



Collage by Caroline Leetch

Review of Mental Health Week by Ondine Flynn.

On Monday the 19th there was an air of excitement in St Louis as students and staff alike wore green ribbons as a symbol of mental health awareness.

It was Mental Health week in St Louis and we were going to be introduced to new experiences, such as Reflexology, Yoga and meditation.

Guest speakers would be visiting the school and mental health would be taught in an array of classes throughout the week.

As a Leaving Cert Student, I know all too well about the causes and symptoms of stress. How to work through them and how to alleviate these stresses is what we don't know all that much about and I was looking forward to learning !

The first activity I had signed up for was Reflexology. We were greeted by the reflexologist Judy Buckley, who immediately put us at ease. We discussed stressors, and stress management. To relax completely we were introduced to reflexology and in a short time we worked on each others feet. After a

slight hesitation we all thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We completely relaxed and switched off from the busy world we had left behind only an hour ago.

This was such a beneficial workshop, as we had the opportunity to speak about common stressors and ways to manage them. The Reflexology itself was a wonderful experience as it taught us how to truly relax, something we all need to do at some point!

Next up was the Yoga, this workshop was a favourite of mine as It was not only beneficial to the mind and body, but also fun! We did a yoga session which was great because it helped us to focus on ourselves whilst also getting great exercise which we all need to factor in on a daily basis. I feel, as school work piles up little time is given to switching off, but with yoga you're killing two birds with one stone as it is relaxing and clears your mind, but it is also good exercise.

Niall Dunne, Mental Health Officer for Mayo spoke with Junior students and Niall mc Namee, a mental health ambassador for the GPA spoke to Seniors. Their presentation and personal stories were inspiring and I think all students agreed their visits were beneficial.

Meditation classes were also made available and Ms Rose took small groups each day to practice the art of mindfulness. To be aware of my breath and the ticking of the clock on the classroom wall were some things that many of us had never did before. To slow down and just to be.

WE all need to appreciate our minds.

Mental Health week gave us tools in how to do this while spreading the motto "it is okay not to be okay and absolutely okay to ask for help".

Mental Health awareness is very much promoted in our school and I think that to actively get involved in workshops that helped us with taking care of our Mental Health was so great and rewarding because we were taught how to take care of our Mental Health first hand, instead of reading it from a book!



A thoroughly enjoyable and educational week was had by all.