**Health check**



**Part 1**

Read the statements in the table about health.

Some are **right** and some are **wrong**.

Tick **one** box for each statement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | | I am **sure** this is right | I **think** this is right | I **think** this is wrong | I am **sure** this is wrong |
| **1** | You only need to think about your health when you’re ill. |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | You are either healthy or ill. There is nothing in-between. |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | You can’t do anything to change your health. |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Health and fitness are the same thing. |  |  |  |  |

**Health check**



**Part 2**

Read the statements in the table about health.

Some are **right** and some are **wrong**.

Tick **one** box for each statement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | | I am **sure** this is right | I **think** this is right | I **think** this is wrong | I am **sure** this is wrong |
| **1** | Everybody can have ill health. |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | To stay healthy you must take care of both your body and your mind. |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | The health of your thoughts and your emotions is called your physical health. |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | The health of your body is called your mental health. |  |  |  |  |

**Health check**



**Part 3**

Read the statements in the table about health.

Some are **right** and some are **wrong**.

Tick **one** box for each statement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | | I am **sure** this is right | I **think** this is right | I **think** this is wrong | I am **sure** this is wrong |
| **1** | Everybody has mental health. |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | Mental ill health affects lots of people. |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | Your physical health can affect your mental health. |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Your mental health can affect your physical health. |  |  |  |  |

*Biology > Big idea BHD: Health and disease > Topic BHD1: What are health and disease? > Key concept BHD1.1: Good and ill health*

|  |
| --- |
| **Diagnostic question** |
| **Health** |

**Overview**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Learning focus: | The physical health and the mental health of an organism can range from good to ill, and are affected by numerous factors. |
| Observable learning outcome: | Recall that people have both physical health and mental health, which can range from good to ill. |
| Question type: | Confidence grid |
| Key words: | Health, disease |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **P** | **PRIOR UNDERSTANDING**  This diagnostic question probes understanding of ideas that are usually taught at age 5-11, to aid transition from earlier stages of learning. |

**What does the research say?**

Learning about health at school should aim to improve students’ understanding of both physical and mental health (Paakkari and Paakkari, 2012; Kutcher et al., 2016; Mental Health Foundation, 2019).

Children’s understanding of health, and of behaviours associated with good and ill health, changes with their age and developmental stage (Berk, 2000). The ways in which people define health shifts with age; while children and younger people tend to define health in terms of vitality and physical strength, older people relate health to physical functions and ability to cope with everyday life.

Research suggests that young children’s primary source of health information is their family, followed by public health campaigns, and then teachers and friends at school (Brindal et al., 2012). Regardless of prior schooling in ideas about healthy and unhealthy behaviours, children at age 11 are likely to have many preconceptions about health from everyday life.

The misunderstanding that health only relates to physical health (and not also to mental health) is common, and health is often equated specifically with physical *fitness* (Varea, 2018). When children aged 9-11 in the US (Reeve and Bell, 2009) and aged 5-9 in Australia (Brindal et al., 2012) were asked to draw and write about healthy and unhealthy things, most of the students’ answers related to diet (over 60% in the US study) and physical activity; emotional and mental health rarely featured. When the children in the US study were asked to define health, their answers mostly referred to disease (causes and cures).

**Ways to use this question**

This diagnostic question helps to provide evidence of students’ preconceptions about physical and mental health.

Students should complete the confidence grids individually. This could be a pencil and paper exercise, or you could use the PowerPoint presentation with an electronic voting system or mini white boards. It may be helpful to follow each part with a discussion of the statements and students’ answers (see ‘How to respond - what next?’) before moving on to the next part.

*Differentiation*

You may choose to read the statements to the class, so that everyone can focus on the science. In some situations it may be more appropriate for a teaching assistant to read for one or two students.

**Expected answers**

*Part 1*

1. You only need to think about your health when you’re ill – **wrong** (staying in *good* health requires action beyond just treating disease)
2. You are either healthy or ill. There is nothing in-between – **wrong** (draw out the idea that health can range from good to ill, with various factors acting to make health better or worse)
3. You can’t do anything to change your health – **wrong** (health depends on a range of behavioural, biological and environmental factors, some of which can be changed)
4. Health and fitness are the same thing – **wrong** (somebody who has done a lot of exercise may be physically fit, but their physical and mental health can be affected by illness)

*Part 2*

1. Everybody can have ill health – **right**
2. To stay healthy you must take care of both your body and your mind – **right**
3. The health of your thoughts and your emotions is called your physical health – **wrong** (this is called mental health)
4. The health of your body is called your mental health – **wrong** (this is called physical health)

*Part 3*

1. Everybody has mental health – **right** (students who select ‘wrong’ as their answer may be thinking only of mental *ill* health, or mental health ‘issues’)
2. Mental ill health affects lots of people – **right**
3. Your physical health can affect your mental health – **right**
4. Your mental health can affect your physical health – **right**

**How to respond - what next?**

After students have indicated their answers, you may choose to follow up with structured class discussion. Ask one student to explain why they gave the answer they did; ask another student to explain why they agree with them; ask another to explain why they disagree, and so on. This sort of discussion gives students the opportunity to explore their thinking and for you to really understand their learning needs. Responses often work best when the activities involve paired or small group discussions, which encourage social construction of new ideas (meaning making) through dialogue.

If students struggle with the idea that everybody has mental health as well as physical health, the following video from the Mental Health Foundation, entitled “From surviving to thriving”, could be used to challenge their thinking:

* <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/surviving-thriving-building-mentally-healthier-britain>

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