

MENTAL



TEACHERS GUIDE & CLASS ACTIVITIES

MENTAL HEALTH
CURRICULUM
GUIDE

LEARN
MENTAL HEALTH
IN THE
CLASSROOM

VERSION 1

MENTAL



Mental Health Learning Curriculum

OVERVIEW

Introducing the Lesson:

The following lesson plan guides students in understanding mental health. The lesson is designed to educate students on mental health and the stigma around it. Additionally, the lesson explores healthy coping mechanisms.

Warm-up:

This includes a Pre/Post Quiz to see what you already know about mental health. Answers will be provided to the teacher.

Discussion Questions:

A group discussion to explore the stigma on mental health. This includes a handout.

Understanding Mental Health:

This fact sheet is to provide a deeper understanding of mental health.

Learning Coping Strategies:

This includes healthy strategies and resources to help you cope.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section: _____

Score: _____

Pre/Post Quiz

TRUE/FALSE Directions: Read each statement below carefully. Circle True or False. The pre-lesson quiz is used to test what you already know and will not be graded.

1. People who claim to be depressed are weak and just need to pull themselves together. No one can do anything to help them.

A.True B. False

2. Only a professional can diagnose someone with depression.

A.True B. False

3. People with social connections have lower levels of anxiety and depression.

A.True B. False

4. A sign of depression is loss of appetite or overeating.

A.True B. False

5. People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

A.True B. False



PRE/POST QUIZ- ANSWER KEY

The pre-lesson quiz is used to test what students already know and will not be graded. The teacher will go over the questions and answers. The teacher will also decide whether or not to grade the post-lesson quiz at the end of the lesson.

1. **False** - Depression isn't a weakness. Depression is a mental health disorder. Therapy and/or medication by a physician can be provided to help someone with depression.
2. **True** - Only a professional can diagnose someone with depression.
3. **True** - People with social connections have lower levels of anxiety and depression. Joining clubs or volunteering in your community may help you be around more people.
4. **True** - One of the many signs of depression is loss of appetite or overeating.
5. **False** - Don't ignore warnings, clues, or suicide threats. Someone who dies by suicide has always given some warning.

Create a class discussion based on their answers and any common myths they assume.

Optional: Have the students bring the handout home and quiz their friends or family. Write a one-page paper on their take-away from this activity.



GUIDED DISCUSSION

These questions will be used to guide a discussion in your classroom. It will explore the meaning of stigma and mental health as a whole.

Get started:

1. Ask the class define the word stigma
2. Provide the class a worksheet and lead a class discussion on discriminatory attitudes, thoughts, and words

Questions for dicussion:

- Why do you think people with a mental illness are stigmatized?
 - possible answers: they don't know anything about mental illnesses
- Can you name a few other things (health issues, social issues) in the world that may have been stigmatized throughout the years?
 - possible answers: homosexuality, divorce, unwed motherhood
- How can people change the public's attitude toward these conditions or social issues?
 - possible answers: education, changing social norms, open dialogue
- What are some things that may influence the perception of mental illness?
 - possible answers: media, films, news
- How do you think people with a mental illness are affected by the stigma?
 - possible answers: ashamed, unwilling to seek help



Name: _____

Section: _____

Date: _____

Discussing the Stigma Exercise

Feel free to discuss with your peers about what you already know or have learned. Write down everything you know about the stigma on mental health.



UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health includes:

- Emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- It affects how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices

Factors that contribute to mental health problems:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Early warning signs:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school



UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Recovery:

- a process of change
- improve their health and wellness
- successful management of stressful events



Healthy Coping Strategies & Resources

This is a guide to provide students with healthy coping strategies when dealing with depression or anxiety. Check out the resources below if you wish to seek help.



Healthy Coping Strategies:

- Practice yoga
- Meditate
- Healthy eating
- Staying hydrated
- Exercise daily
- Breathing exercises
- Journaling
- Volunteer
- Pick up a hobby
- Talk to someone



Resources:

If it is an emergency, dial **9-1-1**

24/7 Crisis Hotline: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

1-800-273-TALK (8255)



Text TALK to 741-741 to text with a trained crisis counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, **24/7**

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474

You can also visit your primary care provider, local emergency hospital, local walk-in clinic, local urgent care center.

Additional resources can be found on www.afsp.org/find-support/resources/

