

CARING FOR THE BODY



WHAT DO I WANT?

WHAT IS BEST FOR ME?

HOW WILL I ACT?

CARING FOR THE BODY

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SESSION 1: Fuel.

Resources:

- * *They Are What You Feed Them* by Alex Richardson.
- * *Supersize Me*; documentary exploring the impact of fast food on the body.
- * *The Men Who Made Us Fat*; documentary exploring effects of sugar on the diet (currently available on YouTube).

1. What do I want? My fuelling desires.

- * Ask students to imagine that they could eat/drink whatever they wanted, as much as they wanted, whenever they wanted. What would they choose?
- * Now ask them to imagine the long term consequences of their dream diet. What would the consequences be for things like body shape, organ function and health, ability to regulate mood, ability to learn etc.?
- * With long term consequences in mind, is there anything they would change about their dream diet?
- * What does this process tell us about our desires?
- * A nice way to explore the tension between what we want and what is in our interests, is the documentary *Supersize Me*. Many children would love the idea of a McDonald's meal three times per day: this documentary shows the physical effects of eating only McDonald's food for one month.

2. What is best for me? Reasoned fuelling.

- * Ask students to identify the main things they need to do on a normal day (e.g. move/exercise/play, learn, spend time with others, sleep/rest).
- * Ask students to prioritise these things in order of importance to them.
- * Ask them to identify how eating contributes to what they need and want to do on a daily basis, not only in terms of what they eat, but how much and when. For example the brain is fuelled by (certain types of) glucose, so we need the right carbohydrates for it to function well; breakfast kick-starts the metabolism and makes us better able to function and learn in the morning; eating large meals late at night can interfere with sleep.
- * Ask students to find out more nuanced information on this. They could investigate the impact of the time they eat on how well they sleep; the impact of the food groups they consume on their ability to play sport; the glycaemic index and their ability to pay attention/learn/manage their moods.

3. What should I do now?

- * Students should now be in a position to identify one or two things that they would like to change about the way that they fuel themselves. It should come out of what they prioritised in section 2 and how well they think they are achieving that.





- * They should identify when they are going to make this change and how virtues might help them to make it a lasting one (Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility).

SESSION 2: Rest.

1. What do I want?

- * Ask students for their reaction to the statements 'staying up late' and 'lying in.' Ask them also for their reactions to the statements 'going to bed on time' and 'getting up early.'
- * Discuss the attractiveness of staying up late and of lying in: what is it about this that appeals to some of them?
- * Ask students to describe their own experiences of rest and sleeping. How many hours do they sleep for on an average night? When do they go to bed? Do they have a sleep routine and what is it? Do they argue with parents/carers about bed time or getting up in the morning?

2. What is best for me?

- * As with the previous lesson, ask students to note the things they have to do each day, prioritise their importance and then speculate on how sleep might contribute to doing these things successfully.
- * Ask students to investigate fully why sleep is important to them and what their sleep needs are as teenagers (i.e. are they the same as adults and children?) There are plenty of good online resources and articles on this e.g. <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/importance-of-sleep.html>.

- * They should also consider what hurdles lie in the way of change, how they can be removed or overcome, which people are going to help them make the change, how they will help and when they are going to evaluate how successful they have been in making it.

There are also some good video resources on YouTube e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9Nd6u39yD0> or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eLfn7Ewx_s [all available 02/15].

- * Students might like to widen their thinking to the importance of rest and play alongside sleep. How do they rest/play during the day and how does it contribute to them feeling and functioning better?

3. What should I do now?

- * Students should now be in a position to identify one or two things that they would like to change about the way that they rest themselves. It should come out of what they prioritised in section 2 and how well they think they are achieving that.
- * They should identify when they are going to make this change and how virtues might help them to make it a lasting one (Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility).
- * They should also consider what hurdles lie in the way of change, how they can be removed or overcome, which people are going to help them make the change, and how they will help and when they are going to evaluate how successful they have been in making it.





SESSION 3: Exercise.

Resources:

- * *Spark* by John Ratey.

1. What do I want?

- * Ask the students who have a dog at home, what happens if their dog isn't walked every day.
- * Ask students to imagine a human life without exercise. There is a clip in the film *Wall.e* that playfully explores the impact that a sedentary life may have on our species over time.
- * Ask students to identify the conditions of modern living that make it easier for us to not exercise. Ask them to identify which of them get in the way of their own exercise and to analyse what happens in their mind when they are choosing between being given a lift and walking, or between x-box and going out on their bike, or between doing PE and getting someone to write a note.

