

ASSEMBLY GUIDE FOR PRIMARY-AGE CHILDREN

These ideas can be adapted for use in school, for home-schooling or online learning.

AIMS

- To introduce the idea of growth and change
- To emphasise that we can keep growing – even when things get tough

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A real cross section of a tree trunk with clear growth rings (or a coloured photograph or image of one)
- A large piece of paper and marker pens (or interactive whiteboard)

STEP 1

TEACHING POINT:

Optional: corresponds with slides 2 and 3

Human beings change and grow – we do it all the time and in many different ways. Physical growth is easy to see as we grow from babies to children, teenagers to adults. Another way that we can grow is emotionally. Things that upset us when we are younger may no longer be so upsetting when we're older. Challenges and trying new things can help us to grow and adapt.

INTRODUCE THE THEME OF YOUR ASSEMBLY:

This Children's Mental Health Week we are exploring the theme 'Growing Together'. Some growth is easy to see, like when we grow from babies into children or when flowers grow in spring. But other growth may be more difficult to spot. In fact, it might seem like we're not growing at all.

Show a cross-section of a tree trunk (real or a large coloured photo of one). Point out the rings and explain that a tree grows a new ring every year. Ask a child to come forward to help count the rings.

STEP 2

TEACHING POINT:

We all need support to help us to keep growing, especially when things get tough.

Explain that in some years trees grow a lot, making the rings clear to see. Ask the children what they think would help a tree to grow well (e.g. sunlight, rain, warmth, protection etc).

However, in some years trees have a hard time growing, making it more difficult to see a clear growth ring in the trunk. Ask the children what they think could stop a tree growing well (e.g. too much wind, rain, sun, pests, lack of protection etc).

Each tree tells its own story about the weather and the conditions in each year of its growth. However, whether the conditions are good or bad, a tree still grows a new ring. Isn't that amazing?

STEP 3

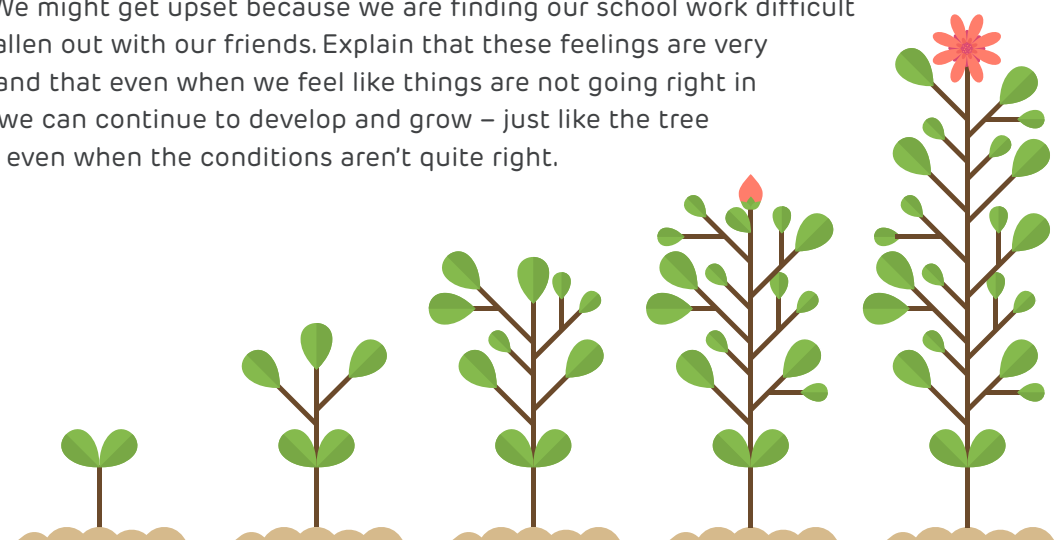
TEACHING POINT:

Optional: corresponds with slide 4

Just like trees and plants need support to help them grow, we need support to help us grow emotionally. We need our parents and carers, our teachers, our friends. We often need others to help us to believe in ourselves, to keep going, and to try doing things a bit differently.

Talk about how people can be like trees. Sometimes we feel like we are growing and developing and doing really well. For example, we might do well in our tests at school and feel like we have good friends.

But at other times we might feel like we are not growing and developing like we want to. We might get upset because we are finding our school work difficult or have fallen out with our friends. Explain that these feelings are very ordinary and that even when we feel like things are not going right in our lives, we can continue to develop and grow – just like the tree can grow even when the conditions aren't quite right.



STEP
4

TEACHING POINT:

Optional: corresponds with slides 5 and 6

Reflecting on how much we've grown, and thinking of ways that we can continue to grow together is one good way to look after our mental health.

"Be like a tree. Stay grounded. Connect with your roots. Turn over a new leaf. Bend before you break. Enjoy your unique natural beauty. Keep growing." – **Joanne Raptis**

Either read or display the quotation above. Discuss with the children what it could mean and how they could apply it in their own lives.

Next draw a series of large concentric circles on a piece of paper or interactive whiteboard.

Invite staff and pupils to come to the front to write a brief couple of words about how they would like to grow in the coming term (or you can write for them). You may wish to have one or two colleagues prepped to do this in advance.

Note - this could also be a follow-up activity in class after the assembly.

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



- 1 Hold a **'Dress to Express'** day to raise vital funds for children's mental health bit.ly/3C9RAwM
- 2 Tune in to our free **'Growing Together'** virtual assembly with your class or during assembly [Available from Monday 7 Feb]
- 3 Watch our series of **'Growth stories'** featuring some famous faces, and even be inspired to create your own [Available from January]
- 4 **Share our tips** for parents and carers with your school community bit.ly/3C8wHC7
- 5 **Spread the word** by sharing how you plan to take part on social media! Don't forget to use #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek

