim to be more active?

Rock climbing

Gym

Go for a walk

Why not encourage friends and family to be more active with you!

Activity:
Do a circuit with the boys. Get them moving!





Important:
Learning a new skill distracts us from our struggles and can reduce stress.

Share:
Tell the boys about a skill that you have learnt. How did it go ?

Important:
Make sure you emphasize the importance of it being for fun.

3. LEARN NEW SKILLS

Research shows that learning new skills can improve your mental wellbeing.

Don't put pressure on yourself to be perfect.
It is all about having fun!

Learning a new skill can:

- Boost your self-confidence
- Help you to build a sense of purpose
- Help you to connect with others

What new skill would you like to learn?

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to be creative and think outside the box!

Write down 3 things people could choose to learn?

1. Guitar
2. Art
3. Photography

Why not learn a new skill with a friend or family member!

Activity:
Teach the boys a new skill.
Something fun.
E.g Juggling, Cooking.

Ask:
Ask the boys what skills they would like to learn and why.



Important:
Giving to others takes the focus off yourself and your own struggles.

Bible:
Share a Bible story with the boys about helping others.
E.g The good samaritan.



4. GIVE TO OTHERS

Giving to others is a great way to improve your mental health.

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

Acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

Have you ever given to others before?
How did it make you feel?

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward.
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth.
- Helping you connect with other people.

Share:
Give the boys an example of when you helped give to others. How did you feel?

Write down 3 ways you could give to others.

How could you and your BB give to others each week?

1. Visit granny and spend time with her
2. Tidy the kitchen
3. Buy a friend some lunch

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to keep it simple and think of something easy to do!



Activity:
Plan an opportunity for the boys to give to others and serve.



Important:
If you think that you are struggling it is important to take action and ask for help!

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to make this a daily habit.

5. BE MINDFUL

Being mindful is paying more attention to the present moment and can help improve your mental wellbeing.

Being mindful is a quick mental check-in with yourself throughout the day.

Being mindful includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

When being mindful, ask yourself the following questions:

Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

- How do I feel?
- What has caused that emotion?
- How can I reduce that feeling?
- Do I need to talk to someone?

When could you stop to be mindful throughout your day?
On the bus, walking home, in the gym, bedtime.

Ask a leader!
*When are they mindful?
What do they do?*

Share:
Share with the boys when you are mindful. What do you do?

Activity:
Get the boys to try it for one minute and share with the group!

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Share:
Fill in the boxes yourself and
share your answers with the boys.

HEALTHY MIND PLAN

Create your own 'Healthy Mind Plan' to help you improve your mental health.

3 ways I will de-stress:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I will stop and reflect each day:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Encourage:
Encourage the boys to put this into practice. Check in with them to see how things are going.

The person I trust to speak to when I am struggling is:

My favourite Bible verse to encourage me is:

I will be active each by:

-
-
-



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ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
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