

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

BE THE CHANGE

MENTAL HEALTH LESSONS

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MENTAL HEALTH LESSONS

DEAR EDUCATOR,

The **Safer, Smarter Teens** curriculum empowers teens to protect themselves and others by building self-esteem, promoting development of personal boundaries, helping identify “red flags” of unsafe situations, and ensuring teens know where they can go to access help in any situation that feels scary or uncomfortable. The curriculum scaffolds knowledge and builds awareness of safety principles to provide teens with age-appropriate tools to avoid victimization and harm.

Developing an understanding of mental health is critical to students’ social-emotional development and overall wellness – which is why the *Safer, Smarter Teens* curriculum now includes a series of six **Mental Health** lessons to address this essential information with students, as aligned to Florida education rules and standards.

The lessons that follow will help high school students build background knowledge about mental health and provide them with strategies to gain and maintain mental wellbeing. Through these lessons, students will gain an understanding of physical health, mental health, and wellbeing, including:

- Attitudes and beliefs surrounding mental health, and how stigma can result in a reluctance to talk about and seek help for mental health issues
- A general understanding of mental illness with emphasis on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that signal a cause for concern
- Where and how to seek help for yourself or others when there are mental health concerns
- Sensitive and developmentally appropriate information about the risk factors and warning signs of suicide
- Understanding stress; how to manage stress, and when to seek help
- The stages of addiction and how to make healthy lifestyle choices

I know from my time in the classroom that it is challenging to fit additional curricula into your already demanding schedule. However, the activities that make up the *Safer, Smarter Teens Be the Change* curriculum provide instruction designed to help you meet many existing educational benchmarks in various academic areas, while imparting critical personal safety information and fulfilling Department of Education rules on mental health instruction.

One in six children has a diagnosed mental health disorder – and many more children are living with undiagnosed mental health challenges. This curriculum has the power to help your students cultivate good mental health, seek help for themselves and others when it is needed, and fight dangerous stigma and misinformation surrounding mental health.

Thank you for being a mental health hero, and for teaching a new generation how to take care of their mental health and wellbeing. Please visit LaurensKids.org and SaferSmarterSchools.org for additional support as you teach this curriculum.

Sincerely,



Lauren Book, M.S.Ed.
Founder/CEO, Lauren’s Kids

WELCOME

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS BE THE CHANGE: MENTAL HEALTH CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Safer, Smarter Teens was created by Lauren Book, M.S., Ed., Founder and CEO of the Lauren's Kids foundation and former classroom educator, alongside a team of developmental psychologists and career educators. The curriculum has been implemented across the State of Florida at the direction of the Florida Legislature, with grant funding from the Bureau of Exceptional Education, Florida Department of Education.

While the following Mental Health lessons can be taught alone, they are designed to be introduced after students have completed the initial lessons of the *Safer, Smarter Teens Be the Change* curriculum to enhance the development of personal protection skills and personal wellbeing. Each of the six Mental Health lessons are designed to take 45 minutes of class instructional time, though educators can easily abbreviate or extend lessons and included activities based on your classroom needs.

All lessons should be covered in the order they are presented, with flexibility in scheduling and pacing of lessons. Each grade specific lesson is composed of the following components:

- Objectives that are aligned with the Florida educational rules and standards
- Overview of the topics covered in the lesson
- Key Vocabulary includes the terms students need to learn in the lesson
- Activities include presentation, class discussion, and group and individual activities to present the content of the lesson and apply the knowledge gained
- Grade-level extension presentation and activities follow the main lesson materials

- Written Reflection allows students to reflect on lesson content

Before beginning these lessons, please send the Parent Introduction letter home with each student or make it available on your class website.

Teachers may wish to use a file folder for each student to house their work as they are participating in the *Safer, Smarter Teens* program. Due to the sensitive nature of this curriculum, it is important for these folders to be kept in a secure location to ensure students' privacy is protected. Teachers should review all student work as there may be an opportunity for a student to disclose their own unsafe situation or raise concerns about a friend's safety. As all adults are Mandatory Reporters, teachers are required to follow up with authorities with suspicions of abuse.

Teacher Tip:

The foundational principles from the **Safer, Smarter Teens Be the Change** curriculum will help empower students to deal with the topics presented in the additional mental health lessons – including peer pressure, balance of power, and lifestyle choices. However, if you choose to teach the following Mental Health lessons on their own without first completing the **Safer, Smarter Teens Be the Change** curriculum, it may be helpful to review the foundational curriculum to ensure an understanding of protective principals and how they are intended to be presented to students. Within the following lessons, you will find notes indicating where this background knowledge is helpful, and where to find the information in the foundational curriculum.

LESSONS

1. Mental Health & Wellbeing
2. Understanding the Stigma
Associated with Mental Health
3. State of Mind
4. Seeking Help
5. Addiction
6. Wellbeing

ICON KEY



Teacher-Led Discussion



Small Groups



Individual Assignments



Classroom Discussion



Written Reflection



Project Activity

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 1

MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain awareness of physical and mental health
- Students will gain awareness of physical and mental wellbeing
- Students will understand different mental states, including mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental health problems, and mental illness
- Students will gain a general understanding of mental illnesses common for teenagers

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will learn that health includes both physical and mental health. They will gain an understanding of physical and mental wellbeing. They will learn the difference between mental distress, mental health problems, and mental illness. Students will learn about mental illnesses that are common for teenagers.

MATERIALS:

- Mental States Chart – to be projected
- What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns? worksheet
- Mental Health Concerns and Mental Illness Definitions – to be projected
- I Don't Want Anyone to Know – 10th grade
- I'll Never Tell – 11th grade
- Time for Help – 12th grade

KEY VOCABULARY:

- **Health:** A person's mental and physical condition; measure of wellbeing
- **Mental Distress:** The emotional response to daily challenges that results in thoughts, feelings, and actions; mental distress can signal a person to develop or use strategies to face challenges
- **Mental Health:** A person's emotional wellbeing that affects thoughts, feelings, and actions
- **Mental Health Problems:** The stronger or more intense emotional response to greater life challenges; help and support may be needed from a trusted adult

- **Mental Illness:** Extreme difficulty or changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions that lasts over time and interferes with daily activities; a medical condition that requires diagnosis and help from a qualified helping professional
- **Mental Wellbeing:** Being able to handle the stressful and unexpected things that happen in daily life; managing thoughts, feelings, and actions positively
- **Physical Health:** The health or condition of your body
- **Physical Wellbeing:** Physical wellbeing is more than just the health of your body; physical wellbeing includes the lifestyle choices that promote and enhance physical wellness
- **Stress:** Feeling worried or uneasy about something
- **Stressor:** The event or circumstance that makes you feel stressed

LESSON 1 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson's message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“Today we will begin talking about health. A person's health goes beyond their physical health and includes their mental and emotional health, too. As we work through this material, I want you to be aware of your own health and wellbeing. I also want you to be thinking about your friends, family, and other people you know. As members of our community, it is important that we all understand and have compassion when someone is struggling with physical or mental health – and that we know how and when to get help for ourselves and others.”

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring from each lesson in *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce the important safety concepts they've learned. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many classroom activities within this curriculum can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.



A. Understanding Health

1. Ask each question and project or write each word or phrase on the board. Have students share ideas and elaborate on their ideas through class discussion. Generate a definition for each term. Definitions should include the general information below. Write the definitions on the board.

How would you define health?

A person's mental and physical condition; measure of wellbeing

What is physical health?

The health or condition of your body

What is physical wellbeing?

Physical wellbeing is more than just the health of your body; physical wellbeing includes the lifestyle choices that promote and enhance physical wellness

What is mental health?

A person's emotional wellbeing that affects thoughts, feelings, and actions

What is mental wellbeing?

Being able to handle the stressful and unexpected things that happen in daily life; managing thoughts, feelings, and actions positively

Teacher Tip:

Help students understand that there are multiple factors involved in maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. As part of overall health and wellness, good mental health includes:

- A sense of self-esteem and self-confidence
- The ability to identify, express and regulate emotions
- The ability to set and achieve goals
- Recognition of one's creative skills
- The ability to expand knowledge and skills
- The ability to feel and show empathy for others
- The ability to create and maintain satisfying relationships

Adapted from the World Health Organization

Teacher Tip:

Help students understand that a person can have good physical health and also be experiencing a physical illness. Likewise, a person can have overall good mental health at the same time as they have a mental illness.



B. Understanding Health



“Everyone goes through a range of emotions during any given day and week. Events and situations generate emotional reactions that affect our thoughts, mood, and behavior. There is a difference between an emotional reaction and a mental illness. To help understand this, we are going to talk about different mental states and how your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors may look while you are in each state.”

“First, we will talk about Mental Distress:

We face situations or challenges that trigger different thoughts, feelings and emotions. Maybe you have a big project due soon and this causes you to have distressing or negative thoughts like, 'I will never be able to do this,' or 'I can't handle this.' You may feel upset or anxious. There may be a physical reaction like butterflies in your stomach, sweating, tense muscles, or shedding a few tears. These reactions may result in your avoiding the situation – not starting to work on your project and ignoring the issues as best you can – or they may help you to get busy – getting started on the project so you are able to finish in time. Mental distress is uncomfortable but not debilitating – it includes the daily experiences everyone has to deal with, and is a signal to use or develop strategies to face or solve the challenge. Successfully dealing with stressors helps to develop good mental health.”

“Next, we will talk about Mental Health Problems:

Sometimes there is a situation or a stressor that is bigger or more intense than what we face in our daily lives. The stressor may be a death in the family or a serious illness. This may result in a more severe reaction and cause mental health problems. Stronger emotions such as sadness, anger, grief, or anxiety may generate negative thoughts, such as 'I can't handle this,' 'Why did this have to happen to me,' or 'I just want things to be the way they were.' There may be a variety of physical reactions such as not being able to eat or sleep, or eating and sleeping too much. Daily activities may be affected, you may have trouble in school or begin fighting with people you care about. When dealing with potential mental health problems you may need to seek help from school counselors, medical professionals, and other trusted adults.”

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that teenagers are often more likely to share their concerns with a peer – but while friends can provide support, seeking help from a trusted adult or helping professional may be needed to deal with mental health problems.

“The last mental state we will discuss is Mental Illness:

Mental illness is a more serious medical condition. It is more complex and involved than mental distress or mental health problems. Mental illness should not be taken lightly or ignored. Just as a serious physical health condition requires a medical professional to diagnose, mental illness must be diagnosed by a qualified professional (doctor, psychiatrist, or mental health clinician). When someone is dealing with mental illness, their disordered thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions are far more extreme and last for a much longer time. Someone may experience panic attacks, depression, generalized anxiety, or illnesses including schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. It can be difficult to think clearly. This might make someone feel completely hopeless or helpless. They may have thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Friends and family may notice big changes in emotions and behaviors. It is important to seek help if you suspect that you or someone else has a mental illness so a trained mental health professional can provide needed care.”

- Project and review **Mental State Chart**.
- Ask students to brainstorm things in their lives or the lives of others that could cause stress. Write the list on the board. Examples:
 - An important test is coming up
 - Receiving a low grade on a school project
 - A breakup with your girlfriend or boyfriend
 - The death of a family member
 - A move across the country
 - The incarceration of a parent
- Explain that students may experience a range of reactions to stressful events like the ones they just brainstormed. Consider how different reactions may indicate a person’s mental state, as described in the Mental State Chart.



“Suppose an important test is coming up, what does this look like if you have...”

• **Mental Wellbeing**

“You study your notes and review the textbook. You feel confident and comfortable that you know the information pretty well. You’re a little nervous, but you’re just going to try your best.”

• **Mental Distress**

“When you think about the important test, you feel anxious or nervous. When you begin to study, you may feel overwhelmed and more nervous – so you may procrastinate or obsess and overprepare. As you continue to study, you gain more confidence that you understand the material. Most negative feelings subside when the test is over.”

• **Mental Health Problem**

“The thought of the upcoming test is very overwhelming. You feel like you do not know how to handle the situation. Your friend offers to study with you, but even thinking about the test makes you feel anxious and makes your stomach hurt. You go to talk to the school counselor about your concerns. With the school counselor, you work on breathing techniques that help you relax. You use these techniques to help you when studying and before taking the test. This helps the negative feelings subside.”

• **Mental Illness**

“When you think about the test, you feel like you cannot breathe and your heart is beating quickly. You feel restless, your thoughts are racing, and you have difficulty concentrating. Your head begins to pound. Your arms and fingers feel numb. Your doctor diagnoses that you have panic attacks and works with you on a treatment plan.”



C. Identifying Mental Health Concerns and Mental Illness



“There are many different types of mental illnesses, just like there are many kinds of physical illnesses. Some mental health concerns and mental illnesses are more common in people your age; we are going to discuss a few of these illnesses and some of the signs and symptoms someone struggling with them may display. It is important to know general information about different mental health conditions, but remember that you cannot and must not assume that everyone who displays a symptom of a mental health concern has a mental illness. A qualified professional must make the diagnosis of a mental illness.”

Teacher Tip:

Reinforce to students that for this activity they will learn about several mental health concerns and mental illnesses. This is not a comprehensive list, but it includes mental health concerns that are common with students their age. This information is to be used to provide background information, not to determine a diagnosis of mental illness.



Activity: What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns?

- Distribute the **What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns?** worksheet.
- Have students work with a partner or in small groups to complete the activity.
- Explain to students that this will help them determine what they know about different mental health concerns and mental illnesses right now – and that you will then provide additional information about mental health concerns and mental illness so students can compare what they learned.
- After 10 minutes, project the **Mental Health Concerns and Mental Illness Definitions** and have students check their work.
- Ask students if they would they have made the right choice in getting a friend help when filling out their activity sheets. Give the students time to revise their answers, and discuss as a class.
- Reinforce to students that a mental health concern or mental illness must be diagnosed by a professional. Everyone may experience some of the symptoms or characteristics of mental health concerns or mental illnesses under certain circumstances or when dealing with a major life event. For most people, these symptoms subside and control over emotions, thoughts, and behaviors is regained. There is a cause for concern based on the intensity and duration of the symptoms.

What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns? Answer Key:

1. *No; he just moved and is distracted or anxious - which seems like a normal reaction to a life stressor*
2. *Yes; he may be depressed – sadness, sleeplessness, loss of appetite has been going on for weeks ... talk to trusted adult*
3. *Yes; the anxiety she is feeling has been going on for weeks ... talk to trusted adult*
4. *Yes; his behavior is consistently disruptive and he is putting others' safety at risk ... talk to trusted adult*
5. *Get help immediately – indicators of suicidal thoughts*
6. *Yes; seems up and down, possibly suicidal ... talk to trusted adult*
7. *Yes; Possible eating disorder ... help needed from trusted adult*
8. *Yes; help needed immediately from trusted adult, seems like friend could have serious mental illness*

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that while it is important to recognize mental health concerns, they are NOT qualified to diagnose a mental illness. If they are concerned about themselves or others, they should seek help from a mental health professional or trusted adult. If they or someone they know is in immediate danger, they should call 911 right away.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

9

9th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

Students in 9th grade are exploring their independence. They are seeking greater control of their lives and striving to create their personal identity.



“Part of growing up is developing a personal sense of identity. Our identity is not set in stone, it is consistently evolving. Sometimes people think their identity is based on only one part of their life or on one thing that they do.

‘I am a soccer player’

‘I am a student’

‘I am a little sister’

However, our identity is based on many different things.”



Class Discussion:

Write the following identities on the board:

- Soccer player
- Student
- Little sister

Using only on these identities, have the class describe this person. The description can only include things that go with these very specific identities. For example, **Soccer player – Plays a game with a ball.** That would be a description. **Soccer player – Good at sports.** We cannot make that generalization. There are a lot of people that play soccer, however, they may or may not be good at sports.

Review the list of descriptors.

- Discuss if the list provides a full picture of who this person is.
- What are some of the problems of describing someone using only labels, or one or two things we may know about them?
- What are some of the problems of defining someone based on a mental health condition or mental illness?
- How do you avoid making judgments or assumptions about who someone is based only on their mental health condition?

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that we often jump to conclusions or make assumptions about someone based on what we think we know about their lives.

**Written Reflection:**

Someone's identity is composed of many different aspects of their life, including their belief system and values, likes and dislikes, personality, and more. Knowing only one thing about someone does not allow for a full understanding of who that person is. What are the problems with defining someone's identity based only on a mental health concern or mental illness?

**10th Grade Extension Activity****Teacher Tip:**

Peer acceptance and fitting in are very important at this age. There is also an increased desire for privacy and greater independence. There may be a reluctance to go to a parent or adult for help.



“At your age, friends, fitting in, and being accepted can be extremely important. Sometimes, you might not know how to fit in or may worry about losing friends. If someone is dealing with a mental health concern, they might be reluctant to let people know because they are concerned about how people will react and wonder if they will be accepted or judged.”

Activity: I Don't Want Anyone to Know

- Distribute the **I Don't Want Anyone to Know** worksheet.
- Explain that students will work with a partner or small group to read each scenario, identify what the student is worried about, and discuss what incorrect assumptions are being made about mental health conditions.
- Have groups share their answers.
- Review the incorrect assumptions and discuss what you can say and do to let others know that you are accepting of people who may be struggling with mental health challenges. For example:
 - Avoid using phrases that may be offensive or send the wrong message – “She's crazy.” “What a mental case.”
 - Show empathy.
 - Consider activities that are comfortable for someone dealing with a mental health concern – if someone gets anxious going out to eat, don't plan a trip to a restaurant, plan a movie night instead.

**Written Reflection:**

Acceptance and fitting in can be very important. Sometimes we hide things or pretend to be someone we are not. How can you be more understanding and accepting of others? How can you make sure your words or actions send a message that you are accepting of people who are struggling with a mental health concern?

11

11th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

Thoughts, feelings, and emotions can be intensified at this age. While students believe they have the skills needed to successfully manage all aspects of their lives, in reality, they are still learning. They may not be willing to admit that they are not in control which can result in a reluctance to seek help for a mental health concern.



