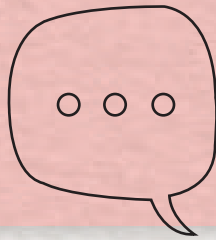
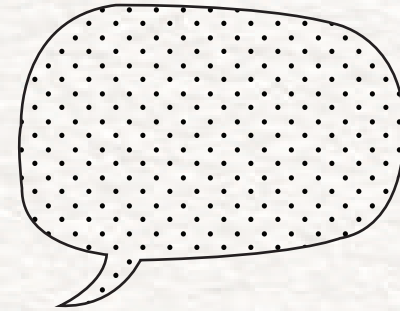
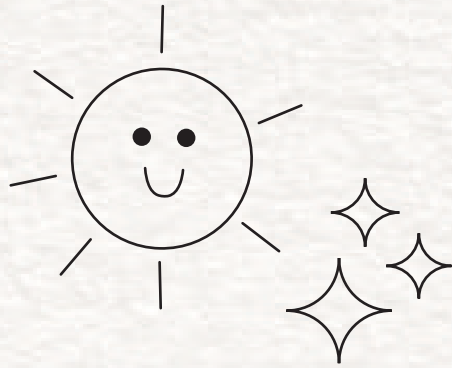


Willpower

Chasing the Likes



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Willpower - Chasing the Likes - Teacher information

What we are learning :

- How to have self-awareness and the **willpower** to encourage positive wellbeing (by not chasing the likes)
- How social media affects the brain and how our **willpower** can help us to remain positive
- What to do if we find ourselves chasing the likes

Key Information

A brain chemical linked to pleasure and depression may also trigger fear, according to a new study. Researchers say this may explain why the neurotransmitter **dopamine**, known to **cause** addictive behaviour, may also play a role in **anxiety** disorders.

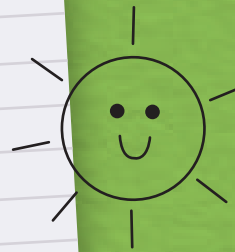
Dopamine plays an integral role in the reward system, a group of brain processes that control motivation, desire, and cravings.

Dopamine levels also influence the following bodily functions:

- mood
- sleep
- learning
- movement

- alertness
- blood flow
- urine output

Technology is so hyper-arousing that it raises **dopamine** levels – the feel-good neurotransmitter most involved in the addiction dynamic.



Willpower - Chasing the Likes - Teacher information

Did you know?



Teachers information. Information that is shared with the children is at the teacher's discretion

Adolescents in particular tend to be attuned to the opinions of their peers, and the simple act of peers “liking” a recently published photo within the social media portfolio can act as a “quantifiable social endorsement” (Sherman et al., 2016[106]). Using fMRI data and a platform resembling Instagram, Sherman and colleagues found that how teens perceive photos is significantly affected by the popularity of the photo, in this case quantified by how many likes it had already received (Sherman et al., 2016[106]).

In terms of brain activity, more popular photos elicited a greater response. Regions of the brain that are associated with social memories and cognition, as well as imitation showed higher levels of activation (Sherman et al., 2016[106]). Furthermore, the authors noted greater activation of the visual cortex when participants viewed photos with many likes versus those with few likes. It was suggested that this might be because participants took greater care when looking at more popular versus less popular photos (Sherman et al., 2016[106]).



In 2019, Adam Mosseri, the CEO of Instagram, made the decision to remove the number of likes on public posts to prevent users making judgements on their own and each other's popularity and worth.



According to Adam, the rationale behind this move is to “reduce anxiety and social comparisons” on the platform.

Willpower - Chasing the Likes - Teacher information

Intended Learning Outcomes

CHARACTER OUTCOMES

- To understand what willpower is and how to use it to manage your use of social media.
- To understand the impact on the brain of using social media.
- How to help ourselves and others if we find ourselves on social media too much.
- Where to go for help if we need it.

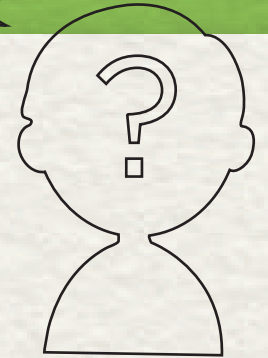
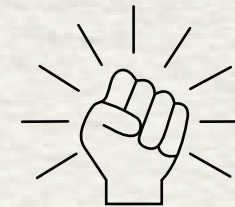
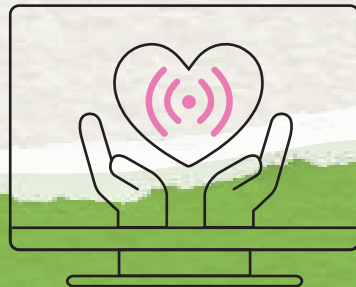
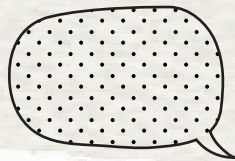
Links to Statutory RSE and Health Education 2019

ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

- that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not.
- that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online.

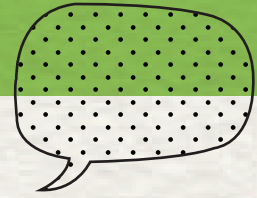
RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.
- practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness.



Workshop 4: Willpower – Chasing the Likes

Introduction



What effect does social media have on our brain?

