



#MindYourSelfie



Frame of Mind Teacher Companion Guide

About Mind Your Selfie

The #MindYourSelfie School Resources have been developed by Walk in My Shoes, the mental health awareness-raising campaign of St Patrick's Mental Health Services, to assist teachers in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the classroom.

Our Mind Your Selfie classroom resources include:

- A series of guided relaxation audio exercises that introduce the practice of mindfulness to young people
- Printable mindfulness colouring sheets that can help students feel more relaxed as they pay close attention to the present moment and stay focused only on the colouring task
- The Wellness Journals provide young people with a template to record their feelings and thoughts and can be completed as a once-off assignment or as a daily activity
- Our Wellness Activity Calendar is a mental health and wellbeing calendar with daily actions that students can complete to promote positive mental health and mindfulness
- The Selfie 'Steem activity invites students to share positive messages about one another
- Our Selfie Tips Origami Chatterbox is a game that helps young people to think positively about themselves
- A series of free eBooks designed to give teachers practical tips and advice in relation to mental health
- Our Wellness Wall banner serves to create a space in your classroom or in the school where everyone is welcome to read and contribute their ideas

About this guide

This teacher's companion guide has been developed to accompany the Mind Your Selfie Film Resource launched for #MindYourSelfie Day 2019. This film resource features clips of some of the shortlisted films that entered our **Frame of Mind Short Film Competition 2018.**

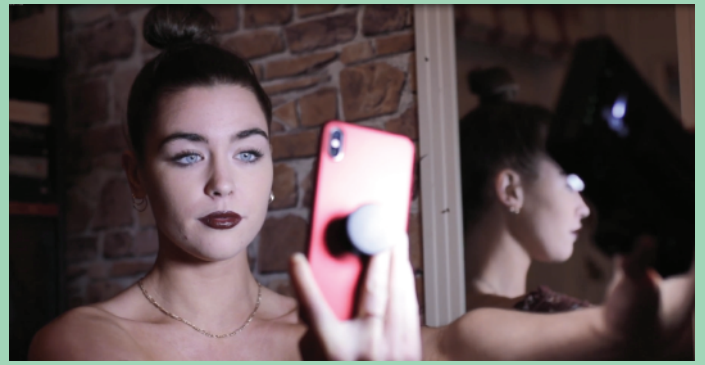
The clips featured as part of the Frame of Mind Resource have been especially selected because of their exploration of important mental health topics that are particularly relevant to young people. Along with the teacher's guide, the clips are a tool to help teachers start a discussion about the mental health themes explored through the films.

We recommend allocating up to one hour for viewing this film and completing the exercises contained within this companion guide. You will find the full-length films featured in this resource on **WalkInMyShoes.ie/ShortFilmComp.**

Section 1:

Social media and the negative impact it can have on our mental health

Social media is a great way to help us feel more connected to our friends and family but it can also have negative effects on our mental health. The short film featured in this section is called **'Masks'** by **Adam Coleman** and it highlights the anxiety many people experience when posting content on social media.



'Masks' by Adam Coleman

Asking the questions below after watching this section of the film will help to begin the conversation about social media and anxiety. It is helpful to end this discussion by asking students to name the things they can do to mind their own mental health when using social media.

Section 1 Questions

- Do you think that social media can make you anxious?
- How do you feel when something you post doesn't get a lot of likes?
- Do you think social media prevents you from spending face-to-face time with people?
- What are some of the things we can do to mind our mental health when using social media?

Important points to reiterate:

- Don't compare yourself to others. Social media is full of photoshopped and filtered versions of who and what we think our life should be like. So, don't believe everything you see online!
- Pay attention to how you feel before and after you have been on social media – If you don't feel good after spending time using social media then limit the time you spend on those platforms and spend more face-to-face time with friends and family.

Section 2: Our Inner Critic

Everything we say to ourselves matters and our inner critic can be very harsh. It can stop us from taking part in things for fear of looking stupid, and it can even prevent us from feeling happy with our achievements. Left to fester for long enough, it can lead to mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety.

The clip featured in this section is from the short film called '**You Are Not Your Thoughts**' made by the **TY Students from Mountrath Community School, Co. Laois**. This clip shows the impact that negative feelings and self-beliefs can have on us and how we perceive ourselves in the world.



'You Are Not Your Thoughts' by Mountrath Community School, Co. Laois

The following exercises are designed to encourage students to reflect on their own inner critic and come up with ways that they can turn that critic into a friend. The students can answer these questions privately or the following questions can form the basis of a group discussion.



Discussion Topics can include:

- Do you have an inner critic?
- Can you give them a name?
- What are some of the things your inner critic says most often?
- Does your inner critic stop you from doing things?

Turning your inner critic into a friend

Being aware of your inner critic is the first step to turning it into your friend. When you hear your inner critic saying things like, "I am such an idiot", talk back and tell it that isn't true.

Now replace that statement with something you know is true, such as, "sometimes I do smart things", and come up with as many examples as you can to support this new statement. The inner critic doesn't like to be wrong. The more examples you come up with to support your alternate view, the less you will hear your inner critic.

Section 3: Anxiety and Depression

The clip featured in this section is called **‘The Storm Before the Calm’ by Renate Canagan**. In this segment of the film we hear young people talking about how it feels just before an anxiety attack. Anxiety in young people can be quite common, it can be helpful to talk about what anxiety is, how it can feel in the body and ways to manage anxiety or panic if they occur.



‘The Storm Before the Calm’ by Renate Canagan

What is anxiety?

Everyone experiences occasional anxiety, it’s a normal part of life and can be a normal reaction to some of life's stressors. However, people with anxiety disorders can often have intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. These feelings of anxiety and panic interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control, are out of proportion to the actual danger and can last a long time.

Often, anxiety disorders involve repeated episodes of sudden intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks). Anxiety disorders can lead those experiencing them to avoid certain places or situations for fear that they might have a panic attack.

What anxiety can feel like

A panic attack can be very frightening and distressing and it is helpful to recognise the signs and symptoms associated with panic attacks including:

- A racing heartbeat
- Feeling faint
- Sweating, hot flushes
- Nausea, a churning stomach
- Chest pain, shortness of breath
- Trembling, shaky limbs
- Chills
- A choking sensation
- Dizziness
- Numbness or pins and needles, a tingling sensation in your fingers
- Dry mouth
- A need to go to the toilet
- Ringing in your ears
- A feeling of dread or a fear of dying

Although panic attacks are frightening, they're not dangerous. An attack won't cause you any physical harm.

If you feel a panic attack coming on, try the following:

- Don't fight the attack and stay where you are, if possible
- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Remind yourself that the attack will pass
- Focus on positive, peaceful and relaxing images
- Remember it isn't life-threatening

To reduce the chances of a further attack, it may also help to:

- Read a self-help book about anxiety based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Try activities like yoga and Pilates to help you relax
- Learn breathing techniques to help ease symptoms
- Do regular physical exercise to reduce stress and tension
- Avoid sugary food and drinks, caffeine, alcohol and smoking – all of these can make attacks worse



Section 4: Telling Others How You Feel

In this short clip from the video called **'Man Up'** by **Miley Aldridge**, we see how people react when a man tells others he feels depressed. Telling him to ultimately 'man up' is very unhelpful and reactions like this can prevent people from speaking out about how they feel, resulting in them suffering in silence.



'Man Up' by Miley Aldridge

Sadness and depression

Sadness is a normal human emotion. We've all experienced it at some stage in our lives. Sadness is usually triggered by a difficult, hurtful, challenging or disappointing event, experience or situation. In other words, sadness is often situational, as the result of a trigger and when that event, experience or situation passes, our emotional hurt fades and in turn our sadness lessens.

So how do we differentiate between sadness and depression? Depression does not necessarily require a difficult event or situation, a loss, or a change of circumstance as a trigger. In fact, it often occurs in the absence of any such triggers. People's lives on paper might be totally fine—they would even admit this is true—and yet they still feel horrible.

Depression is a serious but treatable mental health difficulty that affects millions of people, from young to old and from all walks of life. For those experiencing depression, or any type of mental health difficulty, telling someone how you feel can be the first step to getting help. How people react when you tell them how you feel can be so important.

Class Exercise

Ask the class to imagine how they would react if their friend told them they were feeling depressed. The list on the following page can help you guide the conversation around suitable ways they can offer their friend support.