“We’ve explored information about different mental health concerns and mental illnesses. Now, let’s discuss mental health and why it can be difficult to talk about.”

Ask: “Why do you think mental health can be a difficult or uncomfortable thing to talk about?”

Teacher Tip:

Help students to realize that we are often concerned about what others think about us. We may hide things or keep things to ourselves out of fear of how others will react.



Activity: I’ll Never Tell

- Have students work in small groups to discuss the questions on the **I’ll Never Tell** worksheet. Have students share their answers.



Written Reflection:

When you are learning something new, you often need to work it out by yourself. For example, if you want to learn to play a new song on the piano, you need to practice until your fingers know which keys to play. If you are trying to learn how to juggle, you need to practice until you can keep all three beanbags in the air at once. However, there are some things that you can't do on your own. Dealing with a mental health concern can be one of those things. If you or someone you know is dealing with a mental health concern, how can you let go of the idea that “I can do this by myself” and get help from a trusted adult?

12

12th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

Senior year is filled with excitement and anxiety about the future. There is often sadness and remorse about high school coming to an end. The rollercoaster of emotions can be overwhelming. It is important to have an awareness of physical and mental health needs at this time of life.



“We have discussed physical and mental health. While we are not medical doctors or mental health professionals, we are experts on ourselves. No one knows us better than we know ourselves. We are usually pretty good at identifying (not diagnosing) our physical needs. For example, we can tell when we have a headache, when we cut ourselves, or when we have a sore throat. We may not know what caused the headache...we may not know what sharp object cut our skin... and we may not know what is making our throat hurt – but we can identify the physical symptoms.”



Class discussion:

Lead a class discussion about physical health using the following questions:

- If you had a mild headache, what would you do about it? Who could help you?
- If you had a severe headache, what would you do about it? Who could help you?
- If you had a small cut, what would you do about it? Who could help you?
- If you had a large, deep cut, what would you do about it? Who could help you?
- If you had a mild sore throat, what would you do about it? Who could help you?
- If you had a sore throat with a very high fever, what would you do about it? Who could help you?

Explain that the need to seek help is often associated with the severity and duration of the injury or illness.



Activity: Time for Help

- Ask students to consider their mental health. When can they handle things on their own and when do they need to get help? Remind students that everyone will have their own ability to deal with different mental health concerns. How one person handles something may be totally different from how someone else handles it. For this activity, think about the severity and the duration of the concern to decide if it is time to get help from a trusted adult. Just like a small cut can be treated at home with soap, water, and a Band-Aid, and a large, deep cut may require stitches from a doctor. Mild sadness over a distressing life event can be self-managed and passes with time – but feeling down in the dumps for several weeks, having trouble sleeping, and losing interest in things you once enjoyed requires help from a trusted adult or helping professional.
- Distribute the **Time for Help** worksheet.
- Have students work with a partner or in a small group.
- Explain that students should read each statement, then consider the severity, intensity, and duration of the description to determine if help is needed.

- Have students list the indicators that signal when help is needed, then determine and list all options of people who could help.
- Upon completion, have students share their answers.



Written Reflection:

Next year, your life may be very different than it is right now. You may be living in a new town, starting a new job, starting college, or trying to decide what you want to do. Imagine yourself one year from now. What can you do to stay both physically and mentally healthy? How would you get help if you have a concern for your physical health or wellbeing? How would you get help if you have a concern for your mental health or wellbeing?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 1-MH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

MATERIALS

- **Mental States Chart – to be projected**
- **What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns?**
- **Mental Health Concerns and Mental Illness Definitions**
- **I Don't Want Anyone to Know – 10th grade**
- **I'll Never Tell – 11th grade**
- **Time for Help – 12th grade**

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org
or LaurenKids.org.

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental State Chart

Mental State	Possible Reaction	Intervention Needed
Mental Wellbeing	Content and comfortable with the current situation	No intervention is needed
Mental Distress	Emotional reaction: upset, sad, angry, frustrated, disappointed, worried	The emotional reaction may subside in a short time, talking to friends or family may help
Mental Health Problem	Very strong emotional and physical reaction: Grieving, despair, anxious, hopelessness, anguish	Help can be obtained by talking to a close family member, trusted adult, or school counselor
Mental Illness	Depression, anxiety, social phobia, delusions, suicidal ideation	Requires therapeutic intervention from a professional

Adapted from The Inter-Relationship of Mental Health States, as presented by Dr. Kutcher

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

What Do You Know About Mental Health Concerns?

Directions: Working in small groups or with a partner, read each observation. Then determine if a mental health concern or mental illness may be suggested; decide whether help from a trusted adult may be needed and why.

Observation	Possible Indicator of Mental Illness? Help Needed? Why or why not?
<p>1. You meet a new student. During English class, you notice that he seems restless. He frequently moves around in his chair, he looks around the room, opens his backpack, then he stares out the window. When he is asked a question, he doesn't seem to know what has been going on in class.</p>	
<p>2. You notice your friend has seemed unusually sad for the past few weeks and he has stopped hanging out on the weekends. When you tell him you are concerned, he tells you that he hasn't been sleeping well and doesn't have an appetite. He tells you he doesn't know why.</p>	
<p>3. During summer vacation, your sister shares that she is really worried about going back to school. When she thinks about going to school, she feels afraid and nervous. This has been going on for a few weeks.</p>	

REMEMBER: If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, you must seek help from a trusted adult or mental health professional. If you think someone is in immediate danger, call 911. Don't know how to talk about what's going on? Check the Resource Guide for texting options.

<p>4. A student in your class is very defiant. He often argues with teachers and other adults. He skips class a lot and frequently tries to start fights.</p>	
<p>5. Your friend often writes in her journal. When she is spending the night at your house, she leaves the journal open on the bed. You see the words, "I want to die." Out of concern, you read what she wrote. She discloses that she feels helpless and hopeless and is considering ending her life.</p>	
<p>6. Your neighbor is a few years older than you. You see each other occasionally when you get the mail. One day, she is very excited and happy. She tells you all about her plans to earn a bunch of money to go on an awesome trip. A few days later you see her again. She is walking slowing, looking down at the ground. When you ask how her travel plans are coming along, she quietly tells you that it doesn't matter. She will never go anywhere. It's all useless, there is no point in planning for a trip she will never go on.</p>	
<p>7. One of your teammates has started losing weight. When the coach gives out the new uniforms, she makes comments about looking overweight. She often makes negative comments about her appearance. She never eats anything during the pre-game meals.</p>	
<p>8. Your friend confides that he feels like his life is out of control and that there are times he doesn't know what is real and what is in his head. He starts telling you about people and things that don't make sense. He tells you about voices he often hears.</p>	

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health Concerns and Mental Illness Definitions

Anxiety Disorder: Feeling extremely afraid, worried, or uneasy about a situation or thing. The feelings are so intense that it interferes with daily activities.

Bipolar Disorder: A mood or emotional disorder that causes extreme mood swings from an extremely happy or good mood (mania) to extremely sad, overwhelmed, or low mood (depression). This is far more extreme than the usual ups and downs of teenage life.

Conduct Disorder: Behaviors that are extremely destructive toward other people, animals, and property. Including failure to follow basic rules and comply with requests of others. Running away or skipping school may be the result of a conduct disorder.

Depression: Overwhelming feelings and emotions that include sadness and irritability for an extended period (usually two weeks or longer). Daily activities such as eating, sleeping, and going to school can be impacted by depression.

Eating Disorder: Distorted body image that results in dangerous, abnormal or extreme eating behaviors, including insufficient intake of food (anorexia nervosa), excessive eating (binge eating disorder), or purging after eating (bulimia) that results in improper nutrition. Someone does not need to be extremely thin to suffer from an eating disorder.

Schizophrenia: A serious mental illness resulting from a disconnection between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that causes withdrawal from reality and relationships. Losing touch with reality results in delusions and living in a fantasy world, making it difficult to think, speak or interact with others in an organized way.

Suicide: Suicide is not a mental illness, however, it may result from mental illness. Suicide is defined as self-inflicted behavior with the intent to die. Suicidal ideation or ideology is thinking about, planning for, or considering suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth age 10 – 24.

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

I Don't Want Anyone to Know

Directions: Read each scenario. Identify what the students are worried about. Then, discuss what incorrect assumptions are being made about mental health conditions.

Terrence: I just moved and had to go to a new school. I really want to make new friends. I don't think they know what it means to have bipolar disorder. If I tell them they will probably overreact every time I show any kind of emotion. I just want to have some new friends to hang out with, I don't want them to look at me like something is wrong with me.

Jayla: I know my friends say they want to help. But if they know what's going on, they are going to make excuses not to hang out with me. We usually go get pizza after practice. I know they will stop including me. I don't think they get it, this about a lot more than me not wanting to eat. They also don't get that I really need my friends right now.

Alex: Sometimes my heart is racing, my hands are sweating, and I have trouble breathing. I don't think I can leave my house. I have a great therapist and I feel like I am making a lot of progress. I heard my friends talking about how you have to be messed up to need a therapist. I know it's just that they don't understand, but I'm not going to tell them about what is going on with my mental health. I don't want them to judge me.

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

I'll Never Tell

Directions: Read each question and consider how someone your age might be feeling and thinking. Generate a list of answers to each question.

When it comes to mental health concerns, why might someone be reluctant to tell their parents what they are experiencing?

When it comes to mental health concerns, why might someone be reluctant to tell their friends what they are experiencing?

What if you are worried about a friend or someone you know? Why might you be reluctant to tell them you are concerned?

LESSON 1 - MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Time for Help

Directions: Read each statement. Consider the severity, intensity, and duration of the situation to decide if this is something that can be handled alone or if it is something that requires help. Identify the indicators that signal when help is needed. List options of who could help.

1. I had such a busy weekend. I can't believe it's Monday morning already. It so hard to wake up early for school.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

2. For the past few weeks, I just want to stay in bed. I can't deal with getting up and going to school.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

3. I am so nervous about going away to college. Since I got accepted last month, I keep worrying about what it will be like, who my roommate will be, and how I will handle the classes. Every time someone asks me about it, I feel sick to my stomach. I am so anxious; I can't sleep or eat.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

4. I am so nervous about telling my friends and family that I am gay. I get butterflies in my stomach when I think about it. I am nervous, but I'm ready.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

5. There are days that I feel invincible. I honestly believe that I can do anything. But then everything comes crashing down. When that happens, I am in a dark place and I don't see a way out.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

6. I was so excited about going to the first showing of the new action movie. When I heard it was sold out, I was so disappointed I thought I was going to cry.

Can handle alone Needs help

If help is needed, what signaled the need for help?

Who could help?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 2

Mental Health

**UNDERSTANDING THE STIGMA
ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH**

Lesson 2 - Mental Health

UNDERSTANDING THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain awareness of the stigma associated with mental health and mental illness
- Students will make the connection between stigma and reluctance to talk about mental illness
- Students will make the connection between stigma and reluctance to seek help for mental illness
- Students will develop strategies to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the stigma that is often associated with mental illness. Students will learn how these negative attitudes can make it difficult to talk about mental illness. Students will also learn that misinformation, embarrassment, and shame can make some people reluctant to seek needed help. Students will explore ways to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness.

MATERIALS:

- Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health – to be projected
- Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health worksheet
- Step Out of Your Comfort Zone – 9th Grade
- Words Matter – STOP Stigma – 10th Grade
- Breaking the Roadblocks – 11th Grade
- Where Do I Stand? – 12th Grade

KEY VOCABULARY:

- **Health:** A person's mental and physical condition; measure of wellbeing
- **Mental Distress:** The emotional response to daily challenges that results in thoughts, feelings, and actions; mental distress can signal a person to develop or use strategies to face challenges
- **Mental Health:** A person's emotional wellbeing that affects thoughts, feelings, and actions

- **Mental Health Problems:** The stronger or more intense emotional response to greater life challenges; help and support may be needed from a trusted adult
- **Mental Illness:** Extreme difficulty or changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions that lasts over time and interferes with daily activities; a medical condition that requires diagnosis and help from a qualified helping professional
- **Mental Wellbeing:** Being able to handle the stressful and unexpected things that happen in daily life; managing thoughts, feelings, and actions positively
- **Physical Health:** The health or condition of your body
- **Physical Wellbeing:** Physical wellbeing is more than just the health of your body; physical wellbeing includes the lifestyle choices that promote and enhance physical wellness
- **Stigma:** A negative or disapproving attitude or belief that can cause people to avoid or fear something; usually a result of lack of knowledge or understanding.

LESSON 2 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson's message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“Today we are going to talk about stigma and how it can affect how think about and deal with mental illness. It is important to understand how our thoughts and attitudes, as well as the thoughts and attitudes of others, can influence how we will approach the important issue of mental illness.”

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring in each lesson in *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce important safety concepts. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many activities can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.



A. Stigma and Mental Illness

- Begin by reviewing the key vocabulary terms.
- Ask students if they have heard the word **Stigma**.
- Project or write “stigma” on the board.
- Have students generate a definition. The definition should include the following information:

Stigma: A negative or disapproving attitude or belief that can cause people to avoid or fear something; usually a result of lack of knowledge or understanding

Explain that mental illness is often stigmatized.



“When someone is diagnosed with a physical illness such as the flu, arthritis, or even cancer, do we judge or blame the person? (No)

However, when someone is diagnosed with a mental illness such as depression, anxiety, or an eating disorder, have you seen people judge or blame the person suffering?

There are often predetermined thoughts, ideas, and judgments about mental illness that can be untrue and harmful.”



Class Discussion

- Ask: Does the stigma associated with mental illness influence how people talk about mental illness? If so, how?
- Does stigma affect people getting treatment? If so, how and why?

Teacher Tip:

The stigma associated with mental illness can result in negative and discriminatory thoughts, attitudes, and actions toward people with mental illness.

This stigma may cause people to be reluctant to talk about or share any mental health concerns. This may prevent someone from seeking and receiving needed help due to misinformation, fear or embarrassment.

B. Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health

Ask: How do we decrease the stigma associated with mental illness?



Due to the stigma associated with mental illness, some people feel ashamed or afraid. They may be reluctant to talk about their mental health and avoid seeking help. It is essential to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness.”

“Decreasing the stigma can begin by:

- *Talking openly about mental health*
- *Education to better understand mental health and mental illness*
- *Being conscious of language. A mental health condition should not be used as an adjective – for example: He is not a schizophrenic; he is a person with schizophrenia*
- *Encourage equality between physical and mental illness; both physical and mental illnesses are the result of disease*
- *Show compassion for those with mental illness (just as you would show compassion for someone with a physical illness)*
- *Choose empowerment over shame*
- *Be honest about treatment; there is no shame associated with going to the dentist for a toothache or seeing a doctor for high blood pressure - we should strive for the same attitude about seeing a therapist”*

Adapted from NAMI



Activity: Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health

- Project **Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health**.
- Use the projected list to guide students through class discussion about an advocacy plan.
- Remind students of the importance of advocating for change.
- Distribute **Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health Worksheet**.
- Have students brainstorm ideas on how to advocate for change at school.
- Have students work with a partner or in small groups to complete the worksheet.
- After 10 to 15 minutes, have groups share their plans.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:



9th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

While students this age are striving for independence, they are also striving to be accepted and included. The stigma associated with mental illness can lead to reluctance to talk about mental health.



Class Discussion:

- Ask students to think about something that they know a lot about and are kind of an expert on – such as music, food, video games, or fashion – and to write this topic down.
- Have students list two or three things about that topic that they could share with someone else.
- Ask students to share these things with the class.

- Ask students if they felt comfortable sharing about these topics they know a lot about.
- Ask students to consider their comfort level dealing with topics they know a lot about versus topics they do not know very much about. What if they had to write about or share aloud about something they did not know much about? How would this make them feel?

Explain:

- We often feel more comfortable dealing with topics that we know a lot about rather than topics we do not know very much about.
- Stigma often begins with a lack of understanding and a lack of knowledge which may lead to the spread of misinformation, or cause someone to feel uncomfortable or nervous about a topic.
- What if you had to talk to someone or explain to the class about mental health? Would you feel comfortable?
- What do you need to know to help decrease the stigma surrounding mental health and increase your comfort level and the comfort level of the person or people you are sharing with?



Activity: Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

- Distribute the **Step Out of Your Comfort Zone** worksheet.
- Explain that knowing the facts and understanding mental illness will help to decrease the stigma that surrounds it. Another way to decrease stigma is to be aware of your own thoughts and opinions about mental health and mental illness. The more open and honest you can be, the more likely you are to decrease the stigma associated with mental health and mental illness.
- Have students work individually to complete the worksheet.
- Students will read each statement and place the letter either in or out of the comfort zone circle to signify their personal comfort level. The closer to the center, the higher the level of comfort.
- Upon completion, have students review their answers and consider how they can reduce their own stigma and increase their comfort level.



Written Reflection:

"Sadly, too often, the stigma around mental health prevents people who need help from seeking it. But that simply doesn't make any sense." - Michelle Obama, former First Lady of the United States

Read the quote by former First Lady Michelle Obama. If stigma prevents people from seeking needed help for mental health issues, how can decreasing the stigma increase the likelihood someone accesses needed help?

10

10th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

At this age, students are continuing to develop their personal sense of identity. However, a desire for acceptance can influence the identity that students project. Stigma may reduce a student's willingness to seek help due to concerns about peer perception.



Class Discussion:

Discuss the following questions:

- Why is the unknown scary?
- Why does the topic of mental health make some people feel uncomfortable?
- Why are people uncomfortable talking about mental illness?
- Why do you think stigma exists?
- How do the words we use increase or decrease the stigma surrounding mental illness?



Activity: Words Matter – STOP Stigma

- Ask students to consider the words and actions that increase the stigma surrounding mental illness. Then consider the words and actions that will decrease stigma.
- Distribute the **Words Matter – STOP Stigma** worksheet.
- Have students work with a partner or in a small group.
- Students will use the letters in the word STIGMA to identify words and actions that promote stigma, then use the letters in the word STOP to create statements to reduce stigma.
- Have students share their answers.

