

Featuring musician, author, and mental health advocate Jordan Stephens, these four short films see him share personal insights to positive mental health with a focus on identity. He challenges students to take a deeper look at their own experiences and reactions while offering ideas to equip young people with the tools to handle what life throws their way.

The films may be used as part of the planned curriculum for PSHE or as part of tutor time. Each short film comes with suggested discussion points and activities to use as a springboard into deeper discussion.

These four films were created to fit within:

- The Citizenship and PSHE (RSE) curriculum in England
- The Curriculum for Excellence (Health & Wellbeing Education) in Scotland
- Learning for Life and Work in Northern Ireland
- Personal and Social Education (PSE) in Wales

Using in tutor time

If using in tutor time we recommend you start a discussion by talking about what mental health is. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as ‘a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.’



You could then use the following prompts:

Identity crisis	Jordan explains that identity comprises your values, your beliefs and how you think others see you. What are your values and where do they come from? How do you think others see you and are they seeing the real you?
Cultural chameleons	Jordan talks about the labels that society likes to put on us. Can you list the many ways people might label other people without really knowing them? Do we sometimes make assumptions about people based on these labels or the small amount of information we have about them?
Radical self-acceptance	‘Radical’ means far-reaching or fundamental. This suggests that self-acceptance is something that changes us deeply and fundamentally. Talk about what you think Jordan means by self-acceptance being a radical act.
Amplifying your impact	Jordan talks about finding purpose in life. What do you think he means by purpose? What purpose has Jordan found?

After watching the films, as a group, talk about ways that everyone can support each other with their mental health. Remind students that if they or someone they know has suicidal thoughts then it is important to get help immediately. This is not something they should have to deal with alone.

Using in PSHE lessons

If using in lesson time, fuller teacher notes are provided to support sessions that contain one individual and one pair or small group activity, with a takeaway challenge that encourages students to further work on their own mental health outside the classroom. These will help them learn to navigate the challenges of self-discovery and learn self-love from a personal perspective. Students will understand how having a strong sense of identity can empower you to exercise your voice with fairness and respect.

There is little or no additional need for resources or planning but it's important to become familiar with the films and questions before each session. Consider carefully whether it will be appropriate and of use for your specific cohort as every class is different, even if they are in the same year group. Feel free to adapt the questions to the needs of your own students.

Before watching the films

We recommend that you set up a group agreement before watching the films and this should include how and where to access support if needed. You could include signposting to any support in school or locally.

Remind students that the classroom should be a safe space to discuss and share thoughts and that they should be aware of and respect others' opinions and experiences. Remind them also that you cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality but will talk to individuals if you have any concerns. It's also ok not to share any personal experiences if they don't want to. They can discuss Jordan's personal experiences instead or talk about 'someone who.'

Start a discussion by talking about what mental health is. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.' Ask the group if this resonates with them and as a group try and come up with your own definition.

After watching the films

As a group, talk about ways that everyone can support each other with their mental health. Support and allyship is a strong focus in these films.

Each film ends with this message:

Most importantly, remember to seek professional help if you need it. If you're struggling, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional. They can provide immediate support to help you navigate your feelings and develop a stronger sense of self.

Remind students that if they or someone they know has suicidal thoughts then it is important to get help immediately. This is not something they should have to deal with alone.

Want more?

Head to stemcrew.org/gohumansacademy to explore masterclasses covering self care, wellbeing, mental and physical fitness and more.

Identity crisis

Lesson plan

In this film Jordan talks about identity and how important this is to our mental health with a focus on:

- Examining how our sense of identity can impact our mental health
- Identifying and managing stressors that may arise from societal pressures and expectations
- Cultivating coping strategies for mental health challenges related to identity
- Learning to prioritise self-care and seeking support when needed



Once you have watched the film together, start a discussion based on the questions below. This could be as a whole class, in small groups or pairs. It's important that every student can express themselves in a way that feels comfortable to them.

Discussion prompts

Jordan explains that identity comprises your values, your beliefs and how you think others see you.

