

We are trying to explore the theme of ‘express yourself’ in all its different forms. Trying to make links between healthy self-expression and good mental health. To develop healthy ways of expressing ourselves and supporting others to do so.

Finding healthy ways to express ourselves creatively is one way of looking after our mental health. When we are able to find creative, enjoyable ways to share our thoughts, feelings and ideas, this can make us feel good and help our mental health, especially through challenging times.

We often get told by our family, friends, school, communities and through social media how we ‘should’ look, think, speak, and act. These constant messages about what we ought to do, and who we ought to be, can make it difficult to let go of expectations and express our true selves. But being able to do so is important for our wellbeing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uak9tEFIKGU>

**Explore your creativity**

Over the week complete a challenge to explore your self-expression and to try something new.

Mediums and art forms you may consider include: simple craft making, sculpture, junk modelling, mask making, murals, weaving, painting, photography, film, digital art, dance, drama, mime, poetry and literature, music, singing, gardening and cooking. But there are lots more to choose from.

Look through these ideas, try some or have a go at something completely different. This should be fun!

**1. Have a go at defining yourself**

Consider the following:

Make sure that your definitions aren’t overly narrow or limiting.

Keep yourself open to new experiences, talents, interests, passions, and opportunities.

Being an adolescent is all about creating our own identity and expressing it!

" the self is not something that one finds. It is something that one creates.”

**2. Make a photo montage** or short video that expresses WHO you are as a person

This could include your current likes and dislikes, strengths, interests, dreams and passions.

Alternatively, you may like to complete a 7-day photo challenge during

Children’s Mental Health Week, for instance taking one photo a day that captures expresses some aspect of

Yourself, either literally or in abstract form.

**3. Write a daily journal**

Keep a daily journal in which they write about whatever comes to mind. It can be helpful to carry around an ideas book with you. Jotting down your thoughts can also help you to problem-solve — mind maps are a great tool for this. Creating vision boards about your future dreams and aspirations can also help to motivate and inspire you.

**4. Make inside-outside boxes**

Follow these simple instructions:

Decorate a box with images and words on the outside to represent the qualities you show to the world

Decorate the inside of the box with images and words that represent the inner qualities, interests and passions that are hidden to most people. Think about why we all do this and what stops us sharing all of ourselves with others.

**5. Sing together**

Sing songs that focus on self-expression and being your authentic self.

Here are some songs your students could try:

‘If you want to sing out, sing out’ by Cat Stevens: <https://bit.ly/3iesKBg>

‘Express yourself’ by Labrinth <https://bit.ly/3kSm8tS>

‘Roar’ by Katy Perry <https://bit.ly/349L2hZ>

**6. Understanding dance as a form of self-care**

Watch the following videos as inspiration for how dancing can be used as a way to de-stress, join together and express your identity:

Dancing Di’ Stress Away by Study in Sweden <https://bit.ly/33cBHGO>

Dance as self-care by Anna Freud <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISxmYT4fbBQ>

Make up a dance, remember the focus is on having fun and expressing yourself — not on being the world’s best dancer!