Teacher Tip:

Sample of how to complete the Words Matter – STOP Stigma

Stereotype

Taboo

Ignorance

Generalize

Mean

Assumptions

Speak openly about mental health

Tell someone if help is needed

Offer help to others

Promote understanding of mental health



Written Reflection:

"Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all." - Bill Clinton, Former President of the United States

Read the quote by former President Bill Clinton. What actions can you take to decrease the stigma surrounding mental illness?



11th Grade Extension Activity

Teacher Tip:

Students this age are continuing to learn to manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Helping to decrease stigma can increase their willingness to seek help.



Class Discussion:

- Explain that there are some barriers or roadblocks to decreasing the stigma associated with mental illness.
- Have students share their ideas and list them on the board.
- The list should include ideas such as:
 - Feeling ashamed
 - Reluctance to talk about mental health and mental illness
 - Lack of understanding of mental illness
 - Lack of knowledge about mental illness
 - Reluctance to seek help
 - Worrying about what others think
 - Words and actions that are insensitive
- After reviewing the list, have students share ideas on how to break down each roadblock.
- The list should include ideas such as:
 - Talk openly about mental health.
 - Education increases understanding of mental health and mental illness.
 - Be careful of the language and words you use.
 - Encourage equality between physical and mental illness. Both physical and mental illnesses are treatable health conditions.
 - Show compassion for those with mental illness.
 - Choose empowerment over shame.
 - Be honest about treatment. There is no shame associated with going to the doctor when you get sick. We should have the same attitude about seeing a mental health professional.



Activity: Breaking the Roadblocks

- Distribute the **Breaking the Roadblocks** worksheet.
- Have students work with a partner or in a small group.
- Read each roadblock and determine how to break down that barrier and decrease the stigma.

- Have students share their answers.

Sample Answers are provided as a guide. Student answers should contain this general information:

1. Be aware of the language you use. It can be hurtful to use negative terms like nuts, crazy, loony.
2. Seek help from a trusted adult or mental health professional.
3. Show compassion for those with mental illness.
4. Treat mental and physical illnesses equally.
5. Education leads to better understanding about mental health and mental illness.
6. Mental health education helps gain information, awareness, and empathy for others.
7. Instead of feeling shame, choose to be empowered.
8. Be considerate of using mental illnesses to describe personal characteristics. It can be insensitive.
9. It is important to seek help when needed.



Written Reflection:

"At the root of this dilemma is the way we view mental health in this country. Whether an illness affects your heart, your leg, or your brain, it's still an illness, and there should be no distinction." – Michelle Obama, Former First Lady of the United States

Consider the quote by former First Lady Michelle Obama. What can you do to decrease the distinction between physical and mental health needs, and decrease the stigma associated with mental illness?



12th Grade Extension Activity



Class Discussion:

- Explain that everyone has their own thoughts and opinions about mental health and mental illness.
- Ask students how personal thoughts and opinions can influence stigma.
- Ask students how personal thoughts and opinions can influence seeking help for a mental health concern.
- Explain that as students are leaving home for college, the military, or to enter the workforce, they will be facing new challenges and greater independence. They may be learning how to pay bills, get their car fixed, or go to the doctor for the flu without the help of an adult. They may also have to decide if they need help with a mental health issue.



Activity: Where Do I Stand?

- Explain that decreasing stigma is important. It is also important for you to honestly consider your thoughts and opinions about mental health, mental illness, seeking help, and treatment.
- Distribute the **Where Do I Stand?** worksheet.

- Have students read each statement and honestly reflect on their thoughts and feelings about the statement.
- Upon completion, remind students of the importance of decreasing their own personal stigma. Do not let stigma stand in the way of getting help if it is needed.



Written Reflection:

"It's okay to not be okay." Michael Phelps, Olympic Swimmer and Gold Medalist

Michael Phelps has shared his issues with depression and anxiety in hopes it would help to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness. What do you think the statement "It's okay to not be okay" means? How can understanding that statement reduce stigma?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 2-MH

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

MATERIALS

- **Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health – to be projected**
- **Decreasing the Stigma of Mental Health (worksheet)**
- **Step Out of Your Comfort Zone – 9th Grade**
- **Words Matter – STOP Stigma – 10th Grade**
- **Breaking the Roadblocks – 11th Grade**
- **Where Do I Stand? – 12th Grade**

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org or LaurensKids.org.

Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health



DECREASING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH

Directions: Project to lead class discussion on advocacy planning.

1. Identify a stigma or misconception associated with mental illness.
2. Think about how you want to combat this stigma. Is there a specific message you want to communicate?
3. Identify a target audience for your anti-stigma, positive information campaign.
4. Create a specific message for your target audience.
5. How will you promote your message? (For example posters, school news segments, classroom presentations)
6. What kind of support do you need to complete the project?
7. Create an implementation plan that includes who is responsible for each activity, the cost, timeline to implement, how long it will last, and any follow-up activities.

Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

DECREASING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHEET

Directions: Consider the stigmas associated with mental illness. How can you be an advocate to decrease this stigma in your school by creating a positive information campaign?

Identify a stigma or misconception associated with mental illness.

Think about how you want to combat this stigma. Is there a specific message you want to communicate?

Identify a target audience for your anti-stigma, positive information campaign.

Create a specific message for your target audience.

How will you promote your message? (e.g., posters, school news segments, classroom presentations)

What kind of support do you need to complete the project?

Create an implementation plan that includes who is responsible for each activity, the cost, timeline to implement, how long it will last, and any follow-up activities.

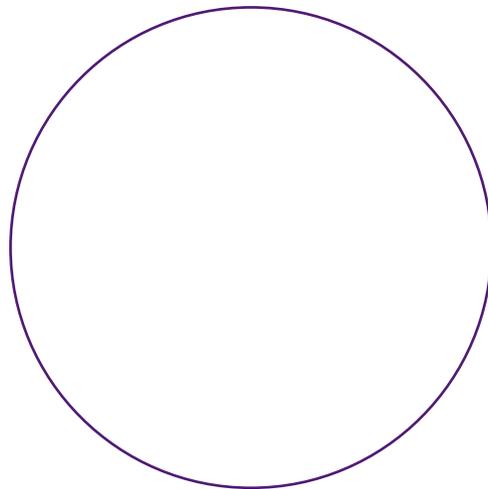
Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Directions: Read each statement. Consider your reaction. If you are comfortable in the situation, place the letter in the Comfort Zone circle. If you are not comfortable, place the letter outside of the Comfort Zone circle. The closer to the middle of the circle a letter is placed, the more comfortable you are with the situation.

Review your answers and assess your comfort zone. Consider how you might decrease stigma and increase your comfort level with mental health issues.



- A. Asking a friend what's wrong when they are crying.
- B. Talking to friends at lunch about how to help people think about mental illness the same way they think about a physical illness.
- C. Taking time to learn more about mental health.
- D. Reminding other people that it's not okay to use insensitive terms like crazy, nuts, or loony.
- E. Offering support to someone who comes to school with a broken leg.
- F. Offering support to someone dealing with anxiety.
- G. Telling a friend that you went to the doctor for a sprained ankle.
- H. Telling a friend that you are going to start seeing a therapist.
- I. Telling your friends that it is not okay to make fun of people with mental health challenges.
- J. Telling a friend that you are concerned and think they need help from a trusted adult.
- K. Telling your mom or dad that you think you might need help because of a mental health concern.

Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

WORDS MATTER - STOP STIGMA

Directions: Our words and actions can promote or reduce the stigma associated with mental health and mental illness. Use the letters in the word STIGMA to identify words and actions that promote stigma, then use the letters in the word STOP to create statements to reduce stigma.

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Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

BREAKING THE ROADBLOCKS

Directions: Consider the stigma associated with mental illness. How can you be an advocate to decrease the stigma in your school?

Mental State	Possible Reaction
Your sister tells you that the new kid who moved into the neighborhood is always alone. She says, "I guess he's just nuts."	
I have been having so many bad days lately, no one will understand.	
I don't know why people can't be strong enough to just get over their mental health issues.	
I don't have a problem going to the doctor for the flu, but I am not going to a doctor for my mental health.	
I know she was diagnosed with anxiety. I just don't know what to say to her or how to act around her.	
I don't understand why we need to learn about mental health, I'm fine!	
I am so ashamed; I don't want anyone to know what I'm dealing with.	
Your friend always brags about how organized she is. She often says, "I'm just so OCD."	
I don't want to tell anyone what's going on, no one can help anyway.	

Lesson 2 - Mental Health

Understanding the Stigma Associated with Mental Health

WHERE DO I STAND?

Directions: Read each statement. Honestly consider your thoughts and opinions about each statement and write them in the spaces below.

It is okay for someone to seek help if they are struggling with a mental health concern.

It is okay to talk to a friend about a mental health concern.

If you need help with a mental health concern, you need to go to a trusted adult for help.

It can be helpful to seek treatment for a mental health concern.

I would be comfortable seeking help if I was struggling with a mental health concern.

I have a friend I could talk to about any mental health concerns I may experience.

I would go to a trusted adult if I needed help with a mental health concern.

I would seek treatment if needed for a mental health concern.

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 3

MENTAL HEALTH

STATE OF MIND

LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

STATE OF MIND

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain awareness of the different mental states: mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental problems, and mental illness
- Students will be able to differentiate between different mental states: mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental problems, and mental illness
- Students will gain awareness of some of the causes of mental illness

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will gain an awareness of different states of mind, including mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental health problems, and mental illness. Students will learn that everyone faces challenges and stressful situations. A person's mental health will impact how they deal with the situation. To expand upon the stigma associated with mental illness, students will also learn about some of the causes of mental illness.

MATERIALS:

- Mental State Definitions – to be projected
- State of Mind worksheet
- How Do I React? worksheet – 9th Grade
- Your Personal Compass worksheet – 10th grade
- The Colors of You – 11th grade
- Check Your Wellbeing Gauge worksheet – 12th grade

KEY VOCABULARY:

- **Health:** A person's mental and physical condition; measure of wellbeing
- **Mental Distress:** The emotional response to daily challenges that results in thoughts, feelings, and actions; mental distress can signal a person to develop or use strategies to face challenges
- **Mental Health:** A person's emotional wellbeing that affects thoughts, feelings, and actions
- **Mental Health Problems:** The stronger or more intense emotional response to greater life challenges; help and support may be needed from a trusted adult
- **Mental Illness:** Extreme difficulty or changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions that lasts over time and interferes with daily activities; a

medical condition that requires diagnosis and help from a qualified helping professional

- **Mental Wellbeing:** Being able to handle the stressful and unexpected things that happen in daily life; managing thoughts, feelings, and actions positively
- **Physical Health:** The health or condition of your body
- **Physical Wellbeing:** Physical wellbeing is more than just the health of your body; physical wellbeing includes the lifestyle choices that promote and enhance physical wellness
- **Stigma:** A negative or disapproving attitude or belief that can cause people to avoid or fear something; usually a result of lack of knowledge or understanding.

LESSON 3 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson's message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“Today we are going to continue to talk about mental health. To better understand mental health, we will learn about different states of mind. Your state of mind is how you feel and includes your mood and emotions. How you think and act will be influenced by how you are feeling. Every day, we face a variety of situations. Some are more challenging than others. Our state of mind will have a bearing on how we handle each situation. We are also going to discuss some of the causes of mental illness. Let’s begin by learning more about the differences between mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental health problems, and mental illness.”

Teacher Tip:

The information on causes of mental illness is intended to help students understand that just like physical illness, mental illness can have a variety of causes. Mental illness causes a disturbance in thinking, emotions, and/or behaviors. Causes can be genetic, biological, or environmental. Emphasize to students that just as the cause of a person’s physical illness can be beyond their control, so too can the cause of mental illness.

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring in each lesson in *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce the important safety concepts. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many activities can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.

A. Stigma and Mental Illness



“We are going to continue to work on understanding the different states of mind: mental wellbeing, mental distress, mental health problems, and mental illness. It is very important to understand that when you or someone you know is struggling in ANY state of mind, you need to seek help. When a friend is struggling, it is not your responsibility to try to fix things, it is your responsibility to get help.”



Activity: Mental State Definitions

- Project and review the **Mental State Definitions**.



Activity: State of Mind

- Distribute the **State of Mind** activity.
- Have students read each situation and determine the mental state that is represented.
- Based on the mental state, students will determine the type of intervention needed.
- After ten minutes, have students share and discuss answers.
- Remind students of the importance of seeking help when there is a concern about mental health problems or mental illness.

Answer Key:

1. *Mental Distress; Talk to your friend, talk to a parent, talk to a sibling*
2. *Potential Mental Illness; Tell a trusted adult, seek professional help*
3. *Mental Distress or Mental Health Problem (depends on the severity); Talk to a school counselor, talk to parents*
4. *Mental Illness; Tell a trusted adult, seek professional help*
5. *Mental Illness (because it has gone on for several weeks); Tell a trusted adult, seek professional help*
6. *Mental Distress; Talk to a friend, talk to school counselor*
7. *Mental Health Problem or Mental Illness (depends on the severity, intensity, and duration); Tell the teacher you are concerned, tell the school counselor you are concerned, tell a trusted adult, seek professional help*
8. *Mental Wellbeing; no intervention required*
9. *Mental Distress; Talk to your friend*

B. The Causes of Mental Illness



“We like to answer the ‘why’ questions. You may ask:

Why did I get a good grade on my Biology test? – Because I studied for three days.

Why did I get in a fight with my brother? – Because I took his headphones without asking.

Why did I get a cold? – Because everyone else in my family is sick and I was around their germs.

Sometimes the answer is easy to find, but other times, there is no clear ‘Why’ answer. There are some answers to questions about the causes of mental illnesses, but not all answers are clear and precise. We know that research has found that mental illness involves instability or disturbances in thinking, emotions, and/or behaviors. This may occur due to a variety of reasons, including disruptions in the function of various portions of the brain, as well as genetic, and environmental factors. Mental illness can affect adults, children, and teens from all backgrounds, all cultures, and all incomes.

Mental health is NOT caused by personal weakness, poverty, evil spirits, or poor nutrition.”

How the brain is involved in mental health.

“The brain is a very intricate and involved network of cells and neurochemicals. It is essential for the parts of the brain to successfully communicate and work together. This helps to control what a person thinks, feels, and how they behave.

However, when pathways in the brain are disrupted and specific parts of the brain are not able to communicate with other parts of the brain, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can be affected. A person may experience a variety of problems that interfere with their daily life and result in the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors associated with mental illness.

It is very important to note that negative thoughts, extreme emotions, or unusual behaviors do not always signal mental illness. Everyone experiences normal or expected reactions to life events; for example, feeling anxious or worried about moving to a new town, feeling grief and wanting to be alone after the death a family member, or sleeplessness and fear about a hurricane on the way. These are temporary reactions that

should diminish in time. While everyone has their own reaction to events and will heal at their own pace, there may be cause for concern based on the intensity and duration of the reaction.”

Teacher Tip:

Reinforce to students that everyone has emotional ups and downs. It is okay to get upset, to be sad, or react emotionally to events and situations. These reactions should be temporary. There is cause for concern when the disruption of emotions, thinking, and behaviors is sustained and intense. Always seek help in those circumstances.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:



9th Grade Extension Activity

- Explain to students that just as we monitor and check our physical wellbeing, we should also take time to check on our mental wellbeing. One way to do that is to be aware of how we react to different activities and events.
- Clarify that reactions can be positive and productive or destructive and negative. For example, someone might feel worried about a big test they will take in a week. The positive reaction might be to complete the study guide, make flash cards, and review the notes from class for 30 minutes every night. The destructive reaction might be to yell “Can’t you see I’m studying? I don’t have time to play with you!” when your little brother asks you to play, or to get high after school instead of studying.



Activity: How Do I React?

- Distribute the **How Do I React?** worksheet.
- Review the directions. Students will write an activity or event that results in the emotion listed, then determine and write their reaction to that activity or event. The reaction can be positive, destructive, or both.
- When students have completed the worksheet have them review their reactions.
- Remind students to consider the intensity, severity, and duration of their reaction to determine if there may be a cause for concern that may require them to seek help from a trusted adult or helping professional.



Written Reflection:

Monitoring physical and mental health is an important part of overall wellbeing. Review your responses from your How Do I React worksheet. Select three positive reactions. How did these help with your wellbeing?



10th Grade Extension Activity



Activity: Your Personal Compass

- Explain: It is important to consider your own personal state of mind. One way to do that is with a Self Care Check.
- Distribute the **Your Personal Compass** worksheet.
- Students will read each statement. Then, using their personal compass, they will consider where their thoughts, feelings, and emotions fall during different times of day. Students will add three specific activities or events to the list for consideration, such as basketball practice, dance lessons, or tutoring. Students should keep in mind that there are many factors that contribute to their feelings. For example, one morning a student might be very excited when she wakes up because she has fun plans with friends after school. On another day, that same student may wake up and feel worried because she has a big test that she doesn't feel prepared for. Students' compasses are designed to help them get an idea about how they feel during different parts of their day.
- Students will review their personal compasses to determine if there are any areas of concern and recognize if they need to seek help.

Teacher Tip:

Remind students of the importance of self care. Being aware of their state of mind and recognizing when help is needed is essential for physical and mental wellbeing.



Written Reflection:

It is not unusual for us to check how we are feeling physically. Think about times when you have had aches and pains, a sore throat, a stuffy nose, or a headache. Why is it equally important to check how we are feeling mentally?



11th Grade Extension Activity



Activity: The Colors of You

- Explain that it is important for everyone to have awareness of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Taking time to stop and consider your emotions and your mental state is important.
- Explain that to help gain awareness of our mental state, we are going to use colors to associate with emotions.
- Distribute **The Colors of You** worksheet.
- Explain that each range of colors represents a category of emotions. Some examples are listed for each category.
- Students will fill in each box to include emotions that they most often feel.
- Remind students that the list can be used to get ideas, but they are not limited to the examples and can add additional emotions.

