Smile
We care

Enablers notes

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Realising the need in our community

Why this session is important

To help your group or individual to:

- Explore the different needs and issues facing people in their local community
- Realise they can play an important part in making their community a better place
- Understand the SMILE Challenge and the benefits of 'giving back' through positive social action
- Agree an action to work on

What you will need

- Copy of We Care Activity for each group
- SMILE Slide Presentation
- We Care Resources
- Access to information on your local community
- Paper/pens
- 30 mins (depending on time availability)

How to do it

Welcome the group and introduce the SMILE Challenge. Show the **SMILE Slide Presentation** (Resources) and open up the conversation by asking:

- What did they enjoy and learn from the slide show?
- What words make us SMILE?
- Who in your local community would love a SMILE?
- How can you make someone SMILE?

Divide individuals into groups of 4 – 6 (although you can also deliver SMILE as a whole group or class) and ask them to create a team name.

Emphasise how much potential every single person in the room has to make a difference in their local community, however big or small. Explain that the SMILE Challenge will run over several weeks and it will be a fun, engaging and fulfilling opportunity for everyone involved.

Highlight the importance of teamwork and that different skills and abilities will be needed from all those involved to make the challenge a success e.g. research and problem solving to leadership, communication, creativity and practical skills.

We care

Engage the whole group in a creative exercise to map out what they believe the needs and issues are that people are facing in their local community. Generate as big a list as possible using the prompts if required:

- Who is in most need in your local community?
- Why would they be sad?
- What problems or issues are people you know facing?
- What kinds of causes do local charities support?

Encourage individuals to LOOK around their local community and think about the people, place and environment they live in and the sorts of worries or concerns they may have as they wake up each morning.

To help add to this talk through the different things people may have on their plates each day.

Using the **Plate Images** (Resources) ask each group to identify one or two plates or needs they care about most. This may be because someone close to them is facing a particular challenge; or they feel strongly and passionately about a particular issue or that there is simply a real need that they feel they can do something about.

Encourage groups to find out a little more about the need, purpose or causes they've highlighted. There is a great opportunity here to make this interactive and engaging with the local community by LISTENING to people involved and LEARNING more about the underlying issues. This could involve a presentation from a local charity, chat with a family member who volunteers or visit to a local group.

This process can be enabled further by:

- Involving parents, community volunteers, school governors and local charities as facilitators for each group
- Utilising existing links and building on previous community connections
- Piggy backing on activities that are already planned
- Focusing on one issue or need as a whole group

What other questions to ask/points to make

- Be prepared to share your story – what purposes and causes do you feel passionate about, how have you made people SMILE, what are your experiences of volunteering
- Explain the benefits that 'giving back' can bring to our own confidence, sense of fulfilment, positive mental health, belonging and skills for life
- Make the point when working with a group that they can all be supporters for one another, adding help, encouragement, and guidance when needed

As the session draws to a close discuss:

- What they may have learned, or what has surprised or puzzled them about doing these activities
- Help them to identify one key action they may personally wish to take as a result of doing these activities