Mental health

Before the session

Make sure before the session you prepare how you provide members with the mental health myths for the warmer.

Useful Language	**Below are some terms you may want to familiarise yourself with before you facilitate this session, your members don't need to know this vocabulary but you might find it useful when talking about mental health and illness.** Mental health: includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. An invisible illness: this expression is often used in relation to mental illness because a person may not have any visible symptoms. Mental illness it's not a physical/visible illness e.g. a broken a leg, which people can see and know how to treat people so people can think the person is fine, when they are not. Stigma: Stigma is often a term used in relation to mental health. It refers to the fear, avoidance, discrimination, and negative attitudes people with mental health issues face. **Below are the most common mental illnesses that people may experience at some point in their life.** Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): a very common disorder characterised by impulsiveness, hyperactivity, and attention difficulties. It is often diagnosed in childhood and continues in adulthood. Anxiety disorders: are characterised by a general feature of excessive fear (i.e. emotional response to an imagined or real threat) and/or anxiety (i.e. worrying about a future possibility) which has negative behavioural and emotional consequences. Depression: is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how a person feels, thinks and behaves and it can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. A depressed person may have trouble doing day-to-day activities and may sometimes feel like life isn't worth living.

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	Insomnia: is a sleep disorder that makes it difficult for people to fall asleep, stay asleep, or feel restless overnight. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD): the features of this disorder include uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts, obsessions, or behaviours that a person feels the urge to repeat routinely. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): is a common disorder brought on after experiencing a traumatic event such as losing a loved one, assault, abuse or any kind of trauma. The symptoms can include panic attacks, insomnia, anxiety and depression.

Welcome (5 mins)	Make sure you're in the meeting space 10-15 mins before the club starts. Depending on your registration process make sure you've a register either to tick people's names off or for people to add their names too. Also, make sure the suggestion box is visible for members to see and access, again make sure you've got papers and pens for people to make their recommendations/ suggestions.
	Greet members as they enter, invite them to sit/stand wherever they are comfortable.
	Start the club at the advertised time:
	  1. Introduce yourself, what an English Club is, and your role during the club meeting.
	  2. Tell members there are five golden rules they need to follow to ensure this meeting is an enjoyable experience for everyone.
	      I. Use English – don't correct anyone's English
	      II. Be respectful and supportive. You may have different levels of understanding and abilities to contribute to the discussions.
	      III. Everyone has the right to an opinion.
	      IV. Make sure everyone in your group has an opportunity to talk / ask questions. Max 3 mins per person per question.
	      V. All mobile phones off or put on silent.
	  3. Ask members if they have any questions.
	  4. Ask members if they are ready to start.

Warmer (20 mins)	What can you see?
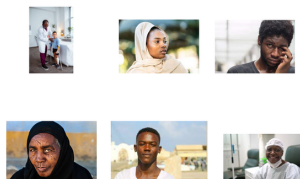
1. Ask members who in these images do they think is unwell.
2. Members will probably identify three pictures: the boy in the hospital, the man touching his eye, and the person in the hospital. But the actual answer is they could be they all unwell. The other three people maybe battling a mental illness.
3. Tell members most mental illnesses are invisible. People may look well on the outside but they could be suffering and in a lot pain inside their mind but because it's not visible people can be insensitive or not give the same level of support as someone how is physically and visibly suffering. Mental illness is often called an invisible illness for this reason.

Mental illness: Myth or reality?
1. Put club members in pairs.
2. Give each pair a copy of the four myth statements. Alternatively, you could write the myths on a blackboard or poster paper.
3. Invite the pairs to read the four statements and discuss together if they think each statement is a myth or reality.
4. Give members around 7 minutes to talk through the statements in their pairs.
5. Using the table provided, discuss their answers (see the table below of the answers, not all the statements are myths).
6. Ask members:
- How can we tell a myth from a fact?
- Why does this difference matter?
- How do you think these mental illness myths impact people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness?

Myth	Reality
1. Mental illness is something only adults suffer from.	Mental illness can occur to anyone at any age.
2. People with a mental illness are violent, aggressive, and dangerous.	Often people living with mental health issues are not dangerous or violent.
3. Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental health problems. People with mental health problems can snap out of it if they try hard enough.	Mental health problems have nothing to do with being lazy or weak and many people need help to get better. Many factors contribute to mental health issues, including: • Biological factors, such as genes, physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry • Life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse • Family history of mental health problems. People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely
4. Some groups of society e.g. women, are more vulnerable to mental illness than others.	Anyone can be diagnosed with a mental health illness, regardless of their race, gender, religious background, or where they live.

Main activity (1 hour)	**Below are some questions, you don't have to do all of them, let the club members guide you, if they are enjoying discussing one of the question rounds let it run beyond the 17 minutes.**
	Round 1: Question 1 (20 mins)
	1. Put members into groups of 5-6 using the different ways people use to overcome their mental illness: therapy, medication, relaxation exercises, journaling, support groups, practising gratitude, meditation etc.
	2. Tell each group to introduce themselves to each other.
	3. Show / give each group the first question: What is mental health?
	4. Give support where needed. Encourage turn-taking / asking questions.
	5. If members answer the question quickly ask them to discuss: How can we improve our mental health? How would you support a family member or friend if they told you they were struggling with their mental health?
	6. After 17 mins facilitate feedback. Invite members to share something new they learned about mental health from their group discussions.
	Round 2: Question 2 (20 mins)
	1. Put members into groups of 5-6 using healthy foods that can lift people's mood: coffee, dark chocolate, bananas, nuts, beans and seeds.
	2. Tell each group to introduce themselves to each other.
	3. Show / give each group the second question: Why is mental health not openly discussed in Sudan?
	4. Monitor, give support where needed. Encourage turn-taking / asking questions.
	5. If members answer the question quickly ask them to discuss: Who is responsible for solving the public issues of mental health in Sudan? How can we solve the problems of not publicly discussing mental health in Sudan?
	6. After 17 mins facilitate feedback. Invite members to share/agree collectively what the obstacles are for publicly discussing mental health in Sudan and why?
	Round 3: Question 3 (20 mins)
	1. Put members into groups of 5-6 using physical activities research says can boost people's mental health: gardening, dancing, walking, swimming, a team sport, yoga.
	2. Tell each group to introduce themselves to each other.
	3. Show / give each group the third question: Do children and young people today face more mental health challenges than in the past?
	4. Monitor, give support where needed. Encourage turn-taking / asking questions.

	5. If members answer the question very quickly get them to discuss: How can we recognise if our students are facing mental challenges? How can we protect children's and young people's mental health in Sudan? 6. After 17 mins facilitate feedback. Invite members to share what their group members discussed.
Wrapping up **(5 mins)**	1. Ask members how their meeting went. 2. Ask members if the club met their expectations. 3. Tell members there's a suggestion box (point to it) where they can share topic ideas or activities we could do. 4. Tell members when the next club is and what the theme/topic is. Encourage them to come / bring a colleague etc. 5. Thank everyone for coming.

If the members enjoyed the club session you could share the following resources with them either on Facebook or in the English Club WhatsApp group:

Understanding Mental Health.pdf
High mental health burden for Africa's youth (nature.com)
3.1 Understanding Mental Health - YouTube
Somalia mental health: one story of hope - YouTube