

Talking about cancer toolkit – lesson plans

Key Stage 3 / S1–S2

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



WHAT IS CANCER? GET THE FACTS

The big picture



This lesson will help pupils understand:

- the basic facts about cancer
- common fears and misconceptions around cancer.

For this lesson you'll need

- DVD clip *Talking about cancer* (secondary version)
- activity sheets 1a *What is cancer? The facts*, 1b *Fact or fiction? The answers*
- scissors

Breaking the ice

Start the lesson by setting the ground rules for class discussions. Then introduce the topic. Start with a brief question and answer session to find out what pupils know, or think they know, about cancer. Record their answers or ask pupils to spend a minute listing their responses, including facts, feelings and opinions. It could start 'Cancer is ...'.

Talking points

Watch the *Talking about cancer* DVD clip and/or ask pupils to read through activity sheet 1a, *What is cancer? The facts*, which explains what cancer is and how it can be treated. Discuss any information that is new to pupils. Do they find any facts surprising?

Class activity

Hand out activity sheet 1b, *Fact or fiction?* Working in small groups, ask pupils to read through the statements and decide if they're true or false, giving reasons for their decisions. Give pupils 10 minutes or so and then hand out or go through the answers for them to check.

Using statement G hold a class discussion and get pupils debating:

- It's best not to talk about cancer.
- It's uncomfortable and depressing.

What do pupils think? What are the benefits and drawbacks of talking about 'difficult' subjects like cancer?

Checking understanding

Refer back to pupils' initial ideas about cancer to correct any misconceptions they may still have. Let them know where they can go if they have concerns or questions about any issues that have been raised in the lesson.

Remember, the Macmillan Support Line is here for anyone who has questions about cancer or just wants someone to talk to. It's free to call on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm).

DIGGING DEEPER

If pupils want to find out more about cancer they can visit macmillan.org.uk. Ask them to use their findings to produce an information leaflet or booklet to give other young people the key facts about cancer.

GET MORE INVOLVED

Why not request a Macmillan talk? Macmillan speakers can give direct information to your pupils about how we help people affected by cancer and give hands-on support with fundraising or awareness events. Simply send details of your request to schools@macmillan.org.uk

EAT WELL, KEEP FIT STAY HEALTHY

The big picture



This lesson will help pupils understand:

- that lifestyle choices can help us keep healthy and reduce our risk of getting cancer and other serious illnesses
- that health and well-being depends on information and making responsible choices.

For this lesson you'll need

- DVD clip *Keeping healthy* (secondary version)
- activity sheet 2, *Get the message out there*.

Breaking the ice

Start by getting your class to share their ideas about what makes up a healthy lifestyle. In pairs, give them one minute to discuss or list as many reasons as possible why looking after our bodies and keeping healthy is important.

Go on to explore the idea that our health affects most areas of our lives, including how we feel on the inside. Explain that looking after yourself when you're young can help keep you healthy when you're older.

Talking points

The main focus of the lesson is to explain that, although no one knows exactly why some people get cancer, there are things you can do to help reduce the chances of getting it. Some of them such as our genes, we may not be able to change. But others, such as our lifestyle, we can do something about.

Show your class the DVD clip *Keeping healthy*. Afterwards, ask them to recall the lifestyle choices that can help us stay healthy and reduce the risk of getting cancer. These are:

Eat a healthy diet

- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Avoid fatty and processed foods.

Be active

- Try to do one hour of exercise a day.

Stay safe in the sun

- Sunburn damages your skin and can increase your risk of developing skin cancer.
- Use sunscreen with a factor of 15 or higher.
- Stay in the shade during the hottest part of the day.

Don't smoke

- Cancer is more common in people who drink alcohol than people who don't.

Class activity

Working in groups, ask pupils to discuss which of the six areas they think young people are least likely to follow. Why do they think this is? What could be done to persuade them to make healthier choices and change their behaviour?

Building on these answers each group could then plan a mini health campaign using activity sheet 2, *Get the message out there*. They'll need to think about the messaging, images and media channels that would be most appropriate for their audience. This could be developed further so groups can produce creative content for their campaign, such as posters or adverts.

Checking understanding

Ask each group to present their campaign ideas. Other pupils could offer feedback. Which campaign do they think would be most effective? Why? Do your pupils think they will make healthier choices knowing the effect it can have on their future health and well being?

DIGGING DEEPER

To take the lesson further, ask your pupils to evaluate national or local health campaigns that have targeted young people.

Pupils could also plan and carry out a survey to see how much other young people know or care about keeping healthy.

GET MORE INVOLVED

Why not get active and take part in a Miles for Macmillan sponsored walk? March to macmillan.org.uk/walks for everything you need to organise your own walk or join your nearest organised walk for Macmillan.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

The big picture



This lesson will help pupils understand:

- some of the ways cancer can affect both individuals and those around them
- how they can support friends going through a difficult time

For this lesson you'll need

- DVD clip *Danielle's story*
- activity sheets 3a *Supporting each other* and 3b *How are you feeling?*

Breaking the ice

A nice way to break the ice and warm up the class is with a game to relax and focus pupils. For example, Pass it on.

Pass it on

Get everyone stood or sat in a circle. One player starts by making a little gesture, perhaps with a little sound. His or her neighbour then tries and does exactly the same. And so on. Ask pupils to watch out for additional movements or noises players might make before or after their turn – these should also be taken over by the next player.

