

Self-care jar

Approximate time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: A jar, small pieces of paper / post it notes

Aim/outcome: To identify ways to look after ourselves and to allow ourselves to give time to self care.

Explanation:

- This is an activity that works well when done with a class of pupils (see pupil resources) but also works well with a staff team. It can be hard with a busy work schedule to take time out to think about our own wellbeing, but with the stresses of work we need to ensure that we look after ourselves.
- In a staff meeting ask all team members to take a post it / slip of paper and write down one activity that they think helps their own wellbeing or something they think would help a colleague. These could be simple things like 'Have a bath', 'Treat yourself to a bar of chocolate' or 'Take the dog for a walk'.
- Ask everyone to fold up their pieces of paper and place them in the jar at the front of the room.
- When everyone has placed something in the jar, pass the jar around and ask everyone to take out a piece of paper and read it. Explain to everyone that the idea of the activity is that before the next staff meeting (preferably as soon as possible) they are to take some time for self care and do what is written on the paper. They can either do exactly what is on the paper they pulled out of the jar, or if they need to adapt it to meet their needs, that is absolutely fine; for example their paper might say 'take the dog for a walk' and they might not have a dog! So they could either go for a walk or they could do something completely different, as long as it is something for themselves (even taking a half an hour time out with a book and a cup of tea!).
- A nice extension is to ask staff to all write another self-care activity down on a piece of paper, and add these to the jar to fill it back up again. The jar should then be kept somewhere in the staffroom, and as people think of nice things to add they can put something in. If the jar is kept topped up, everyone should be encouraged to pick a piece of paper out of the self-care jar whenever they feel down, need cheering up or feel a bit like they need a pick-me-up. Staff members should also be encouraged to notice when their colleagues might be a bit down or in need of a boost – if they do notice someone they should pick something out of the jar and give it to them.
- One of the things that builds resilience is being noticed and having other people care about how you are feeling, as well as learning ways to help yourself cope.