

The Mindful Garden: Cultivating Mental Wellbeing

Learning objective: To identify strategies for maintaining positive mental health and understand that everyone experiences a range of emotions.

Imagine your mind is a garden. Just like plants, your emotions and mental health need regular care to thrive. Below is a list of 'Weeds' (negative habits or feelings that can clutter our minds) and 'Seeds' (positive actions that help us grow). Sort the items into the correct categories and provide a justification for why each action supports emotional regulation.

Word bank: Mindful breathing · Bottling up feelings · Expressing gratitude · Negative self-talk · Quality sleep · Comparing yourself to others · Physical exercise · Talking to a trusted adult

1. Choose two 'Seeds' from the word bank and explain why they are essential for maintaining a healthy mind. Use specific examples. (4 marks)

2. What might happen if a person only focuses on the 'Weeds' in their garden without seeking help? Justify your perspective. (3 marks)

3. Nova the owl suggests that 'self-compassion' is like sunshine for your garden. What does this mean to you in the context of mental health? (3 marks)

4. If a friend was struggling with a 'Weed', how could you help them plant a 'Seed' instead? Describe a supportive approach. (4 marks)

5. Compare and contrast how physical activity (like running or swimming) affects your mental state compared to quiet reflection (like reading or meditation). (4 marks)

6. Why is it important to acknowledge that 'weeds' are a natural part of life, rather than trying to pretend they don't exist? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw your own 'Mindful Garden'. Illustrate the 'Seeds' as blooming flowers or strong trees, and represent the 'Weeds' as small, manageable patches that you are clearing away. Label your drawing with words that represent your own personal coping strategies.



Extension challenge: Write a short poem from the perspective of Pip the caterpillar, describing how it feels to transform from a time of feeling 'cooped up' in a chrysalis (a metaphor for low mood) to emerging with a fresh, positive perspective. Focus on the importance of patience and kindness toward oneself.