Some things you can do to help a friend who tells you they are feeling sad or depressed

- Try to be a good listener and encourage your friend to talk
- Encourage your friend to seek help by going to a trusted adult, a doctor or perhaps going to a counsellor. If they are already receiving help, encourage them to keep appointments and be a listening ear if they want to talk about how things are going. If they have not looked for help, you may want to encourage them to do so.
- Let your friend know you are there for them anytime they want to talk. Reassure them that they can say the same things over and over and you will still listen. Concentrate on listening as best as you can, rather than offering opinions or advice, as often people who are feeling depressed can find advice (even well intentioned) overwhelming.
- Be open to different forms of communication. It may be tough for your friend to express their deeper feelings face-to-face, so being open to text messages, email or Facebook could be a great way to keep the communication open and your support solid.
- Do some reading about depression. There are lots of books on it out there as well as a lot of supportive websites, such as Walkinmyshoes.ie, Jigsaw.ie and Reachout.com
- People experiencing mental health difficulties often judge themselves harshly and put themselves down - a lot. So provide lots of praise for things they do and remind them why they're your friend and all the things you like about them.
- Remind them that depression is a health issue and not some personal flaw. Fact. Simple as.
- Offer to help with everyday tasks that need to be done. A person dealing with depression may sometimes find these types of things overwhelming.
- Do things together. Even simple things like a trip to the cinema or a walk can bring their spirits up. Remind them how great it is to have a lovely friend like you.
- Your friend may need to go to a doctor or service to help them with their depression. Sometimes, it can help if a friend or family member goes with them.
- Look after yourself. Taking care of or even helping a person with depression can be extremely draining and difficult. Try to get help from others who can also support your friend through their depression, so that the pressure is not all just on you. Also, make time for de-stressing activities such as exercise and spending time with friends.

Section 5: Bullying

There are many different types of bullying that can be experienced by children and adults alike. Some are obvious to spot while others can be more subtle. The clip shown is from the short film **‘Speaking Up Helps’** made by the students of **St Joseph’s Roachfordbridge, Co Westmeath**. It does a great job of showing us how subtle bullying can be and the huge impact it can have on our mental health.



‘Speaking Up Helps’ by St Joseph’s Roachfordbridge, Co Westmeath

This section of the video provides a good opportunity to discuss with the class the difference between bullying and banter.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated behaviour that is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically. It is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability.

When banter becomes bullying

“It’s just banter” can sometimes be used in reply to comments that were found to be hurtful and bullying can sometimes be masked as banter, but the difference between the two is that banter is a shared joke that isn’t intended to make someone else feel uncomfortable, belittled or upset. If the joke goes too far or gets too personal, it can become bullying.

Discussion points

This might be a good time to draw attention to and discuss your school’s bullying policy.

Ask the class are they fully aware of who they can approach if they saw someone being bullied or were being bullied themselves.

Facilitate a discussion with the class by asking them to name some of the ways in which bullying can affect mental health.

Bullying can affect a young person in the short-term in the following ways:

- Anger
- Depression
- Anxious avoidance of settings in which bullying may occur
- Greater incidence of illness
- Lower grades than non-bullied peers
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings



Bullying can affect a young person in the long-term in the following ways:

- Reduced education or work opportunities
- Lingering feelings of anger and bitterness, desire for revenge
- Difficulty trusting people
- Interpersonal difficulties including fear and avoidance of new social situations
- Increased tendency to spend time alone
- Perception of self as easy to victimise, overly sensitive and thin-skinned
- Self-esteem problems
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings



Section 6: Reaching out to others

“It’s good to talk” is something we hear said a lot with regards to mental health, but picking up the phone and asking someone to meet can sometimes make us feel anxious and apprehensive about their reaction.

In this section of the film we used a clip from the short film called **‘Gimme a Shout’** by **Sean T. O Meallaigh** which won the general category of the Frame of Mind Short Film Competition 2018.



‘Gimme a Shout’ by **Sean T. O Meallaigh**

In this film, we see how hard it can be to pick up the phone and ask someone to meet for a chat. This topic would make a good discussion point for the class and the questions below could help to frame that conversation.

Discussion questions

- Why is it good to talk if you feel like you're having difficulties?
- Do you have someone you can call or arrange to meet?
- If someone asks to meet you for a chat, how does that make you feel?
- What if you are busy when they ask? How can you phrase your response so that you get to finish what you are busy doing and they don't feel that they are in the way?