- Once the chart is completed, students will move to the second section. Explain that they will start by listing one or more activity or event that represent(s) their typical day by each time period.
- After listing activities on the time chart, have students place the time or activity in the colored box that most closely represents their emotions during that time period. Remind students that more than one time or activity may go in one color box.
- When complete, have students review their state of mind at different times of day and during different activities.
- Have students consider if there are times or events that may indicate a cause for concern. If so, help them to determine the helping professionals or trusted adults that they can turn to for help – including you.



Written Reflection:

The Colors of You chart can be used at any time for a self-check of your state of mind. Why is it important to regularly take a few minutes to check on your physical and mental wellbeing?



12th Grade Extension Activity



Activity: Check Your Wellbeing Gauge

- Explain that self-awareness is very important to understanding and paying attention to ourselves. You might ask yourself,
 - “Who am I?”
 - “What am I going to do with my life?”
 - “Why did I get so upset about that?”
 - “Why am I acting this way?”
- We often seek answers to the many questions we ask about ourselves. There is not a simple, easy way to answer these questions, but building self-awareness may help us get more clarity. This understanding helps empower us to identify and build on our strengths as well as recognize areas of concerns and seek needed help.
- Remind students that the determination of when help is needed is based on the severity, intensity, and duration of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- Distribute the **Check Your Wellbeing Gauge** worksheet.
- Explain that cars have a fuel gauge that signal when the car needs more gas. Imagine if you had a gauge that let you gain self-awareness into you physical and mental wellbeing.
- Have students read each statement and consider their thoughts and emotions during different times of day and during different activities. They will draw an arrow on the gauge to mark their typical thoughts and feelings. The right or green side of the gauge indicates positive and productive thoughts and feelings. The middle or yellow section of the gauge represents neutral thoughts and feelings. The left or red side of gauge indicates negative or destructive thoughts and feelings.

If the arrow is pointing in the red zone, students should consider how to improve their negative or destructive thoughts and feelings and then list these ideas.

- Remind students to consider the severity, intensity, and duration of their reaction to determine if help is needed from a trusted adult or helping professional.

Teacher Tip:

Encourage students to review their answers and reflect on their wellbeing. As they face new situations and new challenges after high school, they will need to continue to develop self-awareness and monitor their wellbeing.



Written Reflection:

Being self-aware helps us recognize our strengths and weaknesses. It also helps us set goals and plan for the future. You are in control of your life's path and can write your own story. Think about your goals and plans for the future. Imagine that it is 20 years in the future and you are reflecting on your life. What goals did you set and what plans did you make to create your life story? Write a narrative story of your future life.

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 3-MH

State of Mind

MATERIALS

- **Mental State Definitions – to be projected**
- **State of Mind**
- **How Do I React? – 9th Grade**
- **Your Personal Compass – 10th grade**
- **The Colors of You – 11th grade**
- **Check Your Wellbeing Gauge – 12th grade**

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org
or LaurensKids.org.

LESSON 3 - MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

Mental State Definitions

Mental Wellbeing: Being able to handle the stressful and unexpected things that happen in daily life; managing thoughts, feelings, and actions positively

Mental Distress: The emotional response to daily challenges that results in thoughts, feelings, and actions; mental distress can signal a person to develop or use strategies to face challenges

Mental Health Problems: The stronger or more intense emotional response to greater life challenges; help and support may be needed from a trusted adult

Mental Illness: Extreme difficulty or changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions that lasts over time and interferes with daily activities; a medical condition that requires diagnosis and help from a qualified helping professional

LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

State of Mind

Directions: Read each situation. Consider the potential Mental State: Mental Wellbeing, Mental Distress, Mental Health Problem, Mental Illness. Then, determine if help is needed and where it can be found.

Situation	Mental State	Help Needed?
<p>Yesterday you had an argument with a good friend. You keep thinking about what happened and it makes you feel sad and worried.</p>		
<p>A member of your basketball team stops coming to practice. He has not been hanging out with his friends on the weekends for the past month. When you ask him about it, he tells you he just doesn't see the point of playing basketball anymore and he just doesn't care.</p>		
<p>Your friend tells you he is so frustrated and he hates school. He explains that he is failing three of his classes so there is no point in coming to school. He thinks he will just drop out.</p>		

<p>You notice that a friend is losing weight. You never see her eating. She often makes comments about being overweight.</p>		
<p>For the past several weeks you have been feeling disconnected. You have no motivation. It is a struggle to wake up and get out of bed. You just want to stay in your room.</p>		
<p>Your friend is crying before school. When you ask what happened she tells you that her girlfriend broke up with her.</p>		
<p>A student in your class starts acting strangely. He doesn't have any close friends and is often alone. The other students have been laughing and making fun of him. You don't think his behavior is funny, you think it is scary.</p>		
<p>You decide to take a walk after school. You notice what a nice day it is and post a picture of a flower you see on your walk.</p>		
<p>Your friend likes to joke around and is usually upbeat. One morning she posts that she is having the worst day ever.</p>		

LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

How Do I React?

Directions: Write an activity or event that results in the emotion listed. Then determine and write your reaction to that activity or event. Your reaction can be positive, destructive, or both. When complete, review your reactions. Consider if there is a cause for concern that may require you to seek help from a trusted adult or helping professional.

EMOTION	Activity or Event	Positive Reaction	Destructive Reaction
Angry			
Afraid			
Anxious			
Calm			
Confident			
Disappointed			
Excited			
Glad			
Happy			
Lonely			
Nervous			
Relaxed			
Upset			

LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

Your Personal Compass

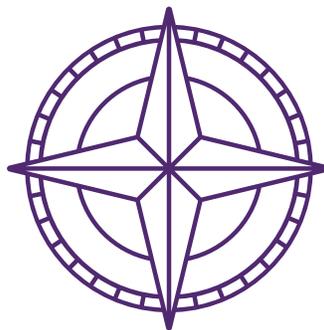
Directions: Read each statement. Then, consider your thoughts and feelings. Determine where they fall on your compass and mark the corresponding feelings with an X. Write in three typical activities or events in your day-to-day life by each of the last three compasses. Use the compasses to reflect on areas of potential concern. Think of the helping professionals and trusted adults you could go to if help is needed.

Sad

Unhappy, gloomy,
disappointed, lonely, upset

Happy

Excited, glad, joyful,
delighted, cheery, creative,
curious, motivated

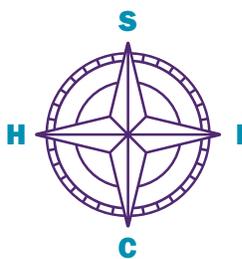


Intense

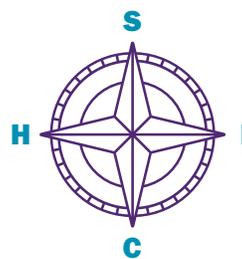
Anxious, angry, fearful,
nervous, irritated, afraid,
worried, uneasy

Calm

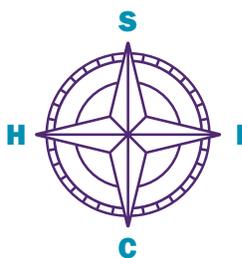
Relaxed, tranquil, restful,
quiet, composed



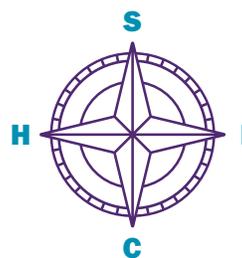
When I woke up
this morning.



During my first
period class.



When I was on
the way to school.



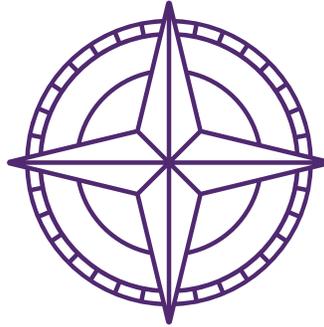
During lunch.

Sad

Unhappy, gloomy,
disappointed, lonely, upset

Happy

Excited, glad, joyful,
delighted, cheery, creative,
curious, motivated

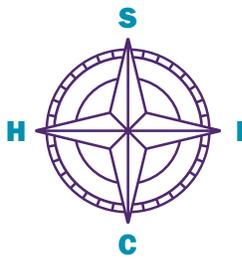


Intense

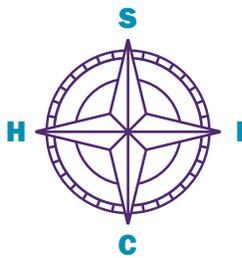
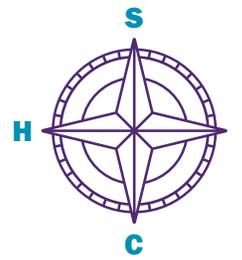
Anxious, angry, fearful,
nervous, irritated, afraid,
worried, uneasy

Calm

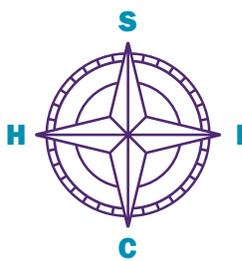
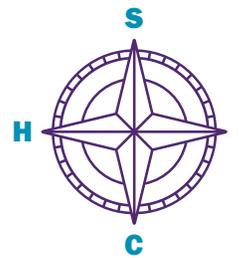
Relaxed, tranquil, restful,
quiet, composed



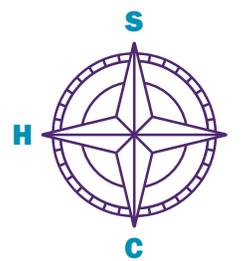
At the end of the
school day.



When I get home.



When I have to do
homework.



LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

The Colors of You

Directions: Look at each color and think of an emotion that it represents. The brighter the color, the more intense the feeling. Categories and examples are listed on the left. This list is to help generate ideas; you can include your own emotions within the category.

EMOTIONS	Less Intense	Intense	More Intense
Peaceful Emotions: Joyful, relaxed, quiet, serene, calm, still, comfortable, easygoing			
Acceptance Emotions: Trusting, hopeful, confident, happy, lucky, fortunate, glad			
Sadness Emotions: Grieving, down, gloomy, miserable, pitiful, unhappy, hopeless			
Fearful Emotions: Apprehensive, bad, frightened, scared, terrible, worried, anxious, stressed			
Anger Emotions: Enraged, annoyed, furious, mad, outraged, irritable, agitated			

Directions: Think about your typical day. List the activity or event that corresponds with each time period below. Next, place the time and activity in the colored box that most closely represents your emotions during that time period. More than one time and activity may go in one color box. When completed, review your state of mind at different times of day and during different activities. Consider if there are times or events that may indicate a cause for concern. If so, determine the helping professionals or trusted adults that you can turn to for help.

6:00 a.m. _____ 12:00 p.m. _____ 6:00 p.m. _____
 7:00 a.m. _____ 1:00 p.m. _____ 7:00 p.m. _____
 8:00 a.m. _____ 2:00 p.m. _____ 8:00 p.m. _____
 9:00 a.m. _____ 3:00 p.m. _____ 9:00 p.m. _____
 10:00 a.m. _____ 4:00 p.m. _____ 10:00 p.m. _____
 11:00 a.m. _____ 5:00 p.m. _____ 11:00 p.m. _____

Less Intense	Intense	More Intense

LESSON 3 = MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mind

Check Your Wellbeing Gauge

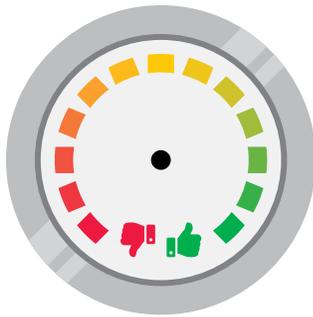
Directions: To help develop self-awareness, consider your thoughts and emotions during different times of day and during different activities. Draw the arrow on your gauge to mark your typical thoughts and feelings during those times.

The right or **green** side of the gauge indicates positive and productive thoughts and feelings.

The middle or **yellow** section of the gauge represents neutral thoughts and feelings.

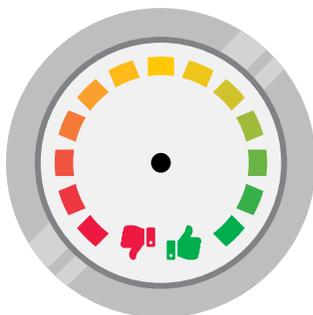
The left or **red** side of gauge indicates negative or destructive thoughts and feelings.

If your arrow is pointing in the red zone, consider how to improve your negative thoughts and feelings. List your ideas. Consider the severity, intensity, and duration of your reaction to determine if help is needed from a trusted adult or helping professional.



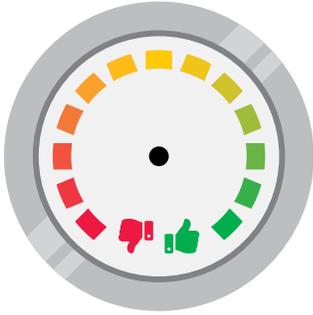
Starting my day.

Plan for improvement:



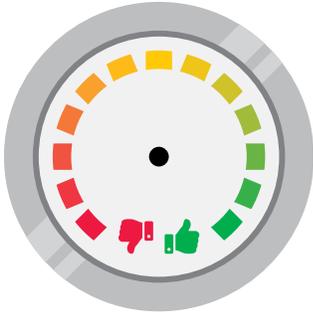
Getting enough sleep.

Plan for improvement:



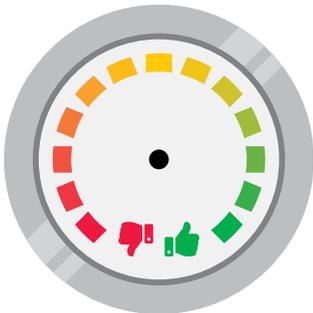
Thinking about life after high school.

Plan for improvement:



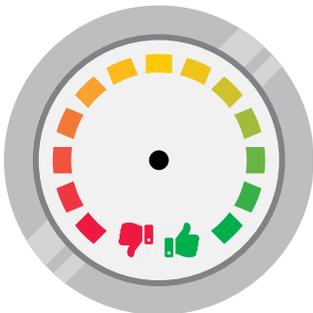
The end of my day.

Plan for improvement:



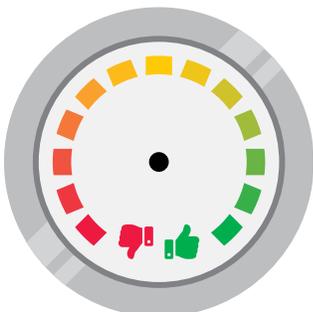
Eating healthy foods.

Plan for improvement:



My current physical wellbeing.

Plan for improvement:



My current mental wellbeing.

Plan for improvement:

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 4

Mental Health

SEEKING HELP

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

SEEKING HELP

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain awareness of warning signs that signal a mental health concern.
- Students will gain an understanding of when to seek help for a mental health concern.
- Students will gain awareness of where to seek help for a mental health concern.
- Students will gain awareness of suicide risk and suicide prevention.

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will gain an awareness of the Red Flags or warning signs of a mental health concern and how to access help when needed. Students will be able to identify when they or someone they know is at risk for suicide. Students will learn the importance of seeking help and how and where get help.

Teacher Tip:

Some students who are at risk for suicide may be overlooked because they do not present overt warning signs of being suicidal. Consider students with the following characteristics and remain vigilant.

- Appears successful and accomplished with perfectionist tendencies
- Shutting down, lack of motivation, uncaring
- Delinquency or legal problems
- Defiance that may be related to a traumatic event

MATERIALS:

- Red Flags – It’s Time to Seek Help – to be projected
- A.C.T. to Help a Friend worksheet
- Assessing the Risk – to be projected
- Notice the S.O.S. – 9th grade
- Misconceptions About Suicide – to be projected – 10th Grade
- Looks Can Be Deceiving – to be projected – 11th grade
- Below the Surface – to be projected – 11th grade
- Notes of Appreciation worksheet – 12th Grade

LESSON 4 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson's message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“Today we are going to learn more about the Red Flags or warning signs that indicate a mental health concern. Red flags are not a diagnosis and they do not determine if a person does or does not have a mental illness – they are, however, warning signs that there may be a problem. When we notice warning signs or concerns, we have a responsibility to help the person in need.

In addition to red flags of mental health concerns, we are going to learn about the specific warning signs of suicide. You may notice the warning signs in a friend, a classmate, a neighbor, family member, or even within yourself. If you have a concern, go to a trusted adult or mental health professional to get help. To that end, I want to remind you that I am always here for you, and that you can come discuss anything with me.

I also want to remind you that it is important to think about how someone else's mental health may affect you. If you live with someone or have a close friend who is struggling with a mental health concern, you may need help and support to know how to deal with the unique challenges this presents. It is very important to consider your needs as well as the needs of the person struggling.”

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring in each lesson of *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce important safety concepts. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many activities can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.

Teacher Tip:

There are many misconceptions about students who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts, including:

- They are being manipulative
- They are just trying to get attention
- They are trying to get out of being in trouble
- They're not credible
- They just need to get some medication
- If we don't talk about it, it will go away

A student's thoughts, words, and actions regarding suicide must be taken seriously.



A. Red Flags – It's Time to Seek Help

Explain that when it comes to mental health, it is very important to know when you should be concerned.

- Discuss that there are many Red Flags that signal something is not right and help may be needed. It is important to know when someone's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors indicate more than just mental distress and a trusted adult or a mental health expert should be contacted.
- Emphasize that if you or someone you know is experiencing any of the following, you need to get help.
- Project **Red Flags- It's Time to Seek Help**.
- Read each statement aloud and have students read along.
- Remind students that there is a difference between having a bad day or getting upset and a mental health concern. You need to consider the intensity, duration, and severity of the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviors.

Teacher Tip:

Reinforce the importance of seeking help if a student or someone they know is having difficulty handling a stressor or if there is a suspicion of a mental illness.

Teacher Tip:

Remind students of the importance of checking their own mental health. If a student is living with someone or has a close friend who is struggling with mental illness, they may need help to deal with the unique challenges this presents.