2. What is best for me?

- * Ask students to recall (from previous lessons) their prioritised list of the things they do each day.
- * Ask students if they know how much and what type of exercise they should be doing each week. Information is here:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-young-people.aspx> [available 02/15].

- * So we know what and how much, but do students know why they should be getting exercise every day? Ask them to find at least two benefits of exercise that they didn't know about. There is information on exercise and mental health here: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-a-z/E/exercise-mental-health/> and there is a TED talk on exercise and learning/creativity here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdDnPYr6R0o> [both available 02/15].
- * Ask students to go back to the list of things they do each day. How could getting the right amount of exercise help them to accomplish those things more effectively?

3. What should I do now?

- * Students should now be in a position to identify one or two things that they would like to change about how much they exercise. It should come out of what they prioritised in section 2 and how well they think they are achieving that.
- * They should identify when they are going to make this change and how virtues might help them to make it a lasting one (Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility).
- * They should also consider what hurdles lie in the way of change, how they can be removed or overcome, which people are going to help them make the change, and how they will help and when they are going to evaluate how successful they have been in making it.



SESSION 4: The Brain.

Resources:

- * Jill Bolt Taylor TED talk on the teenage brain: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzT_SBl31-s [available 02/15] (esp. from 7mins 25)
- * *Blame My Brain* by Nicola Morgan.
- * *The Little Book of Big Stuff About the Brain* by Andrew Curran.
- * *A User's Guide to the Brain* by John Ratey.

1. What does my brain want?

- * Ask students to think through the past three lessons and identify as many elements as they can of fuelling, resting and exercising that benefit the brain and the way that it works.
- * Introduce students to some of the knowledge of what is happening to the brain during adolescence. Jill Bolt Taylor's TED talk is useful, especially from 7.25. Nicola Morgan's book *Blame My Brain* is all about this topic and is aimed at a teenage audience. There is also a good, short video here on the conditions that will maximise the brain's ability to learn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqGz7uqoPZ4> [available 02/15].

2. How can I help my brain to work better?

- * Firstly, ask students to identify the basic habits they need to change to make their brain function better e.g. getting enough sleep/exercise and fuelling the body (and brain) with the right things at the right time.

- * Jill Bolt Taylor suggests that we should imagine the person we want to be as an adult and expose the brain to those experiences in adolescence. She calls this 'tending the garden of the mind.' Ask students to do this and come up with their own plan for tending the garden of their mind for adulthood.
- * Jill Bolt Taylor describes the brain as our power and poses the question 'what are YOU doing with your power?' Ask students to think about the ideas and experiences that they feed their mind with (their 'mind diet'). Ask them to evaluate which ideas and experiences are strengthening their power and which ideas and experiences are diminishing it. The short YouTube video in section 1 provides some good ideas about maximising the brain's ability to learn and could also be used for this section.

3. What do I do now?

- Students should now be in a position to identify one or two things that they would like to change about the way that they develop their brain.
- They should identify when they are going to make this change and how virtues might help them to make it a lasting one (Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility).
- They should also consider what hurdles lie in the way of change, how they can be removed or overcome, which people are going to help them make the change, how they will help and when they are going to evaluate how successful they have been in making it.





SESSION 5: Reflection.

1. Care of the body and the virtues.

- * For each of the virtues (Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude, Humility) ask students to imagine what that virtue looks like when enacted in terms of care of the body (e.g. compassion to the self when we fail to take proper care of our body, but courage and self-discipline to persist with caring for it properly).
- * Ask students to think of icons representative of the notion of caring for the body and to also think of which virtues they employ to take care of themselves (e.g. Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard is well-known for his research into meditation and the brain which exemplifies compassion and self-discipline).

2. My journey with care of the body.

- * Ask students to look back over the previous 4 lessons on fuelling, resting, exercise and the brain. Ask them to re-visit the goals they set themselves for each of these aspects of caring for the body and to evaluate how well they have done in terms of beginning to achieve these goals.
- * Ask students to think about which virtues they need to employ to keep achieving change and how the icons they identified in the previous section can inspire them to keep trying to make changes.