



# MEETING ONE (RAINBOWS & BROWNIES)

## Top Tips

- you might like to send a letter to parents before this meeting so they are aware of the topic
- it is likely some girls will already have come into contact with cancer
- have an adult ready to support any girl who might get upset

## What You Will Need

- a circle of chairs for the girls to sit on
- copies of 'Have You Got the Facts About Cancer'
- felt pens, scissors, glue sticks
- A4 sheets of white paper
- one copy 'Ben's Diary'

## Before you Start

You might like to let parents know about our partnership with Macmillan and explain that as well as raising money we are aiming to increase the girls' awareness and understanding of the issues around cancer. There is a letter template you can use for this purpose.

Decide what ground rules you will have for your discussions – such as valuing what everyone says, letting the Leader know if they feel sad, respecting each other's privacy, etc

## Getting Started

Find out what the girls already know – ask them what they know, or think they know, about cancer and any questions they have. You might like to have a few key questions or phrases ready in case they don't get going straight away. It's a good thing to include any misconceptions at this stage. If possible write their comments up on a large sheet of paper. Then read 'What is Cancer?'

### What is Cancer?

Cancer is a disease that's been around for millions of years and continues to affect a lot of people. Our bodies are made up of millions of building blocks called cells. You cannot see them except with a microscope. Cancer is an illness that affects these cells and stops our bodies working properly. Cells affected by cancer are called cancer cells. Sometimes these cancer cells form a lump which is often called a tumour. In the past, people have often been scared to talk about cancer. But not talking about something often makes it seem scarier and more confusing.

## Did You Know?

Ask the girls to run around the circle and back to their seat if they think the following statements are true:

- you cannot catch cancer from someone else
- lots of people get better from cancer and live a normal life
- it is very rare for children to get cancer
- cancer is not a punishment for doing something wrong. No one knows exactly why some people get cancer and other people don't
- sometimes the treatments cannot make the cancer go away and sadly some people die from the illness

Point out that all the statements are true.

## Meet Mr Davies

Read 'Meet Mr Davies'

Mr Davies is a school caretaker. He has worked at the same school for over 10 years and is very popular. Recently, Mr Davies hasn't been able to come into school because he is being treated for cancer. His cancer cannot spread to the people around him (people can't catch cancer from someone else), but it could spread to another part of his body and stop that part working properly. To stop the cancer spreading, Mr Davies needs to go to hospital for treatment.

Ask the girls to find a partner and give each pair a copy of 'Have You Got the Facts About Cancer' and a blank sheet of A4 paper (or for Rainbows you might like to have them working in small groups each with a Young Leader or Leader to explain the speech bubbles and facts). Ask them to colour in the people then to cut out all the people, speech bubbles, and cancer facts. Get them to stick the people onto the paper, leaving a bit of space around each one. Ask them to match the speech bubble to the people they think are saying the words, then to stick the speech bubbles onto the sheet. Finally ask them to stick next to each person a fact about cancer that they think would help that person to feel less worried.

**The correct combinations are:**

- Mr Davies - Why me? What have I done wrong? - cancer fact D
- Rachel - I'm scared Dad's going to die - cancer fact C
- Mike - People with cancer always lose their hair - cancer fact B
- Ben - Can I catch Grandad's cancer? - cancer fact A

## How is Cancer Treated?

Read the passage below:

The doctors could treat Mr Davies' cancer in three main ways:

- **Surgery** – The cancer cells may have formed a lump called a tumour. This is cut out during an operation
- **Radiotherapy** – The cancer cells are destroyed by high energy rays. This doesn't hurt and is like having an X-ray taken
- **Chemotherapy** – Very strong drugs are used to kill the cancer cells

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy have some side effects. People who have these treatments can feel sick and tired, and their hair can fall out. These side effects will not last long – and hair nearly always grows back. The earlier someone gets treatment for their cancer, the better.

## Showing Feelings

Ask all the girls to act as though they are feeling excited about something. Explain that how we feel affects how we act. Ask two girls to leave the room, then task the rest of the girls to act as if they are feeling a certain way (eg to be grumpy, scared, bored, angry, etc). Bring the two girls back into the room and see if they can guess the way the group is feeling. Play several times using a different emotion each time.

Point out that you can often see when someone is feeling sick or tired but other feelings may not be so obvious. Read the following:

When someone has a serious illness like cancer it not only has an effect on their life but also their family and friends. It's important to remember that often these people need help and support too.

## Ben's Diary

Ask one girl (or a Young Leader for Rainbows) to read out 'Ben's Diary.' In pairs ask the girls to think about Ben's behaviour that day and how he might have been feeling. Can they explain why he might have been angry with his friend Ryan? In pairs ask them to role play a conversation between Ben and Ryan the next day, thinking what Ryan could do or say to help Ben and how Ben might react. For Rainbows do this activity as one group – have two Rainbows to be Ben and Ryan, each with a Young Leader/Leader to help them with the conversation - then discuss as one group what was said.

## Closing Activity

Ask the girls to stand in a circle. Read the following:

We can all help our friends in tough times. For example by letting them know you are there, being a good listener, and being kind and helpful. These can seem quite small things – but they can make a big difference.

Ask each girl in turn to say something kind about the girl standing to her right. You might need to give some examples for Rainbows if they get stuck. Comment on how good it makes you feel when someone says something nice about you.

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