B. A.C.T. to Help a Friend

Explain that peers are often in the best position to notice emotional or behavioral changes in a friend that may indicate mental distress or mental illness.

- When there is a concern, it is essential to show support and help your friend get help – even if they ask you not to tell an adult.
- **A.C.T. – Ask, Care, Tell**, is a way to show support and get help for a friend in need.
- Review examples of how to use A.C.T.
 - **ASK:** I've noticed you are not sleeping, is everything okay?
 - **CARE:** I'm sorry you are feeling overwhelmed. I am always here for you.
 - **TELL:** Let's go talk to my mom. She will have some ideas of what to do.
 - **ASK:** You haven't been acting like yourself, you seem really irritable and angry. Is everything okay?
 - **CARE:** Wow, it sounds like you are going through a lot.
 - **TELL:** We need to talk to someone who can help. Let's go talk to the counselor at lunch.
- **ASK:** It scares me when you talk about dying.
- **CARE:** I really care about you and I don't want you to do anything or hurt yourself. We need to get help right away.
- **TELL:** I'm calling the Suicide Crisis line.



Activity: A.C.T. to Help a Friend

- Have students work in small groups of three to five.
- Distribute one **A.C.T. scenario** to each group.
- Allow students five minutes to practice how to use A.C.T. in the situation they've been given.
- Have each group demonstrate using A.C.T. for their situation.
 - Remind students that a friend may not want to get help. Reinforce the importance of going to a trusted adult or helping professional even if a friend resists the help.

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that friends can be supportive by staying in touch. For example: Don't be afraid to call or text a friend who is struggling with mental health issues. Include your friend in activities that will enhance wellbeing. Avoid being judgmental. Do not use dismissive language such as, "This is no big deal," "You'll get over it," "You need to let it go," or "Just be tough."

Remind students that it is important to seek help from a trusted adult or mental health professional when there is a mental health concern.



C. Suicide Prevention



“Suicide is a very real and serious problem. There are a number of things that can cause a teen to be suicidal or die by suicide. We must all be aware of the causes and warning signs of suicide, and how to get help for yourself or someone you know.”

Review some of the causes of teen suicide:

- The result of mental illness such as depression or bipolar disorder
- The result of alcohol or drug use and abuse
- Overwhelming feeling of distress or agitation
- Perfectionism and feeling you are not perfect
- LGBTQ+ youth who may feel rejected
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Academic difficulties
- A lack of support from family and friends
- Trauma stemming from abuse

Explain that there are many causes of suicide and it is a very complicated issue. If you or someone you know has thoughts or plans about suicide, you must seek help immediately – even if they ask you not to. All threats and warning signs must be taken seriously. Discuss who and where you can go for help:

- Family member
- Friends
- School counselor
- Crisis hotline
- Suicide hotline

Teacher Tip:

Provide students with the local number for the Crisis Center and Suicide Crisis line in your area. Have students add the numbers in their cell phone contacts.



Activity: Assessing the Risk

- Remind students that it is very important to be aware of the warning signs that someone is at risk of dying by suicide. The warning signs may include changes in feelings and behaviors. It is essential to pay attention to all warning signs that may indicate someone is at risk of dying by suicide.
- Distribute the **Assessing the Risk** activity to each student and project the activity for the class.
- Read each statement aloud and ask students to consider if each statement applies to themselves or someone they know.
- Emphasize the importance of seeking help if there are any warning signs of suicidal behavior.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:



9th Grade Extension Activity

- Explain that when there are Signs of Suicide or "S.O.S.," you need to seek help. Teens are often more likely to share their thoughts and feelings with a friend than the adults in their life. Friends and classmates may be in a position to notice the warning signs that someone is at risk of or is considering suicide.
- Remind students that someone they know may have thoughts of suicide or be struggling with mental health issues. It is not their responsible to try to fix things; instead, they need to tell a trusted adult or helping professional – even if their friend asks them not to.



Activity: Notice the S.O.S.

- Distribute the **Notice the S.O.S.** worksheet.
- Explain that this activity depicts a day of high school. For each period of the day, there is an S.O.S. – Sign of Suicide. Have students work with a partner or in a small group to read each statement and consider the S.O.S. Then consider what actions can be taken to help.
- Have students share their answers with the class.



10th Grade Extension Activity

TL *“We talked about the stigma associated with mental illness. There is also a great deal of stigma associated with suicide. Just as we learned that stigma can result in a reluctance to talk about and seek help for mental health concerns, the stigma associated with suicide can cause people to avoid talking about suicide, overlook or ignore warning signs, and be reluctant to seek help.”*

Explain that there are many misconceptions about suicide. It is important to know the facts.

Read or project each statement. Encourage students to share their thoughts on each statement. After the discussion, share the factual information about the statement.

Someone who threatens suicide is just looking for attention

- Teens are often very good at hiding their thoughts and feelings, especially from adults. When someone is talking about suicide, you should listen, take them seriously, and seek help.

Asking or talking about suicide will increase the risk.

- Talking about suicide or asking direct questions will not cause someone to become suicidal. If someone is having suicidal thoughts, it is often a relief when someone notices and offers help.

If we do not educate ourselves about the warning signs of suicidal behavior, we cannot notice when someone may be struggling.

You should never read a note when a friend asks you to keep a note unopened or unread.

- Being asked to keep a note unopened and unread is a warning sign. When there is a possibility that someone is in danger, you must tell a trusted adult.

Very few teens actually die from suicide.

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among students your age.

Someone who attempts suicide was not really serious about wanting to die.

- Many teens attempt suicide to try to stop pain and suffering. That does not mean it was a false alarm or that they were not serious. In fact, teens who make an attempt are far more likely to attempt suicide again and it is more likely that the next attempt will be lethal.

It is dangerous to be around someone who has tried to die by suicide.

- Many people who have thought about or attempted to die by suicide have gotten help for the crisis or mental health problem that was causing them to want to end their life. Just like we recover from or can receive treatment to manage a physical illness, the same is true for mental illness and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Just because someone has struggled, does not mean there is something wrong with them or that they should be avoided. A person is more than their mental health challenges.

You can always tell when someone is considering suicide because they will act sad.

- The causes of suicidal thoughts and behaviors vary. Not everyone who is considering suicide will act in a specific way. Teens who suffer from depression may not appear sad. They may mask their emotions and act happy and carefree. Some medications cause teens and young adults to have a sudden onset of suicidal thoughts. It is important to be open and honest about mental health so anyone who is struggling can get the help they need.

A lot of planning and preparation always takes place prior to attempting suicide.

- The decision to attempt suicide may have been planned or it may be impulsive. People who attempt suicide may consider it the only way out of a situation; many people who have lived through a suicide attempt or suicidal thoughts get help and are grateful that they did not take their lives.

Adapted from Kathryn Rudlin, LCSW, "7 Common Myths About Teen Suicide"

11



11th Grade Extension Activity

Class discussion:

- Explain that sometimes we jump to conclusions about other people. We may look at someone's appearance, the activities they are involved with, or their accomplishments, and think they would never have suicidal thoughts. We may think they are too tough, too strong, or too perfect. There are times that someone at risk is overlooked because of the perception other people have about them.
- Project **Looks Can Be Deceiving** and read each name.
- Have students discuss their thoughts on each person and their accomplishments. On the surface it appears that they would not have suicidal thoughts. However, each person did consider, attempt, or die by suicide. Ask students to consider, how a person who seems to have it all can also have suicidal thoughts.
- Project **Below the Surface**
- Explain that looks can be deceiving and we never truly know what is going on below the surface. How can you be supportive to all friends, even those who you may think have it all together?
 - Ideas should include ideas such as:
 - Listen carefully
 - Don't assume success or achievements equals happiness
 - Let friends know they are important to you
 - Let friends know you are there for them in good and bad times

12

12th Grade Extension Activity

- Explain that we often focus on the negative and get overwhelmed with all that is going on in our lives. We forget to stop and take time to appreciate moments of joy, happiness, and peace.
- Explain that we are going to practice taking a moment to remember a pleasant, happy, or content moment.
- Instruct students to get in a comfortable position, close their eyes (if comfortable) and take several deep breaths.
 - "Think of a time when you felt happy, joyous, pleased, or peaceful."
 - "Think of what you were doing. Try to remember the details. What did you hear? What did you smell? What colors did you see? How did your body feel? How did your head feel?"
 - "Now think of how you feel as you recall that time."
 - "As you recall this memory, continue to breathe by slowly inhaling and exhaling fully."
- After a few moments, ask the students to open their eyes and bring their attention back to the present.



Activity: Notes of Appreciation

- Explain that in addition to recalling pleasant memories, students can learn to stop, notice, and appreciate moments of joy or happiness –

no matter how small. This can become a habit to promote positive thinking. One way to do this is to write down and keep notes of appreciation or gratitude.

- Distribute the **Notes of Appreciation** worksheet.
 - Explain that students can find a box, jar, or other container at home. They can decorate it if they like. Each day, they should think of three things that brought them joy, made them smile, or that they appreciated. Remind students it may be something simple, like laughing with a friend while walking to class, finding a lucky penny, seeing a beautiful flower, or getting your favorite dessert. It might something more monumental like getting a lead in a play, meeting someone you really like, or getting a new puppy.
 - Instruct students to write down three things each day and put them in their jar or box.
 - Over time, they will have a collection of things they are appreciative of or grateful for.
- Explain that periodically they can take a note and reread it, to be reminded of what they appreciate.
- Remind students of the importance of seeking help for themselves or others if they are struggling with finding the joy in everyday life. It is ok not to be ok! But help is available- there is no need to feel helpless, hopeless, or alone.

Teacher Tip:

Observe students to see if anyone is having difficulty finding three things that make them feel happy, joyous, or grateful. Refer students to the school counselor, school psychologist, or other helping professional when appropriate.

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 4-MH

Seeking Help

MATERIALS

- **Red Flags – It’s Time to Seek Help – to be projected**
- **A.C.T. to Help a Friend worksheet**
- **Assessing the Risk – to be projected**
- **Notice the S.O.S. – 9th grade**
- **Misconceptions About Suicide – to be projected – 10th Grade**
- **Looks Can Be Deceiving – to be projected – 11th grade**
- **Below the Surface – to be projected – 11th grade**
- **Notes of Appreciation – 12th Grade**

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org
or LaurensKids.org.

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Red Flags – It's Time to Seek Help

Directions: Read each statement. If any of these statements describe something you or someone you know is experiencing, it is time to seek help from a trusted adult.

1. Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).
2. Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing.
3. Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or gain.
4. Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships with friends and family.
5. Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (difficulty falling or staying asleep, sleeping all day, waking up early, or acting agitated).
6. Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.
7. Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.
8. Abandonment or lack of interest in pastimes or activities.
9. Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so.
10. Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.
11. Repeated use and abuse of drugs or alcohol.

LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 1

You are talking to a friend before school. Everything seems to be fine, when he starts yelling and tells you to leave him alone. You realize that he has been getting angry a lot. Many of his other friends have stopped spending time with him.

ASK

CARE

TELL



LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 2

For the past several weeks your friend has been staying in bed and crying. She has not come to practice and has not been responding to your text messages.

ASK

CARE

TELL

LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 3

You go over to a friend's house to work on a project for school. You start talking about the project and all of the semester exams that are coming up. You notice that your friend looks upset. He explains that he is feeling totally overwhelmed, his heart is racing, and he is having trouble breathing.

ASK

CARE

TELL



LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 4

You have noticed that your friend has recently lost some weight. She rarely eats and when she does, she often goes directly to the bathroom. She often makes comments about her appearance and being overweight, and gets annoyed when people express concern about her health.

ASK

CARE

TELL

LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 5

Your friend is agitated and he has trouble sitting still. He tells you that he hasn't slept in a few nights. When he tries to get to sleep, he can't relax, he can't get things off his mind.

ASK

CARE

TELL



LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 6

Your friend stops hanging out with you and her other friends. When you invite her over, she always makes an excuse. She avoids talking to her friends at lunch. She dropped out of her dance classes.

ASK

CARE

TELL

LESSON 4 - MENTAL HEALTH

A.C.T. to Help a Friend: Scenario 7

Your friend makes a comment that she doesn't see the point to her life. She tells you that she feels like there is no way out and she has been thinking about suicide.

ASK

CARE

TELL



Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Assessing the Risk

Directions: Read each statement and consider if it applies to you or someone you know.

1. I frequently think about death or dying.
2. Sometimes I feel like everyone would be better off without me.
3. I have considered how I would kill myself.
4. I have purposely tried to hurt myself.
5. I don't feel good about myself, I am not worth anything.
6. My sleeping has changed. I don't sleep well / I sleep all the time.
7. I feel differently. My mood, personality and behavior have changed.
8. My eating habits have changed.
9. I feel like I am losing control.
10. I don't think there is any hope for the future.

If any of the statements apply to you or someone you know, there is a risk of suicide. You must seek help from a trusted adult, a parent, a school counselor, or a crisis hotline. Do not overlook the risks – seek help!

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Notice the S.O.S.

Directions: Working with a partner or in a small group, read each statement and consider the S.O.S. – Sign of Suicide. Then consider what actions can be taken to help.

1ST PERIOD – P.E. CLASS

Ryan is dribbling the basketball on the edge of the court. Every day, Kyle, Jaylin, and Rico slap the ball out of his hands and begin to laugh. Today as they walk away, Ryan hears them say, “He is such a loser, he should just sit in the bleachers and watch!” Ryan thinks, “I can’t stand this anymore.”

2ND PERIOD – ENGLISH CLASS

Emily is sitting at her desk in the front of the class. Isabella and Jessie walk past her desk. Isabella says, “Did you hear about Emily? She set another track record at the meet on Saturday. She is having a great season. She is so perfect; all the teachers love her. She has it all!” Emily is thinking, “You have no idea how much pressure I am under. What if my times slip? What if I get a bad grade? What if I do something wrong? I don’t think I can take this pressure much longer!”

3RD PERIOD – SCIENCE CLASS

Meredith walks into class. It looks like she has been crying. Tara asks her what is wrong. Meredith says, “Haven’t you seen it? They started it all again. It’s all over social media. They keep posting stuff about me and telling all these lies. It’s awful!” Tara responds, “Don’t worry about that, no one believes all that stuff.” Meredith starts crying again and says, “I can’t take this anymore. The last time they started posting all that stuff I thought I could just ignore it and forget about it. But I couldn’t. There is no way I can make them stop, there is no way out of this. I can’t live like this anymore.” The teacher is reviewing for the next test. He explains that this test will count for a large portion of the semester grade. Meredith is listening carefully to the review and starts to worry that she may not be prepared. She takes careful notes.

4TH PERIOD – ART CLASS

Terrance is working on his drawing. The teacher praises his use of color and shading. Christina looks over and also compliments Terrance on his drawing. He says, “I’m going to finish it today and you can have it. In fact, you can have all of my drawings that the teacher has been collecting for the art show.” Christina is shocked, “That’s really nice of you, but you should keep them, they are so good.” Terrance looks down, “Nah, I want you to have it. That way you will have something to remember me.”

5TH PERIOD – MATH CLASS

Byron and Kevin have been friends since middle school. They used to hang out after school and on the weekends. Today Byron arrives late to class. He slowly walks to his desk, slumps down in his chair, and pulls up his hood. As the teacher is explaining the lesson, Byron just sits and stares into space. Kevin sits next him. When it is time to complete the worksheet, Kevin says, “Hey, what’s up? I haven’t seen you for a couple weeks. Where have you been?” Byron mumble, “I don’t know, I’ve just been at home...I don’t see the point in all of this anymore.”

6TH PERIOD – SOCIAL STUDIES

Devonte has been dating Chris for the past few months. Over the weekend, Chris broke up with Devonte. Devonte is really struggling with the breakup. When Mel says, “Hey Devonte, I know breakups can be really hard, but you will be okay. How can I help?” Devonte says, “Thanks, but there is nothing you can do, there is nothing anyone can do. I just want this pain to stop.”

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Misconceptions About Suicide

- Someone who threatens to die by suicide is just looking for attention.
- Asking or talking about suicide will increase the risk.
- You should never read a note when a friend asks you to keep a note unopened or unread.
- Very few teens actually die from suicide.
- Someone who attempts suicide was not really serious about wanting to die.
- It is dangerous to be around someone who has tried to die by suicide.
- You can always tell when someone is considering suicide because they will act sad.
- A lot of planning and preparation always takes place prior to attempting suicide.

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Looks Can Be Deceiving

- Halle Berry – Academy Award Winning Actress
- Princess Diana – Princess of Wales, Philanthropist
- Elton John – Singer and Songwriter
- Ronda Rousey – Mixed Martial Arts Champion, Olympic Medalist, Actress
- Anthony Bourdain – Traveling Celebrity Chef, Author, Journalist, TV Star
- Oprah Winfrey – TV Personality and Executive, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist
- Avicci – DJ and Producer

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Below the Surface

- **Halle Berry – Academy Award Winning Actress**
Halle Berry attempted suicide when her marriage to baseball player David Justice failed
- **Princess Diana – Princess of Wales**
Princess Diana reported that she attempted suicide to try to end her unhappiness during a difficult marriage
- **Elton John – Singer and Songwriter**
Elton John attempted suicide because of the stress and pressure of his fame
- **Ronda Rousey – Mixed Martial Arts Champion, Olympic Medalist, Actress**
Ronda Rousey considered suicide after she lost a mixed martial arts fight that ended her undefeated streak
- **Anthony Bourdain – Traveling Celebrity Chef, Author, Journalist, TV Star**
Anthony Bourdain had an incredible career and was loved and admired by many; privately, he battled and ultimately lost his fight with depression
- **Oprah Winfrey – TV Personality and Executive, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist**
Oprah Winfrey considered suicide after being sexually abused and becoming pregnant at the age of 14
- **Avicci – DJ and Producer**
Avicci experienced incredible success as an artist and producer, but struggled privately with addiction, stress, and depression, ultimately dying by suicide

Lesson 4 - Mental Health

Seeking Help

Notes of Appreciation



1. I appreciate:

2. I am grateful for:

3. I am thankful for:



1. I appreciate:

2. I am grateful for:

3. I am thankful for:



1. I appreciate:

2. I am grateful for:

3. I am thankful for:



SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 5

Mental Health

ADDICTION

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

ADDICTION

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will explore the reasons teens choose to use alcohol, drugs, and nicotine (tobacco or vaping)
- Students will understand the dangers of experimenting with or using alcohol, drugs, and nicotine (tobacco or vaping)
- Students will understand the meaning of addiction
- Students will differentiate between healthy and unhealthy choices that could lead to addiction
- Students will understand the negative consequences of addiction

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of addiction and how drug use and addiction can affect their lives. Students will learn about the physical and biological effects of drug use. In addition, they will understand how drugs affect relationships, school, income, mental health, and lifestyle.