- What are your values and where do they come from? Our families are our first teachers so many of your personal values will come from home. What else influences your values and beliefs? Faith, friends, culture, and role models all have an influence
- How do you think others see you and are they seeing the real you?

Jordan talks about how your identity and values are not set in stone but can and should change and develop as we grow.

- When would it be good to re-evaluate your values? What happens if a friend says or does something that goes against your values? Are you able to say how that affects you? Is there someone you can talk to if you feel confused or concerned?

Jordan talks about changing his names or using aliases.

- Do you have any other names? Perhaps family or nicknames or another name belonging to your cultural heritage. How does this other name change your perception of yourself or others' perceptions of you? Do you become someone else with this name? How does this affect your personal identity?

Jordan acknowledges his own triggers – the things that may set off a mental health crisis or simply challenge or upset you.

- Talk about what triggers are and what we can do to minimise them. If faced with a personal trigger, what steps could you take to minimise your reaction? What works for you? Walking away, taking a breath, talking to someone could be examples

Identity crisis

Lesson plan

The brilliant game

- Ask students to get into pairs and label them A and B
- Set a timer for one minute and ask A to talk about how brilliant they are. They should start every sentence with, 'I am brilliant because...' Examples could be as simple as, 'I am brilliant because I shared something in class today which I don't usually do' or 'I am brilliant because I got to school on time today.' It's much harder than we think to talk about ourselves in a positive way but encourage each student to keep going for the full minute. Try not to focus on physical attributes but think more broadly
- Swap so that B has one minute of saying how brilliant they are while A listens
- Finally, match each pair with another pair and ask A to tell the group all the things that make B brilliant and vice versa. Can they remember what their partners said? It's ok for partners to offer prompts if they forget!
- Afterwards, come together as a whole group and talk about what they found challenging. Was it easy or challenging to come up with lots of brilliant things about yourself? How did it feel when someone was talking to others about how brilliant you are? What can we learn from this? What might happen if we told ourselves how brilliant we were every day? Some people use affirmations or visualisations every day to start each day in a positive way. Sportspeople, for example, may visualise a win before a game or match. Is this something you could do too?

Takeaways

Jordan suggests some simple activities that can be done at home. These are:

Identity acknowledgement

Set a timer for 5 minutes, without distractions, thinking about you as a person. What do you value, what do you believe in and what you want in life. How would you describe yourself to other people without getting into physical descriptions?

Dialogue recognition

It might seem simple but practice speaking kindly to yourself. Be more conscious of your strengths, accomplishments, and the values that set you apart from others.

Mindfulness

This is an easy one before bed. Download a mindfulness app on your phone. They're free and you can find short easy exercises to help you stay present and connect with your feelings – rather than storing them away.

Self-monitoring

Taking care of your physical health can also support your mental health. Look out for yourself, like you were entrusted with looking after a friend in need. Make sure to get enough sleep, eat the best you can, and take time to stay active.

Signposting

After the session, remind students that they should seek professional help if they need it. Mental health professionals can provide immediate support to help them navigate their feelings and develop a stronger sense of self.

Cultural chameleons

Lesson plan

In this film Jordan talks about labels and how the world sees us with a focus on:

- Exploring the influence of societal and cultural roles on our identity
- Recognising and challenging societal norms and expectations that do not align with our sense of self
- Developing strategies to navigate cultural and societal expectations while staying true to our identity
- Understanding how to appreciate and celebrate the diversity of identities and experiences within our communities



Below are some questions to get a discussion started. This could be as a whole class or in small groups or pairs. It's important that every student can express themselves in a way that feels comfortable to them.

Discussion prompts

Jordan talks about the labels that society likes to put on us.

- Can you list the many ways people might label other people without really knowing them? For example, the way they look, speak, act, what they wear, where they come from, their age, gender, or sexuality
- Do we sometimes make assumptions about people based on these labels or the small amount of information we have about them? What are the drawbacks of judging someone based on this?

