Synopsis:

This lesson is largely a PSHE lesson, with elements of Science and speaking and listening. Students will learn about the signs of cancer in young people and what to do if they have concerns about their own or others' health. This is important learning because cancer is an issue that affects most people in some way and knowledge will help them to protect themselves both physically and mentally for the future. It will also allow them to consider their own health and how to communicate with a doctor about any concerns.

Learning outcomes:

• By the end of this lesson students will be able to agree with some or all of the following statements:
  • I can talk about things that concern me to help me to feel less afraid.
  • I can give examples of 2 or more of the 5 main signs of cancer in young people.
  • I know that I can go to the doctor if I have any concerns about my health and can explain why it is important to go to the doctor with any concerns about my health.
  • I feel more confident to in how to speak to a doctor about any concerns I have about my own or others' health.

Climate for Learning:

See Teachers Notes. Ensure you remind the group about the ground rules/working agreement that were agreed last time.

Context, baseline assessment and reconnecting activity

Some students will have learned about cancer at primary level. The core section of the lesson allows the teacher to assess this knowledge through peer discussion and questioning; this lesson continues to build upon any prior learning. They will also have learned about how cancer occurs at a basic level along with cancer myths in the previous lesson. This lesson will build upon that learning.

This lesson is a continuation of ‘What is Cancer 1’. If you would like a free Teenage Cancer Trust Education session in your school, please contact education@teenagecancertrust.org. These sessions cover what cancer is, what to look for, how it is treated, supporting a young person with cancer and how a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the risk of cancer in the future.

Resources:

• Teacher’s guidance for Creating a Safe Environment Guidance
• Teenage Cancer Trust Safe Environment Contract
• What is Cancer: Resource sheet 1 – Most common cancers in young people
• What is Cancer 2: Support Sheet 5 – Learning Outcomes
• (link to Teenage Cancer Trust Education film – DCE film)

Introduction (10mins)

Remind the students about the learning from last lesson – the myths and the key messages from the What is Cancer film. Ask the students if they have discovered any more myths that they have now realised are not true/have they come across any more myths that they would like to discuss? If students have lots of questions, it might be worth asking them to write them down and use this as homework research. You may also choose to have an anonymous question box for them to use.

Main (40 mins)

Display the list of the most common cancers in young people (What is Cancer: Resource sheet 1 – Most common cancers in young people) and ask if they have heard of any of them? Use the notes to basically explain the cancers. The students may know people who have experienced these and may wish to discuss this, but teachers should try to distance information from personal stories as everyone’s experience will be different and the students will be better able to learn if they do not become too upset. This will also protect the teacher. This activity should take about 10 minutes. Explain to the students how rare teenage cancer is (less than 1% of all cancers diagnosed in the UK) and that early diagnosis is important because it helps doctors to find the problem and deal with it early. Ask what the students think is a sign of cancer in young people? Collect thoughts and then show the ‘Teenage Cancer Trust education film’ about the 5 signs and how to speak to a doctor about them.
Explain to the students that some young people aren’t sure how to speak to the doctor and that this is a very important life skill. Split them into pairs and ask them to role play a visit to the doctor to discuss a cancer symptom. Ensure that they have time to play both parts. In addition, ask them to role play a discussion between a young person and a trusted adult about concerns in visiting the doctors and how they should go about making an appointment. This activity should take about 30 minutes.

**Plenary (10mins)**

Provide the students with What is Cancer 2: Support Sheet 5 – Learning Outcomes to enable them to assess what they have learned or developed through the last two lessons. Ask the students to share in their pairs one thing that they would still like to develop and one thing that they are particularly pleased to have achieved. As homework, ask all students to find out where their local Doctors’ surgery is and how to make an appointment should they ever need one.

For additional lesson plans about cancer, please visit www.teenagecancertrust.org/educationresources where you can find lessons around the impact of a healthy lifestyle, communicating with a doctor and body image, among others.