MATERIALS:

- Dangers of Drug Use – to be projected
- The Stages of Addiction – to be projected
- The Brain and Addiction – to be projected
- What Do They Have to Lose? worksheet
- What Do I Have to Lose? worksheet
- Get the Facts Straight worksheet including the Prescription Drug Misuse Fact Sheet – 9th Grade
- Facts You Need to Know – 10th Grade
- Why It's A Problem worksheet – 10th Grade
- Myth or Fact Cards – 11th Grade
- Fact Sheet – to be projected – 12th Grade
- It Could Happen to Me worksheet – 12th Grade

KEY VOCABULARY:

- **Addiction:** To be physically and mentally dependent on a substance and unable to stop using that substance without adverse physical and/or mental effects
- **Consequence:** The result or effect of the choices you make

LESSON 5 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson's message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“Today we will be talking about drug use and addiction. It is important to understand how trying and using drugs affects your body and your development. We are also going to discuss the process of becoming addicted to drugs and the consequences of addiction. Finally, you will consider how drug use could affect your life and the importance of setting goals and making healthy choices.”

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring in each lesson of *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce important safety concepts. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many activities can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.

A. The Dangers of Drug Use



“Today we are going to talk about drug use, abuse, and addiction. When I say drugs, I am talking about both recreational and prescription drugs, alcohol, and nicotine from cigarettes and vaping.

I am sure you have heard about the dangers of drug use. Drug and alcohol use and abuse in teens is particularly dangerous because the brain and the body are still developing. Therefore, the effects of drug use on teens can be far more significant

than drug use in adults. When portions of the developing brain and body are damaged, they may not be repaired.

All drugs affect the brain - that is what makes someone feel high. Different drugs might slow things down, speed things up, reduce inhibitions, or numb pain. Some drugs cause the brain to make a person feel things that are not real or see things that are not there.

There are 'pleasure centers' in the brain. When you do things you like - hanging out with friends, playing a sport, or taking a walk in nature - the pleasure centers of the brain send a signal and you feel happiness, joy, pleasure, relaxation. When drugs are used repeatedly, they reset the brain's pleasure centers. Without the drugs, those everyday activities no longer bring happiness and joy. Instead, those feelings are replaced with feelings of hopelessness and sadness."

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the CDC:

- Alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco are substances most commonly used by adolescents.
- By 12th grade, about 66% of students have tried alcohol.
- About 50% of 9th through 12th grade students reported having used marijuana.
- About 40% of 9th through 12th grade students reported having tried cigarettes.
- Among 12th graders, close to 20% reported using prescription medicine without a prescription.

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/teen-substance-use/index.html>



Class Discussion:

- What are some of dangers of using drugs?
- Discuss the dangers. Then project the **Dangers of Drug Use** chart. Discuss additional dangers not previously mentioned.



B. Why Do Teens Try and Use Drugs?

Class Discussion:

- Even though teens have heard the risks and understand the dangers, they still try and use drugs.
- Ask students to share their ideas about why teens experiment with or use drugs, alcohol, or nicotine (tobacco or vaping) even though there are so many dangers associated with drug use and abuse.
- Make a list on the board. The list should include the following:
 - Peer pressure
 - To fit in
 - Their friends are doing it

- Because they want to feel older or do what the older kids are doing
- Because they are curious
- To ease physical or emotional pain
- Tried it and liked how it felt



C. Consequences of Drug Use?

Class Discussion:

Short term vs. long term consequences

- Remind students of the definition of **Consequence**: The result or effect of the choices you make; what happens after you do or do not do something. Ask students:
 - *“If you pick up a rattle snake, what are the chances it will bite you? How quickly will it bite you? How immediately will the result of the bite occur?”*
 - *As a result of the immediate consequences, you do not pick up a rattle snake.*
 - *If vaping made you immediately have serious lung issues, would that change your decision to vape?*
 - *If drinking alcohol caused you to immediately develop liver disease or out-of-control alcoholism, would that change your decision to drink?*
 - *If smoking marijuana caused you to immediately have memory loss, would that change your decision to get high?”*
- Ask: *“Do you think the differences between short-term and long-term consequences are a factor in teens decision to try or use drugs?”*
- Ask: *“Even though teens know that drug use and abuse has significant effects on their bodies and minds, they still try and use drugs. Why?”*

Teacher Tip:

It is common for teenagers to believe that “It won’t happen to me.” Other people will get cancer from smoking, but not me. Other people will get arrested for possession of drugs, but not me. Other people will get addicted, but not me. It is important for teens to understand that they are equally at risk of the consequences of drug use and abuse as anyone else.



D. The Stages of Addiction



“We make choices and there are consequences. Some of our choices result in healthy or positive consequences while other choices result in unhealthy or negative consequences.

You have a big test coming up. What are your choices?

Choice: To study and prepare.

Consequence: Feeling prepared and doing well on the test.

Choice: To spend the evening playing a video game with friends.

Consequence: Feeling anxious about the test and getting a bad grade.”

- Explain that every day we make lifestyle choices. The choices we make result in consequences. Consequences are what happen after we make a choice as a result of the decision we’ve made. Therefore, the decision to try and use drugs, alcohol, or nicotine will have consequences. One consequence can be addiction.
- Ask students to define the word addiction.
 - Write their answers on the board.
 - Create a definition that includes the following: To be physically and mentally dependent on a substance and unable to stop using that substance without adverse physical and/or mental effects.
- Ask students what people might get addicted to; their list may include:
 - Drugs
 - Alcohol
 - Caffeine
 - Nicotine- Tobacco or Vaping
 - Video Games
 - Cell phone – Social media
- Discuss how addiction occurs. Project the **Stages of Addiction** chart. Review each stage. Emphasize that addiction is a process that moves through each stage.

Teacher Tip:

Help students to realize that addiction begins with the first use of a drug. You cannot get addicted to something you have not tried. The risk of addiction increases with continued and ongoing use.



E. The Stages of Addiction



“Some people may think of addiction as just a matter of willpower. If you want to quit badly enough, you just need to put your mind to it, right? Wrong. In reality, there are important mental and physical aspects of addiction that are much more complicated than simply deciding to stop using a drug that you have become dependent upon. The continued use of drugs can significantly affect the brain which can lead to difficult-to-break addictions.”

Project and review **The Brain and Addiction** chart.

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that help may be needed an ANY stage of addiction. Trying or using drugs may be the result of a mental or emotional need. Due to the physical and mental aspects of drug use, professional help may be needed to quit.



Activity: What Do They Have to Lose? – What Do I Have to Lose?

- Have students work with a partner or in small groups.
- Distribute the **What Do They Have to Lose?** worksheet.
- Students will read the fictional student's biography and list 2 or 3 consequences for that student at each stage of addiction.
- After ten minutes have the groups share their answers.
- Distribute the **What Do I Have to Lose?** worksheet.
- Have students work individually to write their own biography and determine the potential consequences of each stage of addiction.
- Finally, have students set three personal goals that include healthy choices to enhance their wellbeing.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:



9th Grade Extension Activity



“Drug misuse and abuse does not only occur with alcohol and illegal or 'street' drugs. It can also happen with prescription or over-the-counter medications. Prescription drugs are intended to be used under the care of a doctor, for a legitimate medical need, and in the correct dosage. However, the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is both illegal and unsafe.

The misuse and abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs is a very real and serious problem. There are many reasons why teens misuse these drugs. Some people think it is no big deal because they're not taking an illegal drug, it's okay because a doctor prescribed it to someone, it may be easier to get than illegal drugs, they think it will be fun and harmless, it will help them study, or it will help them fit in. The reality is, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter drugs all affect the brain. The misuse or abuse of any drug can cause serious physical and mental health problems.

When a doctor prescribes a medication to a person, many things are taken into consideration - things like the person's medical need for the drug, their medical history, age, weight, allergies, and other medications the person is taking. The doctor also explains things to avoid, how to safely use the medication, and how long a person will need to be on it. A prescription drug may be very safe for one person and dangerous for another person.”



Activity: Get the Facts Straight

- Have students work with a partner or in small groups.
- Distribute the **Get the Facts Straight** worksheet.
- Explain that there are often many myths about prescription drug use, misuse, and abuse. It is important to recognize the myths and understand the facts.

- Review the **Prescription Drug Misuse Fact Sheet**.
- Direct students to read each scenario. Discuss the myth that it represents.
- Have the students refer to the fact sheet to find the fact that clears up the misinformation.
- Then, consider the dangers of the myth. Students should take into consideration the potential health, social, legal, and mental dangers.
- Have students share their answers.

Answer Key

- *Emmy takes some of her mother’s prescription painkillers. She tells her friends, “It’s safe to use these, a doctor prescribed them.”*
 - *What is the myth? It is safe to use a prescription drug that was not prescribed to you.*
 - *What is the fact? You should never take a prescription drug that was not prescribed for you. Prescription drugs should be taken for a legitimate medical reason, in the proper dosage, by the person they were prescribed for, and who is under the care of a doctor.*
 - *What are the dangers?*
- *Jayden is hanging out with friends. He is offered a prescription pill and told it will give him a great high. It is stimulant used to help with focus and attention. Jayden does not have a medical condition that requires the use of a stimulant. When he questions if it is safe, his friends tell him it is not big deal to take someone else’s prescription once in a while.*
 - *What is the myth? Taking prescription drugs prescribed to someone else is a safe way to get high, if you only use them once in a while.*
 - *What is the fact? Taking someone else’s prescription drug is never safe. If taken to get high, a prescription drugs can be dangerous and cause serious health problems – even unintended death.*
 - *What are the dangers?*
- *Terrance and Marcus are working on a report about drug abuse. They are researching prescription drug abuse among teenagers. A friend asks why they picked that topic since no one actually abuses prescription drugs.*
 - *What is the myth? Teen prescription drug misuse is uncommon.*
 - *What is the fact? The three most common drugs misused and abused by teens are marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs.*
 - *What are the dangers?*

10

10th Grade Extension Activity



“When we think about drug use, misuse, abuse, and addiction, we often think about illegal drugs. However, prescription and over-the-counter drugs can also be misused and an addiction can be formed. In fact, this is a very serious problem.

When a doctor prescribes a medication, many things are taken into consideration. The age and weight of the person, their medical

history, their medical condition, allergies, and any other medication the person is taking. The doctor also explains things to avoid, how to safely use the medication, and how long the person will be on the medication. A prescription drug may be very safe for one person and dangerous for another person.

All drugs, including over-the-counter and prescription medication, affect the brain. If taken properly, these drugs can have positive health benefits, like helping clear up a bad cough or decreasing your pain. However, if misused, there can be very serious consequences that could result in serious physical and mental health problems – even unintended death.”



Activity: Why It's a Problem

- Project and review the **Facts You Need to Know**.
- Explain that people often think drug misuse and abuse only occurs with illegal drugs.
- Ask students to consider the following statement: Prescription drugs aren't dangerous because a doctor prescribed them.
- Distribute the **Why It's a Problem** worksheet.
- Have students work in small groups to answer the questions on the Why It's a Problem worksheet.
- Have students share their answers.



11th Grade Extension Activity

Ask students to think about the following questions. They do not have to answer aloud.

- When you think about drug misuse and abuse, what drugs do you think of?
- When you think about someone being addicted to drugs, what drugs come to mind?
- Can over-the-counter and prescription drugs be misused and abused?
- Is it a problem to take more of an over-the-counter drug than specified on the directions?
- Is it okay to take a prescription drug that was not prescribed to you?
- Can someone get addicted to an over-the-counter drug or a prescription drug?



“Addiction to, misuse of, and abuse of over-the-counter and prescription drugs is a very serious problem. Prescription drugs are intended to be used under the care of a doctor, for a legitimate medical need, and in the correct dosage. The misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is both illegal and unsafe.

Over-the-counter medications have very specific directions for dosage, how often they can be taken, and things to avoid when taking the medication. Likewise, when a doctor prescribes a

medication, many things are taken into consideration – like the person’s medical need for the drug, their medical history, age, allergies, weight, other medications the person is taking. The doctor also explains things to avoid, how to safely use the medication, and how long a person needs to be on the medication. A prescription drug may be very safe for one person and dangerous for another person. All drugs and medication interact with the brain. When misused, that interaction can cause serious physical and mental health problems – and even death.”



Activity: Myth or Fact

- Print enough copies of **Myth or Fact Cards** for each group of six students. If possible, print the Myth and Fact cards on different colors of paper.
- Cut the Myth cards and place in a plastic bag or paperclip together. Then, cut the Fact cards and place in a plastic bag or paperclip together.
- Give each group a set of Myth cards and a set of Fact cards.
- Have the students distribute one Myth card to each student in the group. Each student will read their myth aloud.
- Have the students randomly distribute one Fact card to each group member. Each student will read the Fact aloud.
- Match each Myth with the Fact that clears up the misinformation.
- Upon completion, have each group share one myth and fact pairing.
- Discuss the myths and facts. Consider new information or surprising facts they learned.

Answer Key

<i>MYTH: It is safe to use someone else’s prescription drugs to get high because they were prescribed by a doctor.</i>	<i>FACT: Using a prescription drug without a doctor prescribing it for you can be dangerous.</i>
<i>MYTH: It is safer to use prescription drugs to get high than using illegal drugs.</i>	<i>FACT: Using prescription drugs to get high can be just as dangerous as using illegal drugs.</i>
<i>MYTH: If my doctor prescribed a drug, even if I misuse it, I can’t get addicted to it.</i>	<i>FACT: Improper use of prescription drugs can lead to addiction, serious health problems, and a risk of overdose.</i>
<i>MYTH: Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol does not increase the risk of accidental overdose or death.</i>	<i>FACT: Mixing prescription pills with other drugs or alcohol increases the risk of death from accidental overdose.</i>

MYTH: I am about the same size as my friend, so it is okay to take their prescription medication.

FACT: It is illegal to share a prescription drug with another person. Doctors consider many factors when prescribing a drug – so what is safely prescribed to one person may be harmful to another person. FACT: It is illegal to share a prescription drug with another person. Doctors consider many factors when prescribing a drug – so what is safely prescribed to one person may be harmful to another person.

MYTH: Prescription painkillers only help deal with pain, they are not addictive. Prescription painkillers are designed to manage extreme pain.

FACT: They should not be taken to manage everyday aches and pains a person may experience. When misused, they are highly addictive.

Teacher Tip:

Remind students that taking a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them is both illegal and dangerous.

12

12th Grade Extension Activity

Have students consider each of the following questions to get an idea of their thoughts and opinions about over-the-counter and prescription drug misuse. These questions are intended for their consideration; answers to the questions may or may not be discussed with the group.

- You slip and hurt your back. Someone offers you a painkiller. You are only going to take it this once. Is that okay?
- You have a really bad cold. You took over-the-counter medication, but you still feel bad. You aren't supposed to take more for another 3 hours. Is it a problem to take more now?
- You have a big report to present before your class. You are really nervous about speaking in front of the class. Is it okay to take someone else's anxiety medication to help you calm down?

TL

"You might think that it is okay to decide how much over-the-counter medication you need instead of following the directions...that it is okay to take someone else's prescription, because if it safe for them it will be okay for you... that it is safe to take a prescription drug for fun or to get high. However, these choices are not safe. In reality,

there is a very serious problem with misuse of over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

Keep in mind that over-the-counter medications have very specific directions for the dosage, how often they can be taken, and things to avoid when taking the medication. When a doctor prescribes a medication, many things are taken into consideration – things like the person’s medical need for the drug, their medical history, age, weight, allergies, and other medications the person is taking. The doctor also explains things to avoid, how to safely use the medication, and how long a person will need to take the medication. A prescription drug may be very safe for one person and dangerous for another person. All drugs and medication interact with the brain. When misused, that interaction can cause serious physical and mental health problems – and even death.

Many of you will be living independently soon. You will be making your own choices and decisions. With greater independence comes greater responsibility. It is important to make safe decisions regarding over-the-counter and prescription drugs, and those safe choices should begin right now.

Many people hear about the consequences of risky behavior and know that there are real dangers to drug use and abuse, but they think those dangers don’t apply to them. That may explain why teens use and sometimes get addicted to drugs, nicotine, and alcohol. Even though they know the risks and dangers, they believe that those things can happen to other people, but will not happen to them.

For example, someone may know the facts but may think the dangers and consequences won’t happen to them:

- Misusing prescription drugs can lead to addiction – but that won’t happen to me!*
- Taking more of a prescription drug than prescribed can cause serious health problems – but that won’t happen to me!*
- Using someone else’s prescription drug once or twice can be dangerous – but that won’t happen to me!*
- More than half of all deaths from overdoses involve prescription drugs – but that won’t happen to me!*
- The reality is – it could happen to you!*

The person who gets addicted to prescription painkillers did not think it would happen to them; the person who ends up in the hospital because of an accidental overdose did not think it would happen to them; and the person who has a serious and dangerous

reaction to taking someone else's prescription did not think it would happen to them."



Activity: It Could Happen to Me

- Project and review the **Fact Sheet**.
- Distribute the **It Could Happen to Me** worksheet.
- Have students work in small groups to complete the activity.
- Have one group member read each scenario aloud. Then, discuss the misconception about what won't happen to them. The group should refer to the Fact Sheet to help determine what could happen.
- Share answers upon completion.

