‘The Kid and I’

An interactive story and learning tool to help young people address mental health stigma and discrimination
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What is ‘The Kid and I’?

Time To Change, in consultation with game designers Fish In A Bottle, have created The Kid and I, an **online, interactive story** exploring a young person’s experience of mental health problems set within a sixth form school.

The aim of The Kid and I and the accompanying pack is to enable teachers and youth leaders to work with and engage pupils and young people with the topic of mental health and mental health problems. The Kid and I also looks at ways of reducing stigma and discrimination that often surround mental health and mental health problems.

Played as an interactive story, The Kid and I, allows pupils and young people to navigate a character experiencing a mental health problem. The player as character chooses conversational responses and actions as they interact with the character’s friends, peers and teachers at school.

The Kid and I allows pupils and young people to explore their understanding about mental health and mental health problems. Making decisions and choices in character allow pupils and young people to examine how adopting certain behaviour can foster support and empathy or perpetuate stigma and discrimination.

Once played through, pupils and young people have unlocked two more characters; a friend and a teacher who, give another perspective of interacting with the main character.

The Kid and I is designed to be played by Secondary aged pupils and young people. It is suitable to be shown and played in class and in a youth group setting. Ideally the online story should be played within a class or youth group setting so that any sensitive responses or concerns can be addressed. We suggest that students navigate through as least Act one within the class room or youth group setting and use in conjunction with the What is Mental Health Activity alongside this pack. See Suggested learning activities on page 16.

The Kid and I can also be played without supervision for example set as homework. We do advise that you introduce The Kid and I with a discussion around the topic of mental health and mental health problems. The activities section of this pack can help you prepare a discussion. We also advise you set aside an opportunity afterwards for young people to discuss how they felt and what they learned from ‘The Kid and I’. In this pack there are suggested lesson plans linked to KS3 and KS4 PSHEE/Citizenship and follow on activities that can be used individually in lessons or as tutor activities and in a youth work setting.

The Kid and I and the accompanying pack are also appropriate to use with sixth form students in pastoral or tutor time.
Talking about Mental Health:

The Kid and I focuses upon issues that can be challenging and difficult. They may resonate with some pupils and young people as well as staff. Educators should be sensitive and remain open to all pupils and young peoples’ needs. Opening each lesson or group work session with good practice methods to make sure that when information is shared there is respect for opinions and experiences. Remind pupils and young people to only share personal or challenging information that they feel comfortable with and remind the class or youth group about respecting confidentiality about what has been shared.

Make sure you are familiar with your school safeguarding protocols and provision of support services for young people experiencing mental health issues outside of the learning environment. Please feel free to contact Naomi Russell from the Time to Change team on Naomi.russell@rethink.org or on 07442 505738 who will further signpost you to local services.
How to play The Kid and I:

The Kid and I, set on one day in a sixth form school, follows a seventeen year old boy called John Wood, as he navigates his own feelings about his mental health problem and the reactions of friends, peers, teachers and family members to his changing behaviour and his return to school?

There are three Acts to The Kid and I

Act 1 allows the player to take on the character John Wood. The player will make decisions and choices about how John responds to friends he will meet at school and a confrontational situation played out in the common room. Playing through the whole of Act 1 as John unlocks Act 2

Act 2 unlocks a character called Kaija. Kaija is a pupil at John’s school and the Act follows the story from her point of view. Playing through the whole of Act 2 as Kaija will unlock Act 3.

Act 3, Mr Farnham’s character can be played. He is John’s teacher and the story can be played through from his point of view.

Making decisions as different characters throughout the whole of ‘The Kid and I’ enables pupils and young people to explore multiple perspectives on John Wood’s story.

Functionality:

Isolation Meter: The Isolation meter is displayed in the bottom left corner of the screen. The closer to John the pink circle is, the more your decisions have isolated him.

Making decisions as all three characters will affect how isolated or supported John Wood feels and how people react to his mental health problems.