What effect does social media have on our brain? Chasing the likes on social media is becoming more of an issue. Why is it so addictive? Because it affects the brain, and triggers its reward centres. Successful social interactions create the release of dopamine, a chemical produced in the brain, which is released when your brain is expecting a reward, associated with a feel good factor.

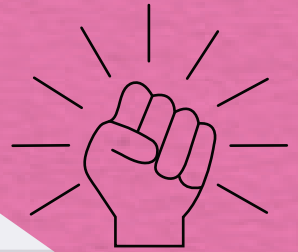
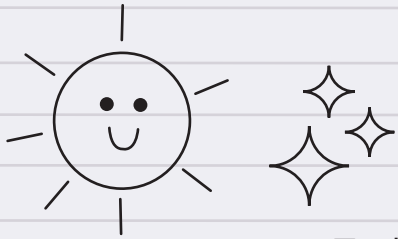
Naturally people go back for more! This dopamine hit can understandably become addictive, in that it encourages us to go back to our phones and scroll through again hoping for a reward and that feel-good dopamine that comes with it. This addictive loop is one of the biggest reasons why on average, we are checking our phones every 12 minutes, as well as the accessibility and portability of the actual phone itself. This is where our will-power comes into play!

Will-power is the ability to control your own actions: strong determination that allows you to do something difficult for a positive outcome.



Workshop 4: Willpower – Chasing the Likes

“We are what we repeatedly do”



Character challenge

Do you have willpower to limit your dopamine level?

Today you will control the amount of dopamine that your brain will receive.

TEACHER NOTES: Set up 2 obstacle courses that run along the length of the hall. Place a basket of 15 green balls at the start of the obstacle course and a basket with a range of different coloured balls at the end of it.

The children need to be in teams of 6 and each team needs to nominate a captain.

Your captain's dopamine levels are too high because of all of his likes on social media. The 15 green balls at the start of the obstacle course represents their dopamine levels. We need to review his habits and make some changes to stabilise his levels. What other activities could he have done instead that would have given him a healthier dopamine increase and kept it within a normal range? Explore alternative activities he could do instead of going on his phone.

One at a time, you need to take a green ball out of the basket and complete the obstacles course. When you get the basket at the end of the course, swap your green ball for a different coloured ball. Bring this ball back with you along the obstacle course and put it in the basket with the green balls. As soon as you have put the ball in the basket, the next person in your team can then take a green ball and complete the obstacle course. You will have 5 minutes to swap as many green balls as you can.

The winning team could either be the team that has the least green balls in the basket or the most varied mix of balls (representing the largest range of activities).

Examples of what the coloured balls could represent:



- Green balls - scanning social media and chasing the likes
- Yellow Balls - exercise
- Blue Balls - listening to music
- Orange Balls - meditating

- White Balls - mindfulness
- Red Balls - time in the sun
- Purple balls: face to face interactions, developing positive relationships



TEACHER NOTE: It is not a bad thing if there are green balls left in the basket – we should try to encourage the idea of ‘moderation’. Discussion: When people ‘chase’ the likes, are they always honest? Are online personas the same in real-life?

Workshop 4: Willpower – Chasing the Likes



Classroom challenge

Discuss the impact of excessively high and excessively low dopamine levels.

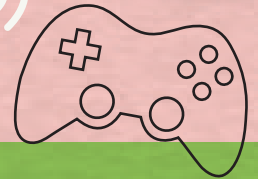
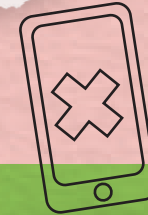
Provide the children with a range of statements - can they arrange them into two groups: high levels of dopamine and low levels of dopamine.

High levels: Low empathy skills, aggressive, less cooperative, poor impulse control, anxiety, difficulty in sleeping, stress, overly energetic.

Low levels: Unmotivated, joyless, depression, difficulty in staying awake.



There needs to be an emphasis on moderation in order to have a 'balanced' level. The activities in the Character Challenge are activities that produce a healthy level of dopamine in comparison to spending too much time on devices and computer games.



Building on the Character Challenge, the children are to produce a poster advocating other ways of keeping our dopamine levels at a 'normal' level.



STOP



THINK



ACTION



REFLECT



RESPECT

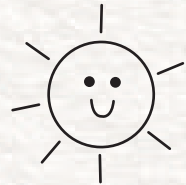
Workshop 4: Willpower – Chasing the Likes

Links to other learning:

Science – Animals, including humans: the importance of exercise on the body and brain

Workshop 5 – Addiction to technology

Mindfulness



Extension activities:

Investigate other chemicals that the brain releases and their functions.

Suggested Resources:

Different coloured balls

PE equipment to devise an obstacle course

Characteristics of people with too high or too low dopamine levels – Classroom Challenge

Suggested Vocab:

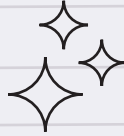
Will-power
Self-awareness
Dopamine
Addiction
Anxiety
Depression
Balance
In moderation





MY REFLECTION JOURNAL: WILL-POWER

What different activities could you do to keep your dopamine levels at a 'normal' level.



What is will-power?

When people get lots of likes on social media, how does that make them feel?

What else could they do in order for them to feel good about themselves?



When you are struggling to stop yourself doing something online, what could you do?

When people don't get lots of likes on social media, how does that make them feel?



What could they do to stop themselves feeling like that?

Personal thoughts and notes:

