**Tips for Coordinating Teachers**

Are you acting as a coordinating teacher in your department for the delivery of the SEEN lessons? I thought I would share with you some of the lessons learnt from teachers who took part in our pre-pilot and those who have taken part in the live online training.

If you would like to talk through any of the following, or have questions, please get in touch – we are here to help and one of the team will happily arrange a phone call to support you **seen@psych.ox.ac.uk**

**Tip 1: Do all staff understand the rationale behind the project?**

Our pre-pilot teachers and education experts feel it is really important to ensure that all staff delivering the lessons understand the rationale behind the project, namely:

* It is well established that the first 1001 days (pregnancy and first two years of a child’s life) is a critically important period​.
* The early years impact on long-term health, wellbeing, learning and earnings potential. ​
* Sensitive and responsive caregiver-infant relationships are pivotal to a child’s development​.
* The project aims to target the **next generation**of caregivers (parents, relatives, key workers, neighbours etc) to equip them for future interactions with young children (aged 0-5).
* There is a wealth of scientific evidence to support the importance of the SEEN project (see staff training video on the evidence base), yet compared to cardiovascular health, there is nothing currently taught in schools about looking after brain development. This pilot is exploring options for changing this…

**Tip 2: Do your teachers understand why this is being taught in science rather than PSHE?**

Sometimes teachers feel the content is more relevant to relationships education in PSHE. It is true that the content is closely linked (and in fact some schools are trialing the lessons in PSHE). We thought it might be useful to explain why we decided to deliver the content through science:

* Brain development is fastest and arguably most important in the early years.
* Little is currently taught about the brain. The basic fact of neurons connecting to make circuits and circuits being strengthened or weakened by experiences provides a template for future learning about the brain and how it works.
* Early years experiences are the ‘environment’ which determine the growth of the brain. Lesson 2 teaches the optimal growth environment… in the same way that biology covers the optimal conditions for plant growth.
* Child development is underpinned by neuroscience. Neuroscience provides the mechanisms for the physiology, emotions and behaviours that individuals experience. It is hoped that by understanding the underlying mechanism, some students are more likely to recognize the importance of the caregiver’s role in child development.
* The lessons are the first step in understanding brain development. A more detailed understanding would include the genetic and environment interplay, epigenetics, physiological responses to stress, hormonal influences, mental health conditions, and so on. These concepts sit more comfortably in science rather than PSHE.
* The evidence underpinning the importance of early neurodevelopment is firmly within the field of science and research using scientific methods.

**Tip 3: Have you thought about how to ensure the questionnaires are completed with minimum disruption?**

* Our pre-pilot teachers suggested completing the first questionnaire in a lesson **before** the SEEN lessons.
* For the data to be submitted, the students need to get to the end of the survey and click ‘finish’. **The second survey is longer than the first**. Enough time needs to be given. If students run out of time, ask them to use a space bar or 0 in the remaining boxes to allow them to get to the end and click finish – then the data they have completed will count!
* If you struggle with IT facilities, the questionnaires can be completed on smart phones and/or as a homework task. Or you can ask students to complete them on paper (or just those who didn’t manage to do it at home). Let us know if you need help organizing this.
* If it helps we could provide you with feedback on how many questionnaires have been completed. We could also send you an email reminder after the lessons if you would like to remind students they need to complete the questionnaires.

**Tip 4: Do the teachers know they can differentiate for their students?**

Our pre-pilot teachers said it is important to signpost teachers to the differentiation options. All our files are editable so teachers can choose, hide or reformat to meet the needs of their students. This is particularly the case for the starter activity in lesson 3 – there are 3 versions here to choose from depending on the data analysis skills of your class. Keyword lists are also available in the teacher pack.

**Tip 5: Are you or your colleagues willing to take part in a focus group after the lessons have been delivered?**

We will be running focus groups after May half term and any teachers attending will receive a £30 ‘love to shop’ voucher to compensate for their time.

We are keen to hear all opinions! So, if you, or a colleague would like to tell us what you do or do not like about the content, or have views about its future in a national curriculum setting… we would love to hear more!

**Tip 6: Are you aware of our short film competition?**

Students or staff can enter a short film that captures student and staff thoughts and experiences about the topic and lessons. There are prizes available to win! This does not have to be coordinated by a teacher taking part in the project (£30 ‘love to shop’ voucher for school film coordinator). Look at our website for more information.