Section 7: What can you do when you feel blue

There is no one way of dealing with mental health difficulties and so people may have to try different ways before they find the right method for them. For some people, something like mindfulness can be great, whereas for others who may be more active relaxers, exercise and activity may fit better. Remember to try different things until you find the best option for you.

This short film called **'What I Do When I Feel Blue'** from **St Patrick's College in Cork** won the Secondary Schools category in the Frame of Mind Short Film Competition 2018. It has a simple but effective message that offers some practical ways that can help when we feel blue which can help prevent low feelings turning into longer periods of depression.



'What I Do When I Feel Blue' by St Patrick's College in Cork



'What I Do When I Feel Blue' by St Patrick's College in Cork



Some things to do to 'Mind Your Selfie'

Connect with others - evidence shows that good relationships with family, friends and the wider community are important for mental wellbeing.



Some ways you can do that are:

- Arrange a day out with friends or members of your family who you may not have connected with recently. Lots of us connect on social media sites but a face-to-face contact spending your time with your friends is so much more meaningful and beneficial than a 'liking' or 'commenting' on posts.
- Reduce your screen time when you are in company. Put the phone away, close your laptop, turn off the TV and have a chat.
- Try connecting with someone new today. Talk to the person beside you in the queue for lunch. This conversation may mean even more to the person you connect with than you realise.



Be active - Being active is great for your physical and mental wellbeing. Evidence proves there is a link between being physically active and good mental wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing means feeling good about yourself and about the world around you and having the ability to get on with life in the way you want. Being active doesn't mean you need to train for a marathon. You need to find physical activity that you enjoy and can fit into your daily/ weekly routine. This may be walking or cycling to school instead of getting a lift, taking up a sport, learning yoga or how to swim.

- Physical activity helps with mild depression. Evidence shows it can protect people against the onset of depression and anxiety.
- Physical activity causes a chemical change in the brain which can help change our mood.
- Physical activity brings about a sense of greater self-esteem, self-control and the ability to rise to a challenge – all of which help improve wellbeing.

To get active and keep active you could join a local walking or sports group/club and make new connections while keeping active. There are many fitness apps available to help you get up and out with programmes for all abilities and activities.

Pay attention - It is easy to rush through daily life without stopping to pay attention. Taking notice of the present moment - noticing your own thoughts, feelings and the world around you - can significantly improve your mental wellbeing.

- Taking notice is also called Mindfulness. It is easy to incorporate mindfulness into your everyday life and it can be a very powerful tool if learnt and practised daily. Listen to the Mindfulness audio clips on the [Walk in My Shoes](#) website. We also have Mindfulness colouring sheets that you can print off and use.



Keep learning - learning new skills is useful and it can also positively impact our mental wellbeing. Learning means different things to everyone. To some it will be a new qualification and to others it will be learning a new recipe in the kitchen.

- Evidence shows that continuing to learn throughout life can help improve and maintain our mental wellbeing. Learning new things can boost our self-confidence, self-esteem, build a sense of purpose and help us connect with others.
- Setting goals and working towards them plays an important part in the way learning influences wellbeing. Many forms of learning involve contact with others which connects us to our communities and peers.

Give - Sometimes we think of our wellbeing in terms of what we have. However, evidence shows that what we do and the way we think has the biggest impact on mental wellbeing. Scientists have shown that giving to others can stimulate the reward areas in the brain helping to create positive feelings. Helping others also gives a sense of purpose and feelings of self-worth. From small acts of kindness to volunteering, giving can give you a sense of purpose, community and connectedness.

Giving comes in many forms... here are a few ideas:

- Show thanks to someone for something they have done for you
- Ask a friend to join you for lunch or a coffee
- Help a stranger with their bags/ onto the bus/ cross the road
- Contact a local charity and find out what activities they have on in the coming weeks/months and volunteer your time.



Thank you for using this Walk in My Shoes Film Resource. We hope you and your class found it helpful. Don't forget to check out the other free to use mental health and wellbeing resources available to download from WalkInMyShoes.ie

Early intervention and
treatment is key to recovery

Asking for help is a sign of strength
not weakness

St Patrick's Mental Health Services

For Support and Information

Call 01 249 3333

info@stpatsmail.com



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