

# Mental Health Champions

**Recently we have introduced a new programme called the Mental Health Champions at Stonehenge School.**

*Reporter: Riana*

## **What is a Mental Health Champion?**

A Mental Health Champion is someone who has been professionally trained by a member of Public Health England to give people with mental disabilities advice on how to deal with everyday life and also just to give them a listening ear so they can release any deep information they may be keeping to themselves.

## **What do they do?**

Once or twice a term they start a new campaign the last topic they covered was body image. They learned new ways to make people feel confident about themselves and what they look like. Each week they have meetings to find ideas on how to promote their campaign such as visiting tutors, doing assemblies and posters around the school.

## **How are they trained?**

Before they did any of that they were trained for a whole week by a lady called Dawn. She works as a Member of Public Health England (Public Health England (PHE) is an executive agency of the Department of Health in the United Kingdom that began operating on 1 April 2013). The students would do numerous activities and group work from a booklet, they would later be assessed on this to see if they passed the course. Many were successful and understood well. Once passing this test they get a qualification equal to a GCSE.

## **What age range?**

The students are aiming to help people who are of the age from ten to fourteen, primarily people that are younger than them. Young students will need more help as most of them will be starting secondary school, meeting new people and may be facing new challenges. This can be very distressing and they'll need someone to talk to.

## **What can the public do to help?**

The Champions have said that we should be more thoughtful and understanding to those who have a mental illness or are going through a rough time. To not be judgmental and be generous to everyone.

## **Why do people do this? Why do *you* do this?**

The champions like to help because they have personally gone through things also and have experienced situations that the younger pupils may be going through therefore the champions can give healthy advice on how to deal with it.

Deryn, a Mental Health Champion, says

*“I enjoy it because helping someone makes me happy. Knowing that I am making some feel the tiniest bit better is a great feeling”*

Josh, another participant says:

*“Well, for starters we get a different tie, that’s always a plus. Also it is great to have this qualification and it is great experience if I wanted to do something like this again in the future. I do like understanding what people are going and helping them with that”*

So these people work hard for hours every day, not for themselves but to help others. There’s nothing nicer than that.