He talks about how we create our own identity and how we might challenge that perception.

- Where do your influences come from? Family and home will come first but friends and outside influences are in there too. Are there any particular role models or influencers that you look up to? Talk about the word 'influencer.' These may be via social media or real life. How do they influence your own behaviour or views? How do you know if these influences are beneficial or positive?

Unique me

- Invite each student to write down everything that makes them absolutely unique. This could include ethnicity, cultural background and physical description but could also include talents, skills and personal attributes or experiences. Encourage students to delve into things like being a good listener, being a supportive friend or being able to empathise
- Talk about how we could develop some of those skills further. You could invite students to share their ideas with the class if they feel comfortable

Cultural chameleons

Lesson plan

Takeaways

Jordan suggests some things to think about. These could form the basis of further discussion in class or be used as something to think about at home. These are:

Identity evolution

Embrace the fluidity of identity. It's okay to redefine yourself outside what other people think of you. Our identities aren't static, they change alongside our life experiences. At the end of the day, the only person you need to have to live with is yourself.

Positive role modelling

Seek out and become positive influences on the people around you. We can't always control people's perceptions, but we can control our own. Let's replace harmful narratives with conversations fuelled by empathy and resilience.

Collective momentum

Change doesn't happen in isolation. Support your friends and families own sense of self, promote honest conversation and then we've got a chance of shifting cultural pressures and expectations.

Signposting

After the session, remind students that they should seek professional help if they need it. Mental health professionals can provide immediate support to help them navigate their feelings and develop a stronger sense of self.

Radical self-acceptance

Lesson plan

In this film Jordan talks about self-acceptance, how to care for ourselves and how to minimise stress by looking at what we can and can't control with a focus on:

- Understanding the importance of self-love in building a positive and healthy sense of identity
- Acknowledging and addressing negative self-talk and counterproductive thoughts
- Learning to practice self-compassion and forgiveness
- Developing strategies for self-care and self-improvement that align with our values and sense of self



Below are some questions to get a discussion started. This could be as a whole class or in small groups or pairs. It's important that every student can express themselves in a way that feels comfortable to them.

Discussion prompts

Let's look at the title of this film. 'Radical' means far-reaching or fundamental. This suggests that self-acceptance is something that changes us deeply and fundamentally.

- Talk about what you think Jordan means by self-acceptance being a radical act.

Jordan suggests that it's important to put time, energy, and care into what we can control.

- Talk about the things in our lives we can control and those we can't. We can control things like the food choices we make, who we enjoy being with and what we wear. When we can't control certain things like what others think of us, how governments respond to situations or big issues like climate change, we can look to see what small steps we can take ourselves

Read through Jordan's six principles and talk generally about what the consequences might be if you don't follow these. For example, if someone doesn't get enough sleep over a long period of time, how might that affect their mental health and physical wellbeing at home and school? What about their performance in exams and sports?

1. Sleep

It's tough but aim for a full night's sleep – around 7 or 8 hours is the goal. Our brains and bodies need that rest to function optimally.

2. Nutrition

Pay attention to what you're putting into your body. Your gut health influences your mental health and how your brain rationalises and processes the world around you.

3. Exercise

It's not just about aesthetics, it's about feeling good. Exercise releases endorphins, providing mental clarity, reducing the risk of 'threat responses' and improving your mood.

Radical self-acceptance

Lesson plan

4. Nature

Disconnect from your devices and reconnect with the natural world. There's a tranquility there that's hard to match.

5. Creativity

Use it as an outlet for self-expression even if you don't consider yourself a creative person. Doing something that allows you to express yourself in a way that suits you can provide you with clarity on your sense of self.

6. Balance solitude and community

Make time to engage with the important people around you, but also listen to yourself to find boundaries and respect your personal time, when your brain needs rest.

My six-point plan

- Following Jordan's six principles, invite students to individually write down how their own six-point plan might look. Start with small changes and challenge them to try and keep to the plan for a week
- After one week, talk together about whether this made a difference in their lives and how they might sustain this

Challenge questions could include:

- Can you go to bed half an hour earlier every night for a week?
- Can you make one food or drink swap for a healthier choice?
- What exercise do you enjoy? Whether it's a team sport, a certain number of steps each day or following an online exercise routine, can you move your body every day?
- How do you connect with nature? Combine with exercise to take a walk to a green space and as Jordan suggests, unplug from devices and just enjoy the sights, sounds and smells or being outside. Explore the outdoors by seeking out new green spaces! For safety, always tell someone where you're going and preferably go with a friend or family member
- How do you get creative? Do you sing, dance, act, write, paint, design? Some people think they're not creative, but it's in our nature. You don't have to be an expert, just enjoying something creative is the key. Can you match the creative outlet to a hobby? If you're into gaming, design your own game narrative. If you enjoy sport, sketch out a new team logo or kit. If you enjoy reading, write a new chapter for your favourite characters
- Some people prefer company, and some prefer solitude so aim for a balance in your life. If you're someone who likes to shut the door on the world, try and make time for friends this week. If you always seek out the company of others, try and make some alone time this week

Takeaways

Challenge the students to use their plan above and to follow their six principles for a week. Remind them that it's ok if it doesn't completely work out but invite them to make at least one or two changes to their usual routine and to consider if they make a difference. Over time, small changes become habits for life.

Signposting

After the session, remind students that they should seek professional help if they need it. Mental health professionals can provide immediate support to help them navigate their feelings and develop a stronger sense of self.

Amplifying your impact

Lesson plan

In this film Jordan talks about how helping others can contribute to positive wellbeing with a focus on:

- Recognising the importance of supporting others in their journey of self-discovery and identity development
- Building skills for active listening and empathy
- Learning to communicate and express support for others' identities and experiences.
- Exploring ways to advocate for and create safe spaces for diverse identities within our communities



Below are some questions to get a discussion started. This could be as a whole class or in small groups or pairs. It's important that every student can express themselves in a way that feels comfortable to them.

Discussion prompts

Jordan talks about finding purpose in life.

- What do you think he means by purpose? What purpose has Jordan found?

Jordan talks about the importance of disconnecting from social media.

- What are the pros and cons of social media and what are the warning signs you're too reliant on it?
- Talk about times when it might be beneficial to put your phone away. Have you ever watched a film and found you've missed chunks because you've been on your phone? Have you ever been interrupted playing sport or being with friends because of checking your phone? How could you be more present?

Let's talk!

- Jordan talks about having a 'stiff upper lip' which means we're often expected to hide our feelings and emotions away and pretend we're ok. In pairs or small groups, make a list of phrases we say and ways we act that may encourage others to hide their emotions. Think of phrases like 'stop making a fuss,' or 'calm down.' Talk about any gender or identity differences that may have come up in previous lessons and the expectations that accompany these identities.
- Encouraging a friend to talk about how they're feeling can feel scary but remember they often don't need you to find a solution, they just need someone to listen. Don't forget that everyone may need support at some point and asking for support is never a sign of weakness
- Make a list of things you can say and do that encourage others to share how they're feeling. You could include things like 'Do you want to talk about it?' or 'I'm here if you need to talk...' or even a simple 'What's up?'

If time allows, role play a situation and take turns to just listen and encourage rather than problem-solve. Common problems could include worrying about school work or falling out with a friend.

Amplifying your impact

Lesson plan

Takeaways

Read through Jordan's suggestions below and invite students to have a go at the changes at home and during the week.

Embrace vulnerability

Sharing your genuine experiences and emotions can be powerful. It not only validates you but can help other people around you feel seen and understood.

Practice digital detox

Regularly taking time off from social media can significantly reduce anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. Check that screen time – and put that time to better use.

Value reciprocal relationships

The strongest bonds are those that are shared. Aim to have relationships where both parties are heard and recognised.

Signposting

After the session, remind students that they should seek professional help if they need it. Mental health professionals can provide immediate support to help them navigate their feelings and develop a stronger sense of self.