

Children's Mental Health Week 6th - 12th February 2023

Let's Connect



BCCS

a children's charity for
Essex and East London

Secondary Resources

Starter ideas for conversations and activities



This year's theme for Children's Mental Health Week is 'Let's Connect'. At BCCS we know all about connecting with children and young people, their families and school staff – we do it every day. We know that you do too and that the first time you connect with your form each day is during registration time. A time not only to see who is present but to check-in emotionally, to chat and to set the tone for the rest of the school day.

What we are really talking about here is social connection – feeling close to others. Feeling loved, cared for and valued in our relationships. Most people want to be accepted just the way they are, without judgement, without being expected to change. Social connection can add purpose and meaning to life – this can be family, friends and you at school. These connections can also help all of us to cope when life feels difficult. Connection makes us stronger.

So, we have prepared a few prompts for you to start a conversation about connection or to offer a connection activity. All are simple, quick ideas that use minimal resources. A great way for you and your form to be part of the 2023 Children's Mental Health Week and get connecting!



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BCCS, 133 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9AB

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society - Registered Charity Number: 1000661

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Activity 1

Discuss in pairs or as a form, someone who you like to connect with – it could be a parent, extended family member, teacher or even a pet. Say why they are important to you. Did this connection change during the COVID pandemic and during lockdowns? And, if so, how is that connection now?

Activity 2

Human Knot Game – 10 students at a time. Purpose of the game is to work collaboratively, for everyone to play an equal part, to experience fun connecting with others and also tolerance of others. After the activity, discuss how your students felt – name any emotions that came up. How was it to work so closely with others? Instructions: Have the entire group of students stand in a circle facing each other. Each student should reach out their left hand and grab a hold of another student's hand. Once all hands have been connected, the students should reach out their right hand to grab a different student's hand. If it becomes too difficult for them to hold hands, you need to break into multiple circles. When all the students have been connected, they must slowly begin to unwind the massive human knot that they've become. This will require twisting, crawling, walking through hoops of arms, and more! But remember, they cannot let go of one another's hands at any time.

Activity 3

Mandala colouring – mandalas have many meanings, but they can symbolise connections within their intricate patterns. Some may believe that all things are connected and silently colouring a mandala pattern can allow students to experience and be part of this connectivity. Visit supercoloring.com for free Mandala colouring pages – one of many free websites where each student can receive a printed black and white mandala ready for whatever colours they choose. You may like to explore with your form how it felt to sit in silence and colour. What did they notice about themselves and others? How did it feel to be quiet but with other people – could they still experience a connection during the collective activity?



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Activity 4

Line up – put your form into 2 groups. One half has to silently form a line according to the criteria you have given them e.g., height order, birth month order, gender order etc. The other half has to discuss together what they think the criteria is. Find out how well your form knows each other! How can they connect as a group to discover the criteria? Can the line up group work in silence?

Activity 5

Connecting with yourself – it can be difficult connecting with others and reaping the rewards if students are not connected with themselves, with who they are. Get your form to write a letter to themselves e.g., Year 7s might give advice to their year 6 self about the secondary transition. Year 11s may tell their younger self about GCSE exam stress. What positive messages would students write to their younger selves? e.g., "I was so worried about mum and dad splitting up but actually it is fine now and I like spending time in both houses". Or "I was SO worried about COVID and hated the lockdowns but life is pretty much back to normal now....."

Activity 6

Two truths, one lie – can be played in pairs or small teams. One person/team tells 2 truths and 1 lie about themselves – can the others guess which is the lie? How well do your students know one another?

We hope that your form has enjoyed connecting with each other while doing some of our activities. Keep up to date with our work by visiting our website or following us on social media. Thank you for your focus on children's mental health this week.



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