GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

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To identify features in themselves and others that help build a healthy balance in their digital life.

Instructions

1. **Introduce** the purpose and desired outcome of the session. Hand out the thumbs up template and ask students to write down what they enjoy most about technology, how this has helped them during lockdown. Then give out the thumbs down template and ask students if there are negatives about technology (social media or gaming). Are there common themes?

2. **Promote** a discussion about what makes us feel stressed out, or gets us down in real life, not online. Using an empty jug, invite each (willing) student to pour a cupful of water in whilst saying something that makes them feel stressed e.g. COVID, lockdown restrictions, too much homework, parents telling them to do things. Continue until the jug actually overflows and explain the similarity between us and the jug – we all have our limits, and when things get too much, something has to give.

3. **Invite** each student to remove a cupful of water from the jug whilst sharing a strategy that helps them calm down e.g. talking to someone, reading a book, going for a walk, doing some exercise. The purpose of this activity is to increase awareness that things building up is natural– we have different things that feel stressful to us and different strategies that help to soothe and calm us. Using social media does not come up regularly as a soothing method, and if this is the case, it is worth pointing out.

4. **Lead** a discussion about what makes students feel good or happy online compared to what makes them feel unhappy or less good about themselves. What are your favourite trends? Are they funny things, similar interests as yours? Now discuss what content is annoying– people who post multiple selfies a day, not following lockdown rules, very political people, those who seem boastful about achievements. It might be helpful to acknowledge that there are posts that annoy us, as a teacher, this will encourage students to understand it is human nature to feel this way – but the more we understand this, the more empowered we are to stop following or stop reading those posts.

5. **Plenary** discussion making the following points clear:
   a. We all have feelings and reactions.
   b. The more we understand these, then the more we are empowered to manage them in a way that benefits our wellbeing.
   c. Show students YoungMinds #ownyourfeed
   – designed to help students have a more positive time online.

Time

40 mins

Resources:
- Emoji outline
- Jug
- Cups
- Source of water
- Towels or mop

Age group/group size:

This activity can be done with secondary school pupils either in small groups or as a whole class. It could be done in tutor/coaching time, or as part of PSHE lessons.

For pupils in primary school, consider themes that focus on screen time and age appropriate video games instead of social media.

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