Teacher Tip:

Encourage students to review their answers and reflect on their wellbeing. As they face new situations and new challenges after high school, they will need to continue to develop self-awareness and monitor their wellbeing.



Written Reflection:

There may be a time when you tell yourself – “It won’t happen to me.” Consider what you have learned about the consequences of drug use. What can you do to change your thinking from “It won’t happen to me” to “It could happen to me.”

How can this shift in thinking help you make safe decisions?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

Lesson 5-MH

Addiction MATERIALS

- Dangers of Drug Use – to be projected
- The Stages of Addiction – to be projected
- The Brain and Addiction – to be projected
- What Do They Have to Lose?
- What Do I Have to Lose?
- Get the Facts Straight worksheet including the Prescription Drug Misuse Fact Sheet – 9th Grade
- Facts You Need to Know – to be projected – 10th Grade
- Why It's A Problem – 10th Grade
- Myth or Fact Cards – 11th Grade
- Fact Sheet – to be projected – 12th Grade
- It Could Happen to Me – 12th Grade

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org
or LaurensKids.org.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Dangers of Drug Use

Brain Development

- Lower intelligence
- Slower thinking and processing of information
- Slower reaction time
- Difficulty performing simple tasks
- Decreased impulse control
- Impaired judgement
- Difficulty learning and retaining information
- Impaired memory
- Mental disorders and mental illness

Physical Development

- Reduced growth rate
- Lower bone density
- Organ damage including heart & liver
- Disruption to brain development

Physical Health

- Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Lung Disease
- Weakened Immune System
- Disease – Hepatitis, HIV (intravenous drugs)

School and work

- Decreased importance of school/work
- Decreased performance in school/work
- Inability to focus

- Failing grades and failing classes
- Being fired from work

Legal Problems

- Arrest for purchase, possession, or selling drugs
- Arrest for being under the influence of drugs
- Arrest for driving under the influence
- Arrest for stealing to obtain money to buy drugs

Problems with Relationships with Family and Friends

- Ignoring obligations with family and friends
- Changing peer groups
- Disconnecting with previous activities
- Increased aggression, more willing to argue and fight
- Stealing money for drugs from family and friends
- Inability to enjoy activities without being high

Financial Problems

- Money needed to purchase drugs
- Money needed for legal expenses
- Housing may be denied after drug convictions
- Medical bills from treatment or medical issues caused by drug use

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

The Stages of Addiction

1. TRYING – When a person tries or experiments with a drug for the first time. This experimentation may be due to pressure from friends and/or trying to fit in. It may be due to curiosity about what it is like to use the drug or to be rebellious. Most people can stop using the drug on their own at this stage. However, if the drug is being used in response to a problem or to “feel better,” help is needed to resolve the underlying reason for using the drug.



2. USING – When a person continues to regularly use the drug because of how it makes them feel. The use of the drug is part of daily life. The use of the drug is predictable (every weekend or when hanging out with friends) or under specific circumstances (when feeling sad, stressed, worried, or lonely). The drug interacts with the brain. The changes in the brain can last hours, days, weeks, or even months before returning to normal.



3. MISUSING – When a person continues to use the drug, despite harm it is causing. Tolerance can develop with misuse, requiring more and more of the drug to get the same effect. The person may begin to show changes in behavior and engage in risky behaviors or activities. A person may begin using the drug at times that are inappropriate - such as before or at school. The drug misuse can lead to failure to take responsibility for obligations with family, friends, school, or work. Tolerance is a sign of misuse and a red flag of addiction.



4. ABUSING – When the person must continue using the drug because they have a mental and/or physical dependence on that drug. Without the drug, withdrawal causes the person to feel anxious, sick, or to have a physical reaction. The person believes that the drug is needed to feel normal, and they use the drug at times that are not appropriate. At this stage, a substance abuse treatment program may be needed to stop using the drug.



5. ADDICTION – When the person is unable to stop using the drug. The need for the drug is so overwhelming it can cause serious problems, including health problems, money problems, and relationship problems. The person often denies that they have a problem with drugs. The need for the drug may motivate the person to do whatever is needed to get more of the drug, putting them at risk for dangerous behavior. Addiction requires the help of a professional addiction treatment program.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

The Brain and Addiction

- Using the drug causes the release of the hormone dopamine in the brain. Dopamine causes feelings of pleasure. The brain remembers these pleasant feelings and desires to repeat them.
- The brain is wired for survival. We need food and water to survive. Drugs can cause the brain to place the use of the drug at the same level of survival as food and water.
- Changes in the brain result in loss of good judgement, including the inability to think clearly, the inability to make good decisions, and the inability to control behavior.
- Changes in the brain cause a person to think the drug is needed to feel normal.
- The addiction to the drug causes the desire and craving for the drug to be the most important thing in a person's life. The drug is more important than family, friends, school, work, health, and even happiness.
- The addiction to the drug is so strong that it interferes with the ability to recognize that an addiction has developed and that the drugs are controlling all aspects of a person's life.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

What Do They Have to Lose?

Directions: Read each student's biography. Determine the consequences of each stage of addiction.

Devon is an 11th grade student. He plays on the school soccer team and is also on a club team. He has several Division 1 colleges interested in him. He studies and works hard to get good grades.

Consequences: Trying

Consequences: Using

Consequences: Misusing

Consequences: Abusing

Consequences: Addiction

Aniyah is a 10th grade student. She has always wanted to go to college to become a nurse. Her father has suffered from cancer and she has spent a lot of time in hospitals. She decided she wants to become a nurse to help other people.

Consequences: Trying

Consequences: Using

Consequences: Misusing

Consequences: Abusing

Consequences: Addiction

Alexis is a 12th grade student. She has always struggled in school. She works hard, but still gets low grades sometimes. She worked at a daycare center last summer. She loves working with children and hopes to get her certification as a daycare assistant after high school graduation.

Consequences: Trying

Consequences: Using

Consequences: Misusing

Consequences: Abusing

Consequences: Addiction

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

What Do I Have to Lose?

My Biography:

Consequences: Trying

Consequences: Using

Consequences: Misusing

Consequences: Abusing

Consequences: Addiction

Review your potential consequences from different stages of addiction. Set three personal goals that include healthy choices to enhance your wellbeing.

Goal 1:

Healthy Choices:

Goal 2:

Healthy Choices:

Goal 3:

Healthy Choices:

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Get the Facts Straight

Directions: Review the Prescription Drug Misuse Fact Sheet. Read each scenario. Determine the myth in the scenario. Then, find the fact. Consider the potential dangers of the myth.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE FACT SHEET

Fact: Taking someone else's prescription drug is never safe. If taken to get high, a prescription drugs can be dangerous and cause serious health problems – even unintended death.

Fact: You should never take a prescription drug that was not prescribed for you. Prescription drugs should be taken for a legitimate medical reason, in the proper dosage, by the person they were prescribed for, and who is under the care of a doctor.

Fact: The three most common drugs misused and abused by teens are marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs.

1. Emmy takes some of her mother's prescription painkillers. She tells her friends, "It's safe to use these, a doctor prescribed them."

What is the myth?

What is the fact?

What are the dangers?

2. Jayden is hanging out with friends. He is offered a prescription pill and told it will give him a great high. It is stimulant used to help with focus and attention. Jayden does not have a medical condition that requires the use of a stimulant. When he questions if it is safe, his friends tell him it is not big deal to take someone else's prescription every once in a while.

What is the myth?

What is the fact?

What are the dangers?

3. Terrance and Marcus are working on a report about drug abuse. They are researching prescription drug abuse among teenagers. A friend asks why they picked that topic since no one actually abuses prescription drugs.

What is the myth?

What is the fact?

What are the dangers?

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Facts You Need to Know

- About 25% of teens say they have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription.
- More than half of drug overdoses that result in death involve prescription drugs.
- Health problems from misuse and abuse of prescription drugs:
 - **Depressant** – can cause severe slowing of the respiratory system (breathing)
 - **Painkiller** – can cause blurry vision, impaired thinking, sleepiness, nausea, depression
 - **Stimulant** – can cause racing or irregular heartbeat, high body temperature, paranoia, anxiety
- Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can result in addiction.
- Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can result in death.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Why It's a Problem

Directions: Consider the statement: "Prescription drugs aren't dangerous because a doctor prescribed them." Use the **Facts You Need to Know** to complete the worksheet.

PART 1: Answer each question using information from the **Facts You Need to Know**.

1. What are some of the dangers of using prescription drugs that were not prescribed to you?

2. What are the dangers of using more of a prescription drug than was prescribed?

PART 2: Rewrite each statement with information from the Facts You Need to Know.

1. Addiction to prescription drugs is not a problem.

2. Teens do not misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

3. Misusing prescription drugs will not impair my thinking.

4. No one ever dies from prescription drug misuse.

5. Misusing prescription drugs will not affect my heart.

PART 3: Use the **Facts You Need to Know** and the knowledge you gained completing this worksheet to create a factual statement to replace "Prescription drugs aren't dangerous because a doctor prescribed them."

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Myth or Fact Cards



MYTH: It is safe to use someone else's prescription drugs to get high because they were prescribed by a doctor.

FACT: Using a prescription drug without a doctor prescribing it for you can be dangerous.

MYTH: It is safer to use prescription drugs to get high than using illegal drugs.

FACT: Using prescription drugs to get high can be just as dangerous as using illegal drugs.

MYTH: If my doctor prescribed a drug, even if I misuse it, I can't get addicted to it.

FACT: Improper use of prescription drugs can lead to addiction, serious health problems, and a risk of overdose.

MYTH: Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol does not increase the risk of accidental overdose or death.

FACT: Mixing prescription pills with other drugs or alcohol increases the risk of death from accidental overdose.

MYTH: I am about the same size as my friend, so it is okay to take their prescription medication.

FACT: It is illegal to share a prescription drug with another person. Doctors consider many factors when prescribing a drug – so what is safely prescribed to one person may be harmful to another person.

MYTH: Prescription painkillers only help deal with pain, they are not addictive.

FACT: Prescription painkillers are designed to manage extreme pain. They should not be taken to manage everyday aches and pains a person may experience. When misused, they are highly addictive.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

Fact Sheet

- About 25% of teens say they have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription.
- More than half of drug overdoses that result in death involve prescription drugs.
- Health problems from misuse and abuse of prescription drugs:
 - **Depressant** – can cause severe slowing of the respiratory system (breathing)
 - **Painkiller** – can cause blurry vision, impaired thinking, sleepiness, nausea, depression
 - **Stimulant** – can cause racing or irregular heartbeat, high body temperature, paranoia, anxiety
- Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can result in addiction.
- Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can result in death.
- Using a prescription drug without a doctor prescribing it for you can be dangerous.
- Using prescription drugs to get high can be just as dangerous as using illegal drugs.
- Improper use of prescription drugs can lead to addiction, serious health problems, and a risk of overdose.
- Mixing prescription pills with other drugs or alcohol increases the risk of death from accidental overdose.
- It is illegal to share a prescription drug with another person. Doctors consider many factors when prescribing a drug – so what is safely prescribed to one person may be harmful to another person.
- Prescription painkillers are designed to manage extreme pain. They should not be taken to manage everyday aches and pains a person may experience. When misused, they are highly addictive.

Lesson 5 - Mental Health

Addiction

It Could Happen to Me

Directions: Read each scenario. Discuss and determine what the person thinks won't happen to them. Then, refer to the Fact Sheet to determine what could actually happen.

1. I am a freshman in college. I have never taken drugs and I don't drink alcohol. I have this huge test tomorrow and I have so much studying to do. My roommate offers me her medication that she takes for attention. She says it will help me focus and stay up all night to study. I have heard it is dangerous to take medication that is not prescribed to me. But I'll be fine.

Identify the "but it won't happen to me."

What could happen?

2. I am a varsity athlete. I hurt my leg in the last game. The trainer said it will be a couple weeks before it feels better. I really need to get back on the field. This kid in the locker room said he could get me some painkillers. If my leg doesn't hurt, I can get back on the field. People always say taking prescription medication that was not prescribed for you is dangerous and can have serious side effects, but that won't happen to me.

Identify the "but it won't happen to me."

What could happen?

3. My doctor prescribed painkillers last year after I had surgery on my broken arm. I only used about half of them. I am feeling really stressed about everything going on – graduation, planning for next year, moving away from home, and so much more! I think it will be okay to take the medication to feel better. People say it is easy to get addicted to prescription painkillers, but that won't happen to me.

Identify the “but it won't happen to me.”

What could happen?

4. I am at a party with my friends. I have only had a couple of drinks. I am taking a prescription drug for my anxiety. I know the doctor told me not to mix alcohol with the medication because it can cause problems. They always tell you that long list of risks, including death...but that won't happen to me because I haven't had that much to drink.

Identify the “but it won't happen to me.”

What could happen?

3. I have been seeing a doctor and have prescription medication. The problem is, it just doesn't work as well as it used to. I think it is okay to take it more often than prescribed. I was told that there are serious side effects if I take too much of this medication, but I know my body and I'm sure I'll be fine.

Identify the “but it won't happen to me.”

What could happen?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 6

MENTAL HEALTH

WELLBEING

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

WELLBEING

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain awareness of strategies to cope with stress
- Students will practice strategies to cope with stress
- Students will gain awareness of resilience and how to increase personal resilience
- Students will gain awareness of the importance of making healthy decisions
- Students will assess their own decision-making as it pertains to their wellbeing

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding that everyone faces stressful situations, and it is important to have strategies to deal with and manage stress. Students will gain an understanding of resilience and how to build resilience. Students will learn that lifestyle choices can impact their physical and mental wellbeing. By assessing current lifestyle choices, students will develop personal goals to enhance their wellbeing.

MATERIALS:

- Managing Stress – to be projected
- Building Resilience – to be projected
- Making Healthy Decisions worksheet
- Written Reflection – to be projected
- Get Up and Go OR Let it Go worksheet – 10th Grade
- Managing Stress – to be projected – 11th Grade
- Time to Reset worksheet – 11th Grade
- Never Too Late to Play worksheet – 12th Grade

KEY VOCABULARY:

- **Resilience:** The ability to cope with and “bounce back” from life’s challenges and traumatic events
- **Stress:** Feeling worried or uneasy about something.
- **Stressor:** The event or circumstance that makes you feel stressed.

LESSON 6 OUTLINE:

Teacher Tip:

Teachers may have differing comfort levels with this material, and the scripts are provided for teachers as a support for implementing this important information. The intent is for teachers to use any or all parts of the scripts that are helpful in delivering the content of the lesson’s message. Teachers will want to review the scripts in the lesson prior to teaching to provide the background knowledge they will need to deliver the content in an age-appropriate manner for high school students.

1. INTRODUCTION



“We all face challenges in our daily lives; some challenges can be more stressful than others. It is important to learn how to manage stress. We are going to learn about and practice some activities that can be used to manage stress. You are also going to learn about how lifestyle choices can impact your physical and mental wellbeing. By reviewing your current choices, you will determine how to set personal goals to enhance your wellbeing.”

2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities allow students to apply the knowledge they are acquiring in each lesson of *Safer, Smarter Teens* and reinforce important safety concepts. Implementing these activities is a critical part of the curriculum. This lesson is designed to be 45 minutes in length. The activities are designed to be completed individually, with partners, in small groups, or with the entire class. To limit the need to photocopy each activity for each student, many activities can be projected to allow for class discussion rather than completing a worksheet.



A. Coping with Stress

- Remind students that there are events in everyone’s lives that can be stressful. It is important to learn how to manage stress.
- Have students discuss ideas of how to promote health and wellbeing, and reduce stress.
- Make a list on the board.
- Project and distribute the **Managing Stress** handout.
- Add strategies from the Managing Stress handout that may be missing from the student-generated list on the board.

B. Relaxation Activities

- Review and practice each relaxation strategy with the class.
- Remind students that everyone has a different comfort level. If they are uncomfortable participating, they can sit quietly.

Breathing to Relax.

- Explain that research has shown that inhaling for three seconds and then exhaling for five seconds can trigger the calming portions of the brain.
- To fully benefit from the breathing activity, the inhale should fill the lungs completely and the exhale should push all of the air out of the lungs.
- Instruct student to sit up straight with both feet on the floor.
- Have students close their eyes or look at a specific focus spot and soften their gaze.
- Begin by taking a very deep, slow, audible inhale and exhale.
- Have students inhale for three seconds and exhale for five seconds:
 - Say “Inhale, one, two, three”
 - Say, “Exhale, one, two, three, four, five”
- Repeat three to five times or until students feel more relaxed and focused.

Muscle Relaxation

This exercise is to be performed in combination with the Breathing to Relax technique above.

- Begin by asking students to notice how they feel. Is there a specific part of the body that has any pain? Is there a part of the body that feels tight or is holding tension?
- Explain that through this activity, students should notice each part of their body and work to relax their muscles.
- Instruct students to sit up straight with both feet on the floor.
- Have students close their eyes or look at a specific focus spot and soften their gaze.
- Begin by taking a very deep, slow, audible inhale and exhale.
- Have students inhale for three seconds and exhale for five seconds:
 - Say “Inhale, one, two, three”
 - Say, “Exhale, one, two, three, four, five”
- After two or three breathing sequences, remind students to continue breathing as instructed.
- Say, “Notice how your head feels. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your head.”
- Say, “Notice how your jaw feels. Is there any pain? Do you feel tension in your jaw? Is your tongue against the top of your mouth? With the next breath, relax, soften the jaw, relax the tongue, and move tension out.”

- Say, “Notice how your neck feels. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your neck.”
- Say, “Notice how your shoulders feel. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your shoulders.”
- Say, “Notice how your arms feel. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your arms.”
- Say, “Notice how your back feels. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your back.”
- Say, “Notice how your legs feel. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your legs.”
- Say, “Notice how your feet feel. Is there any pain? Do you feel any tension? With the next breath, relax and move the tension out of your feet and into the floor.”
- Say, “Continue to inhale and exhale. Notice how you feel. Now open your eyes as you continue to inhale and exhale.”
- Say, “Take one last deep inhale and exhale and then breathe normally.”