Once the player has chosen an answer the pink circle will move either closer to or further away from the image of John. If the pink circle moves closer to John it is indicating that the choice made is isolating John from the other characters in the story. If the pink circle moves further away from John it is indicating that John is being accepted and supported by those around him.

You can make your pupils and young people aware of this tool. It can help them to keep track of what type of language and behaviour supports John Wood and reduces stigma and discrimination.
Talking to people:  In conversations you will be able to choose to react to other characters in one of two ways. Remember the decisions you will make will affect John and his isolation.

By navigating and interacting with different characters in ‘The Kid and I,’ the player determines each character’s response and progression in the story. The player will be given two options of how to react in a conversation. Players choose and click on an option of how the character should respond and continue as such to the story’s conclusion. The options are designed to make the player explore everyday reactions to mental health problems and investigate the differences between the positive and negative language and behaviour responses. Realising the differences will allow pupils and young people to engage in positive, supportive language and behaviour with friends and peers who may be experiencing mental health problems at school.

Social Media:  Clicking on this icon will open the social media screen. You can check on what other characters are up to by reading their posts.

Clicking on the social media icon will pause the story and allow players to gather a little more personal information on characters and discover more about their friendships in ‘The Kid and I’ by reading their social media updates. Clicking off it will take you back to the story.

Unlocking:  Completing the story will unlock the next act highlighting a new character and letting you play through from their point of view.

Playing all three Acts, John Wood, Kaija and Mr Farnham, to their conclusions will give players a rounded experience of investigating differing perspectives and reactions to young people with mental health problems.

‘The Kid and I’ can be clicked through quickly to finish a character’s story. This will allow the player to go back and recap an earlier part of the story. There are extra downloadable materials available including character cards. These have been produced to support the lesson plans and learning activities.
Technical Specifications:

You will need the following in order to use the online story:

Projector or whiteboard

Computer

Access to internet or USB version of The Kid and I

Access to sound is recommended to get the most from the dialogue.

Online story is played using adobe Flash player. We recommend that educators do a quick run through of the story ahead of using with young people.
Suggested lesson plans:

The Kid and I Lesson plan 1: key stage 3 and 4

This lesson aims to raise awareness of the challenges faced by young people experiencing mental health problems. Use Time To Change’s The Kid and I online story that focuses upon a young boy’s experiences at school. Pupils will explore the behaviours, actions and responses the young boy experiences to his mental health problem. The lesson will take an hour and can be linked to PSHE. Learning objectives:

- To empathise with young people experiencing mental health problems
- To explore what mental health problems are and how they might affect a young person’s day to day activities

You will need:

- Time To Change: The Kid and I online story [http://thekid.time-to-change.org.uk/](http://thekid.time-to-change.org.uk/)
- What is mental health? Activity Sheet - See Activities Section
- Who is John Wood? Activity Sheet – See Activities Section

Curriculum links: PSHE Key stage 3 and 4

Personal well-being

1.1 Personal identities
- Understanding that identity is affected by a range of factors, including a positive sense of self.
- Understanding that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment.

1.2 Healthy lifestyles
- Recognising that healthy lifestyles, and the well-being of self and others, depend on information and making responsible choices.

2.3 Developing relationships and working with others
- Use social skills to build and maintain a range of positive relationships.
- Value differences between people and demonstrate empathy and a willingness to learn about people different from themselves.
Starter: 15 minutes
What is mental health? Invite your pupils to respond to the question.

Prompts: Thoughts, Feelings, Emotions, Awareness

Explain to your pupils that mental health refers to how the mind works, involving how we think about others, ourselves, our responses to what may happen to us in our day and how we feel about the choices we make in life.

Prompts: Depression, Bi polar, Anxiety

Explain to your pupils that we all have mental health, like we all have physical health. Both change throughout our lives. And, like our bodies, our minds can become unwell. The effects are as real as a broken arm, even though there isn’t a sling or plaster cast to show for it. The phrase ‘mental health problem’ refers to a group of illnesses that affect the way which an individual thinks, feels and is able to cope with day to day activities.

In pairs or groups give your pupils the ‘What is mental health?’ fact sheet and mind map to read through and fill in.

The Kid and I Online Story 30 minutes

Load online story and display on the whiteboard. Tell your pupils that they are going to explore a character called John Wood in the story ‘The Kid and I’ who is experiencing some difficulties. His mum took him to the doctors who diagnosed John as having a mental health problem.

Tell your pupils that the story is unique as it allows them to respond as John in conversations and situations as John’s day at school unfolds.

Play the introduction to the whole class, then facilitate the pupils as they explore the story for 30 minutes.

Who is John Wood? 10 minutes

After completing Act 1 (John’s Story) hand out the activity: Who is John Wood? Where pupils can start to create a fact file about John and what they think they know about him.

Plenary 5 minutes

Ask pupils to feed back some of the facts that they have discovered about John Wood

Ask pupils to comment on how John feels about his mental health problem and the reactions of family and friends
Conclusion

Return to learning objectives and summarise what new understanding has been gained about mental health and stigma and discrimination.

In addition, you may want to explore Act 2 and 3 (Kaija and Mr Farnham’s stories) as homework or in an extended session, followed by a brief discussion about the different perspectives. Or please see additional activities or resources for more in depth work.
The Kid and I Lesson plan 2: key stage 4

This lesson aims to help your pupils understand mental health and mental health problems. Pupils will identify activities that can cause positive and negative emotions and will explore an online story that raises awareness of the challenges faced by young people experiencing mental health problems. Linked to the PSHE this lesson will take an hour. The activities could be used in key stage 3 and tutor time.

Learning objectives:
- To define mental health and mental health problems
- To identify activities that can have a positive and negative affect on our emotions
- To empathise with young people who are experiencing mental health problems

You will need:
Time To Change: The Kid and I online story
- http://thekid.time-to-change.org.uk/
- What is mental health? Activity Sheet – See activities section
- Who is John Wood? Fact file Activity Sheet – See activities section

Curriculum links:
Personal Well-being
1.1 Personal identities

b. Recognising that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated affects confidence and self-esteem

c. Understanding that self-esteem can change with personal circumstances, such as those associated with family and friendships, achievements and employment.

1.2 Healthy lifestyles

a. Recognising that healthy lifestyles, and the well-being of self and others, depend on information and making responsible choices
Starter: 15 minutes

What is mental health? Invite your pupils to respond to the question.

Prompts: Thoughts, Feelings, Emotions, Awareness

Explain to your pupils that mental health refers to how the mind works, involving how we think about others, ourselves, our responses to what may happen to us in our day and how we feel about the choices we make in life.

Prompts: Depression, Bi polar, Anxiety

Explain to your pupils that we all have mental health, like we all have physical health. Both change throughout our lives. And, like our bodies, our minds can become unwell. The effects are as real as a broken arm, even though there isn’t a sling or plaster cast to show for it. The phrase mental health problem refers to a group of illnesses that affect the way in which an individual thinks, feels and is able to cope with day to day activities.

Fact Sheet: What is mental health? 15 minutes

In small groups give your pupils the ‘What is mental health?’ fact sheet and mind map to read through and fill in.

Ask your pupils to feedback their mind maps.

Developing awareness 15 minutes

Tell your pupils that it is important to be aware of your own mental health and develop tools that enable you to make positive choices and build confidence and self-esteem.

Ask pupils individually to create a list of activities, behaviors and situations that enable them to feel good about themselves.

Next, ask them to write the emotions that the activity makes them feel.

Prompt: Singing in the shower – happy and confident

Ask pupils individually to create a list of activities, behaviors and situations that make them feel unsure and lack in confidence. Again ask pupils to write the emotions that the activity makes them feel.

Prompt: Sitting an exam – nervous and worried

Tell your pupils that developing awareness of situations that make us feel happy or uncomfortable and developing strategies for managing the latter is important in ensuring good mental health (Do acknowledge that whilst for most of us, this kind of self awareness will help us maintain good well-being or manage difficult times, for some of us at some points in our lives, we may find that despite our strategies, we do not feel able to cope – that may be a mental health problem for which we need professional support)
Stats

Tell your pupils that three young people in an average UK class of thirty will be experiencing a mental health problem.

Tell your pupils that those young people might feel worried and nervous about talking about their mental health problem. They might fear they will be thought of differently, judged and that others will behave differently towards them.

Ask your pupils if they can think of ways to support a peer who might be experiencing mental health problems.

Prompt: Talk about it with a friend, teacher or parent

Plenary: The Kid and I

Display on the whiteboard The Kid and I. Tell your pupils that they are going to explore for homework a character called John Wood in the story ‘The Kid and I’. John is experiencing some difficulties. His mum took him to the doctors who diagnosed him as having mental health problems.

Tell your pupils that the story is unique as it allows them to respond as John in conversations and situations, as John’s day at school unfolds.

Play the introduction to the whole class then pause.
Ask pupils for their initial responses to John as a character.

Tell them that they should explore John’s story and give them ‘Who is John Wood?’ worksheet to fill out and be ready to share in the next session.

In the next lesson, facilitate a discussion about what has been learnt from the homework activity, then play through Act 2 & 3 (Kaija and Mr Farnham’s stories) compare perspectives and complete accompanying activities.
Suggested learning activities:

This pack includes a variety of activities which can be used in the classroom and in a youth group setting. They vary in length from ten to thirty minutes long.

The activities can be used to suit your cohort of pupils and young people. They can be used whilst playing ‘The Kid and I’ with your pupils and young people or they can be set as a series of activities to be delivered over a period of lessons or youth group sessions.

The activities are designed to follow the three Acts of The Kid and I: John Wood’s Story, Kaija’s Story and Mr Farnham’s story.

The Kid and I

Act 1: John Wood’s Story Activities:

1. **What is mental health?** Pupils learn to be able to define the meaning of the term mental health.
2. **Who is John Wood?** Pupils create a fact file about John Wood’s character.
3. **Who are the other characters in John’s Story?** Pupils create a fact file about the characters John meets in The Kid and I.
4. **John’s Language and behaviour:** Pupils analyse the language and behaviour John uses.
5. **Looking at language and behaviour:** Pupils investigate the language and behaviour of John’s peers.
6. **Questions and role play:** Pupils engage in role play to discover more about John peers.
7. **Relationship Display:** Pupils discuss the relationships between John and his peers and create a wall display.

Act 2: Kaija’s Story Activities:

1. **Kaija’s story:** Pupils explore Kaija’s character and offer top tips about being the new person at school.
2. **Becky’s story – Group Discussion:** Pupils discuss Becky and her reaction to John’s mental health problem.
3. **Changing relationships:** Pupils identify and explore how Kaija and Becky’s friendship changes through the story.
4. **Media responsibilities:** Pupils research positive and negative media representations of mental health problems.
5. **Diary entry:** Pupils write a diary entry as one of the character from the story.
Act 3: Mr Farnham’s Story

1. **Stigma and Discrimination**: Pupils examine the meaning of Stigma and Discrimination.
2. **Farnham’s office**: Pupils discuss Mr Farnham’s approach to dealing with the confrontational incident.
3. **What support can we offer?**: Pupils identify ways in which they can offer support to peers experiencing mental health problems.
4. **Becky’s story – Group Discussion**: Pupils discuss Becky and her reaction to John’s mental health problem.
5. **Social media responsibility**: Pupils consider the appropriate use of social media.
6. **Youth made media**: Pupils devise their own positive media on youth mental health.
7. **Character Cards: Guess Who?**: Pupils identify which character has developed through the course of the story.
8. **What are the facts about Mental Health?**: Pupils demystify the myths about Mental Health.

These activities allow pupils and young people to express their understanding about mental health, and encourage them to foster positive language and supportive behaviour to reduce the stigma and discrimination that some young people feel if they have a mental health problem.
Activity Sheets