Main talking points

To get the lesson going, ask pupils to recall what they know about cancer. Can pupils suggest how someone may feel if they are diagnosed with cancer? Ask pupils to try and explain their answers.

Then use the DVD clip *Danielle's story* to demonstrate the effect cancer can have on teenagers and their families. The clip shows 17-year-old Danielle and her family talking about her cancer experience. Afterwards, ask pupils to think about what they've watched and reflect on the following questions:

- How did a cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment affect Danielle's life? (Encourage pupils to think about practical, physical and emotional effects.)

- Who helped Danielle cope when she was going through this difficult time?
- How did they support her?
- Apart from Danielle, who else do you think was affected by her cancer diagnosis?

Draw out the positive ways her sister, parents and friends supported Danielle. Explain that a cancer experience, or any major event, can have a ripple effect on family and friends. Often these people need support too.

Class activity

Now ask your pupils to read through activity sheet 3a, *Supporting each other*. Ask them to read the four character biogs. In pairs or small groups get them to discuss what one or more of the characters might be feeling

and why. They could use activity sheet 3b, *How are you feeling?* which contains words some people have used to describe their cancer experience. Or pupils could add their own words. Remind them people can go through conflicting feelings during tough times. After five or 10 minutes ask pupils to feedback to the class so each character can be discussed.

Checking understanding

Focus on Jamil and the difficulty he's having knowing what to do and say to help his friend. Do pupils think it's best for him to ignore the issue or speak to Alex? How could he be a better friend? For example he could let Alex know he's there to listen if he wants to talk and make an effort to spend time with him. Remind pupils it's sometimes the small things that can have a big impact.

DIGGING DEEPER

Visit macmillan.org.uk to find out how Macmillan is there every step of the way for people affected by cancer, as well as their family and friends.

Your fundraising can change lives... £25 could pay for a Macmillan nurse for an hour, helping families affected by cancer to receive essential medical, practical and emotional support.

GET MORE INVOLVED

Pupils could plan a fundraising event to help support people affected by cancer. And what better event than our biggest of the year, the World's Biggest Coffee Morning? The official date is the last Friday in September but you can hold yours whenever suits you best. Simply bake (or buy) some tasty treats, pour out the drinks and ask pupils and staff to donate money for Macmillan. Register for your fundraising pack at macmillan.org.uk/coffee

GET INVOLVED

The big picture



This lesson will help pupils understand:

- how Macmillan supports people affected by cancer.
- how to work with others to help plan an event to support people affected by cancer.

For this lesson you'll need

- DVD clip *About Macmillan*, or PowerPoint presentation *About Macmillan*, found at macmillan.org.uk/schools under Teaching about cancer.
- activity sheet 4, *An event to remember*.

Breaking the ice

Ask pupils to suggest some of the ways cancer can affect an individual as well as their family and friends. Encourage them to think of all the ways it could impact someone's life physically, practically and emotionally. Make a note of their suggestions.

Introduce Macmillan Cancer Support and explain our ambition is to reach and improve the lives of everyone affected by cancer.

Main talking points

Watch the *About Macmillan* DVD clip or use the *About Macmillan* PowerPoint presentation to see how Macmillan support people affected by cancer.

Discuss how Macmillan's services might help with the physical, practical and emotional affects of cancer pupils suggested earlier.

Class activity

Explain that as a charity, Macmillan relies on the money people fundraise and donate to pay for these services. For example, £1 could pay for two copies of our *Understanding chemotherapy* booklet to help people understand how the treatment works and possible side effects, while £191 could fund a Macmillan nurse for one day. Explain that every donation – no matter how big or small – therefore makes a massive difference.

If your group wants to support Macmillan there are loads of ways to get involved.

Whether you want to host a World's Biggest Coffee Morning or think up your own event or sponsored challenge, you'll find links to all the information you need at macmillan.org.uk/schools

Pupils could use activity sheet 4, ***An event to remember***, to help them plan their event.

DIGGING DEEPER

Download our fundraising guide for schools and young people from macmillan.org.uk/schools. It's full of top tips and ideas to help you make the most of your event.

GET MORE INVOLVED

Did you know young people can become Student Macmillan Representatives? This volunteer role can be taken on by individuals or groups and can be a great way to for students to gain valuable skills and experience.

If you're interested, or if you want to request support for your event from a Macmillan fundraiser, just drop us a line on 0300 1000 200 or email fundraising@macmillan.org.uk

'Through fundraising for Macmillan, our students have learnt so much. Not just about Macmillan and fundraising for great causes, but also about themselves, and the potential each of us has to do something life-changing. It has been a joy to see them achieve so much together.'

Justine Mason, Deputy Principal, Hele's School

NOTES

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Quality assured

This toolkit has been designed to make it as easy as possible for you to cover the key topics in a way that is engaging, informative and makes sense for you. All our lesson plans have been created in collaboration with cancer professionals to make sure that all information is accurate and reflects the best evidence available (unless otherwise referenced, all statistics and facts come from [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)).

Macmillan Cancer Support is a certified member of the Information Standard. This is a quality assurance standard that has been established to improve the quality of health and social care information. For more information visit theinformationstandard.org

The topics covered also link to the PSHE/PSE/PSD/ Health and Wellbeing, Citizenship and Science curriculum and support the Every Child Matters outcomes. Each lesson plan indicates which subjects it links to in all UK curriculum.