Relaxing Words

This exercise is to be performed in combination with the Breathing to Relax technique.

- Have students think of a word that they find pleasant or relaxing, such as peace, beach, sun, calm, forest, or breeze.
- Explain that with each exhale, the student will silently say the word to themselves.
- Remind students that when feeling stressed or tense they can say the word to themselves to trigger a calming response.
- Instruct students to sit up straight with both feet on the floor.
- Have students close their eyes or look at a specific focus spot and soften their gaze.
- Begin by taking a very deep, slow, audible inhale and exhale.
- Have students inhale for three seconds and exhale for five seconds.
 - Say “Inhale, one, two, three”
 - Say, “Exhale - say your calming word- one, two, three, four, five”
- Repeat three to five times or until students feel more relaxed and focused.

C. Resilience



“We have talked about how everyone faces stressful situations at certain times in their lives. Why do some people seem to overcome things while others are overwhelmed and have difficulty coping? One factor is resilience. Resilience is the

ability to cope with and 'bounce back' from life's challenges and traumatic events. While some people may be born with resilience, we know that everyone can build their resilience.

There are some qualities that have been identified in resilient teens:

- High self-esteem
- The ability to ask for help
- Belief that their actions can make a difference for the better
- Support from a caring adult in their lives”



D. Building Resilience

- Have students think of a stressful or difficult situation they have faced recently – a big test, family issue, health issues, financial problems. **Note: students are to think of this personal stressor, not share it with the class.**
- Ask students to remember how they handled or are currently handling the situation.
- Have students rank on a scale of 1 to 10 how well they feel they have coped with this situation.
- Without sharing their stressor, ask students to share some internal and external factors that helped their resilience. Make a list of the answers on the board. For example:
 - Internal – making healthy lifestyle choices, understanding I can't control everything but can ask for help when I need it, practicing gratitude, setting and achieving goals in spite of difficulties
 - External – having a loving caregiver, having a counselor at school that really listens, having a best friend, positive influence from teammates, the love of a pet
- Project the **Building Resilience** chart.
- Share additional supports from the **Building Resilience** list.



E. Building Resilience

- Discuss how daily activities can enhance or decrease wellbeing. Distribute the **Making Healthy Decisions** activity.
 - a. Have students read the list of activities and mark with an X the activities that contribute to positive wellbeing.
 - b. Have students review the activity list and mark with an X the activities they have participated in during the past week.
 - c. Have students generate a list of 5 –10 activities that will help enhance their overall wellbeing.



Written Reflection:

Provide students with the following three writing prompts. Students will select one topic and write a one-page reflection.

Written Reflection Topics

- a. How can writing or journaling help with your wellbeing?
- b. Resilience is the ability to recover or “bound back” after facing a difficult situation. Consider your personal strengths that can help you be resilient in a difficult situation. Describe your strengths and how they will help you be resilient.
- c. Review the answers on the Marking Healthy Decisions worksheet that illustrate healthy decisions. Write a fictional story about a teenager who uses their personal strengths to overcome obstacles and make health decisions.

GRADE LEVEL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

9

9th Grade Extension Activity

- Explain that each day we face a variety of situations or circumstances that may be stressful. It can be helpful to take a moment to relax and “center yourself” so you don’t become too overwhelmed.
- One way to do that is to take an imaginary vacation. There are times we want to “get away” – and while we may not be able to physically get away from our stressors, we can take an imaginary vacation.
- Ask students:
 - Imagine where you would go if you could go on a dream vacation.
 - Who would be with you?
 - What would you be doing?
- Have students sit in a comfortable position and take several slow, deep, audible breaths.
- Have students close their eyes or soften their gaze, and let their imagination take them on a vacation.
- After a few minutes, have students return from the vacation, back to class.
- Remind students that taking an imaginary vacation can be a good way to manage stress and relax your system.

10

10th Grade Extension Activity

- Explain that it is important to learn how to deal with stress. Managing stress positively and productively can help you feel healthier and happier.
- One way to manage stress is by figuring out what you do and do not have control over, and letting go of the things you cannot control.
- Start by determining what is stressing you out.
- Next, decide if there is anything you can do to change the situation so that it is no longer causing you stress.
- If there is something you can do, then take control and develop a plan of action that will reduce the stress.

- For example, let's say you have an essay due in one week. You are feeling stressed. What can you do about it? How can you take control of this stress?
- Have students share their answers.
- If you decide that the stress or the situation is outside of your control, you cannot change the circumstances. You will only continue to feel stressed by trying to create this impossible change. There is no use trying to control something you have no power over.
 - For example, let's say you get back your graded essay and you received a low grade. You can worry, you can be upset, you can have negative self-talk. But this stress will not change the situation. You can create a plan for the future to avoid a similar result. What could you do differently next time?
 - Have students share answers.
- If the stressor is out of your control and there is nothing you can do to change it, you need to learn to let it go.



Activity: Get Up and Go OR Let it Go

- Distribute the **Get Up and Go OR Let it Go** worksheet.
- Have students work individually to consider the things that cause them stress. Determine if the stressors are things they can control. If so, students should get up and go to create a plan to help manage the stress. If not, students should let it go as best they can.
- Remind students that whether a stressor is something they can change or not, they can always ask for help from a friend or trusted adult.



11th Grade Extension Activity

Class discussion:

- Explain that sometimes life gets very hectic and busy. At those times, our thoughts and emotions can be just as chaotic. We have to remember that we are not our thoughts – rather, our thoughts are a result of the situation we're in.
- For example, let's say you have three tests this week, practice every day after school, and your boss wants you work some extra shifts. Your thoughts may be, "I can't do this!" "I am totally overwhelmed!" "Why does this always happen to me?!"
- Ask students to think of a time when they felt overwhelmed or stressed by everything they had to do.
- Explain that at these times, we need to stop and take moment to reset. This is a way to press an internal pause button. Maybe you want to use one of the relaxation activities we practiced earlier, or just take a few deep breaths. Maybe you can make a healthy choice that will make you feel good, like taking a walk, reading a book, or writing down a step-by-step plan or schedule for how you can accomplish all you have going on.



- **Project and review the strategies discussed earlier for managing stress.**
- Have students share specific ideas of strategies they have used or would consider using.



Activity: Time to Reset

- Distribute the **Time to Reset** worksheet.
- Have students consider a time when things were busy, hectic, or stressful.
- Working individually, have students think of three strategies they can use to “hit the reset button.”



12th Grade Extension Activity

- Ask students to try to remember playing outside or using their imagination when they were younger. Have them share the play activities, such as blowing bubbles, swinging, playing with toy cars or dolls, or doing art projects.
- Explain that there are benefits to play, not just for young children, for people of any age.
 - Play relieves stress because it helps to release endorphins which help us to feel good.
 - Play improves our brain function by helping with memory, problem solving, and social interaction. We learn better when things are fun.
 - Play improves our relationships with others. Having fun, laughing, and playfully interacting helps us gain trust, compassion and empathy for others.
 - Play helps to develop creativity by stimulating imagination and problem-solving.
 - Play helps us recharge.



Activity: Never Too Late to Play

- Distribute the **Never Too Late to Play** worksheet.
- Explain that sometimes we think we are too old to play, but it is important to always keep play in our lives. It could be as simple as playing a board game with friends, putting a puzzle together with your family, doing an art project, or playing catch with your neighbor.
- Have students think about play in their lives.
 - How often do they currently play?
 - What games or activities do they play?
 - Who do they play with?
 - What can they do to increase opportunities to play?
 - What can they do to make sure they always keep play in their lives?
 - Does online play make you feel differently than offline play?

SAFER, SMARTER TEENS

LESSON 6-MH

Wellbeing MATERIALS

- **Managing Stress – to be projected**
- **Building Resilience – to be projected**
- **Making Healthy Decisions**
- **Written Reflection – to be projected**
- **Get Up and Go OR Let it Go – 10th Grade**
- **Managing Stress – to be projected – 11th Grade**
- **Time to Reset worksheet – 11th Grade**
- **Never Too Late to Play – 12th Grade**

For more information, visit SaferSmarterTeens.org
or LaurensKids.org.

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Managing Stress

- **Get relaxed:** relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, visualization, and mindfulness activities
- **Get creative:** explore drawing, writing, or music
- **Get moving:** try yoga, exercise, dance, or just taking a walk
- **Get outside:** try an outdoor activity in nature
- **Get with friends:** talk to a friend or trusted adult
- **Get help:** reach out to a friend or trusted adult and ask for help

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Building Resilience

- Write your own narrative with a positive outcome. You are not defined by your circumstances; you can write the positive story of your future and there are people who want to help you succeed.
- Feeling supported, loved, cared for, and accepted. Consider the people in your life (family, friends, coaches, teachers, trusted adults) that are important to you and increase your wellbeing. Interact with and get support from these important people in your life.
- Participate in the things you enjoy. Attend an art show, go to a movie, or go to a sporting event.
- Share the activities you enjoy with the important people in your life.
- Get active – play a game or play a sport. Enjoy a safe, creative, and stress-reducing activity.
- Find activities that are calming, positive, and supportive.
- Talk to trusted friends and adults that can help support you and increase resilience. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices – avoid substance abuse, drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping.
- Set goals – both long and short term – and find people in your life who can help you work to achieve these goals.

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Making Healthy Decisions

Directions: Daily activities can contribute to positive mental and physical wellbeing. Review the list of activities below. Determine if each activity contributes to positive wellbeing and mark the column with an X if so. Then, mark with an X the activities you participated in during the past week. Review your activities to determine if they have contributed to your positive wellbeing.

Activity	Positive wellbeing	Participated in the past week
Take a walk		
Quit a team		
Ignore what is bothering you		
Exercise		
Get good sleep each night		
Drink alcohol		
Stop eating		
Call a friend		
Start a fight with a friend		
Listen to music		
Play basketball		
Run away		
Smoke		
Ask for help		
Watch a movie with a friend		
Write in a journal		
Place blame		
Ignore the problem		

Directions: Make a list of 5 – 10 things you will do to promote you own personal wellbeing.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Written Reflection Topics

- a. How can writing or journaling help with your wellbeing?
- b. Resilience is the ability to recover or “bound back” after facing a difficult situation. Consider your personal strengths that can help you be resilient in a difficult situation. Describe your strengths and how they will help you be resilient.
- c. Review the answers on the Marking Healthy Decisions worksheet that illustrate healthy decisions. Write a fictional story about a teenager who uses their personal strengths to overcome obstacles and make health decisions.

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Get Up and Go OR Let it Go

Directions: Think of what causes you stress. Determine if the stressor is something you can control. If so, create a plan to help manage the stress. If not, let it go as best you can. Whether you can control your stressor or not, don't hesitate to reach out to a friend or trusted adult if you need help coping with something going on in your life.

What are three things that you spend a lot of time and energy thinking, worrying, and stressing about? Think about ways you can control and do something about these stressors. If you cannot control the situation, what are ways you can let the stress go?

1. What is causing me stress?

Can I control this situation?

YES – What is my plan?

NO – I need to let it go.

2. What is causing me stress?

Can I control this situation?

YES – What is my plan?

NO – I need to let it go.

3. What is causing me stress?

Can I control this situation?

YES – What is my plan?

NO – I need to let it go.

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Time to Reset

Directions: Think about times when you are very busy, things seem hectic or chaotic, and you have a lot to do. Think of three different “reset” strategies you could use to take a moment to press your internal pause button, and center your thoughts and emotions.



RESET Strategy:



RESET Strategy:



RESET Strategy:

LESSON 6 - MENTAL HEALTH

Wellbeing

Never Too Late to Play

Directions: Write a short answer to each question about play.

How often do I play?

What do I play?

Who do I play with?

What can I do to increase play in my life?

What can I do to keep play in my life?

Resources for Teens

**National Suicide Hotline:
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)**

Toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotlines that connect you to a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center.

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):
800-950-6264 or text NAMI to 741741**

Toll-free, confidential hotline operating Monday – Friday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm (EST). Trained volunteers provide information, referrals, and support to anyone with questions about mental illness.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotlines that connect you to a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center.

Project Safe Place: 1-888-290-7233

Project Safe Place provides access to immediate help and supportive resources for young people in crisis through a network of qualified agencies, businesses, and trained volunteers.

**SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration:
1-300-622-HELP (4357)**

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service in English and Spanish for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

**The Jason Foundation: 1-800-274-TALK (8255)
or text JASON to 741741**

The Jason Foundation provides information, educational programs, and resources to help in the fight against the “silent epidemic” of youth suicide. The Jason Foundation directs those in crisis to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone numbers. Learn more at <http://jasonfoundation.com/>

The Trevor Project: 866-4-U-TREVOR

The Trevor Project operates the only nationwide, around-the-clock crisis and suicide prevention helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. The Trevor Helpline is available as a resource to parents, family members and friends of young people as well. Visit www.TheTrevorProject.org for more information and resources for young people, including “Dear Trevor,” an online Q&A forum for non-time sensitive questions.

TeenScreen.org: 866-833-6727

The TeenScreen National Center for Mental Health Checkups at Columbia University is a non-profit privately funded public health initiative working to increase youth access to regular mental health checkups and the early identification of mental illness. TeenScreen Schools and Communities is the National Center's flagship program, offering mental health checkups to youth through more than 500 local sites in 43 U.S. states. Visit TeenScreen.org to read facts/figures about teenage mental health, and to learn more about the National Center's programs and initiatives.

Standards

Strand HE.912.C: Health Literacy Concepts

Standard 1 **HE.912.C.1:** Core Concepts - Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Standard 2 **HE.912.C.2:** Internal and External Influence - Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Strand HE.912.B: Health Literacy Responsible Behavior

Standard 3 **HE.912.B.3:** Accessing Information - Demonstrate the ability to access valid health information, products, and services to enhance health.

Standard 4 **HE.912.B.4:** Interpersonal Communication - Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal-communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

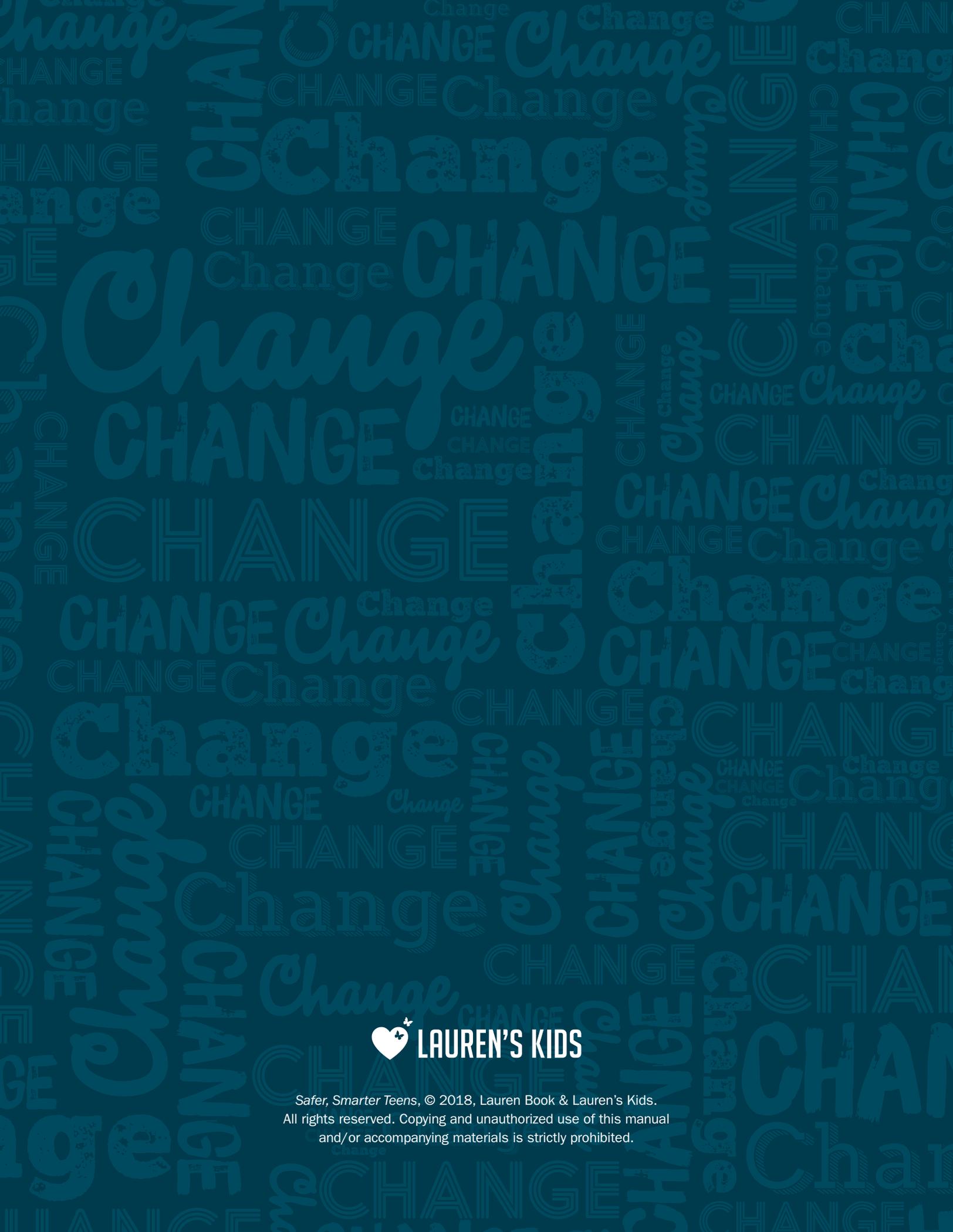
Standard 5 **HE.912.B.5:** Decision Making - Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Standard 6 **HE.912.B.6:** Goal Setting - Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Strand HE.912.P: Health Literacy Promotion

Standard 7 **HE.912.P.7:** Self Management - Demonstrate the ability to practice advocacy, health-enhancing behaviors, and avoidance or reduction of health risks for oneself.

Standard 8 **HE.912.P.8:** Advocacy - Demonstrate the ability to advocate for individual, peer, school, family, and community health.



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