

Mental Wellness Basics Offline Lessons

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Mental Wellness Basics

What is Mental Wellness Basics?

Mental Wellness Basics is the first comprehensive, no-cost digital program designed to help educators foster mental wellness in their classrooms and equip students with lifelong skills to promote positive mental health. The 4 self-paced digital lessons can be easily integrated into any classroom setting.

Mental health is an important element of total health and wellness. Research shows that equipping students with knowledge and tools such as cognitive-behavioral skills not only improves their ability to deal with stressful situations but it also lays the groundwork for preventing significant mental health issues in the future.

By demystifying and defining what mental wellness is, modeling and reinforcing positive behavior, our Mental Wellness Basics course blends evidence informed content with engaging digital activities. This online program teaches students the importance of paying attention to their mental health and the impact of stigma, reinforces the difference between mental wellness and mental illness, helps students understand specific mental illnesses, and provides strategies and steps students can use to seek help when necessary.

Each of the four lessons scaffold students' knowledge to build a comprehensive understanding of what mental wellness is and how to achieve it. Interactive scenarios and digital stories allow students to face stressful situations and manage their mental health effectively while learning how to identify warning signs and how to get help for yourself and for others.

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Key Details

Course Length

4 Lessons, approximately 10-15 minutes each

Target Audience

Grade 8-10

Subject Fit

Health

Standard Alignment

National Health Education Standards (NHES); State Academic Health Standards

Topic Areas

1. Mental Health Basics
2. Understanding Mental Health Disorders
3. Healthy Coping Skills
4. Getting Help

Course Overview

- Lessons:
The course consists of 4 online modules, each lasting approximately 10-15 minutes. Students must first complete the Introduction module entitled “Mental Health Basics,” after completion of the first module, students may complete the remaining modules in any order.
- Assessments:
Each lesson consists of five pre-assessment questions and ten post-assessment questions to measure knowledge gain.
- Offline Lessons:
You can extend the digital program with this package of robust offline lessons, discussion questions, and classroom activities.

How to Use Mental Wellness Basics Offline Lessons

Mental Wellness Basics is accompanied by 8 offline extension lessons, discussion questions, and classroom activities that extend the concepts in each lesson. Each offline lesson can take approximately 25-75 minutes to complete.

The offline lessons are scaffolded, building off of the digital lessons and extending learning into classroom exercises. Mental health is a topic that many of your students have likely been impacted by in some way. As such it is important to be mindful and sensitive to this fact as you engage in the exercises contained in this guide. Conduct follow up discussions as needed, and check in with students about how they are processing and understanding the topics and issues raised in the digital course. Additionally, ensure that you have a resource to direct students to in the event that they would benefit from additional support. This could include a school counselor, one of the resources listed in the digital course, or another individual who has been identified to be able to support students in this capacity.

Digital Lesson	Discussion Questions	Discussion Activity	Extension Lesson
Mental Health Basics	Lesson 1: Debrief and check for understanding with students after completing the digital lesson. (25 mins)	Lesson 1.1: Activity to draft plans to strengthen personal mental health. (45 mins)	Lesson 1.2: Lesson on risk and protective factors and the need for resilience. Digital addiction is addressed. (45 mins)
Understanding Mental Health Disorders	Lesson 2: Debrief and check for understanding with students after completing the digital lesson. (25 mins)	Lesson 2.1: Activity to destigmatize mental disorders by comparing to physical ailments. (45 mins)	Lesson 2.2 Research lesson on mental disorders, finding reputable sources and avoiding stigmatizing language. (75 mins)
Healthy Coping Skills	Lesson 3: Debrief and check for understanding with students after completing the digital lesson. (25 mins)	Lesson 3.1: Activity to understand the positive and negative effects of stress. (45 mins)	Lesson 3.2: Extension Lesson to reframe negative “self-talk.” (45 mins)
Getting Help	Lesson 4: Debrief and check for understanding with students after completing the digital lesson. (25 mins)	Lesson 4.1: Activity to understand and identify stigma. (45 min)	Lesson 4.2: Recognizing and Combating Stigma: A PSA Project. (45 min)



Lesson Plans

LESSON 1

Introduction to Mental Health

🕒 25min Prerequisite: None

Discussion Questions:

- What did you learn about mental health?
- What does stress feel like for you?
Can you give an example of positive or negative stress either in your life or examples that you have seen?
- What can you do to be mentally healthy? (See Lesson 1.1 reference page)
- What were some of the issues students were dealing with in the module and how could they improve their situations?

Student Experiences

Refer to student experiences (below) from the digital Mental Health Basics lesson to serve as examples or as checks for understanding about how they could deal with their situations.

Brian

- ⓘ Brian got into an argument with his parents this morning. He's been thinking about their conversation so much that it's made it hard to pay attention in his classes all day.
- ⊖ Brian's emotions are negatively impacting his day. He may be hurt, angry, or confused, but if he works on his *emotions* he can name what he's feeling and that can help him understand what's causing them. Once he understands what he is feeling, he can start to take action to feel better. This may include sharing his feelings with friends, which could strengthen his *relationships*.

Matias

- ⓘ Matias is feeling exhausted from working a part-time job and trying to keep up with school. He got assigned detention today for sleeping in class.
- ⊖ One area that Matias could work on is getting more sleep. By building healthy *habits* he may be better able to deal with his demanding schedule. To get more sleep, try deep breathing, meditation, reading, listening to calming music, and turning off phones and video games an hour before going to bed.

ⓘ Issues that they faced ⊖ How they could deal with issues

Student Experiences

Zara

- ❗ Zara is a new student at school who feels lonely and isolated. She thinks everyone already has friends and she's scared she doesn't fit in.
- ⊖ Making new friends can be hard, but one thing Zara could try is building new *relationships*. She could start small by reaching out to classmates for advice or to work together on assignments. She could also work on her positive *mindset* by reminding herself that she has a lot to offer. Making good friends can take time, but when she treats herself with compassion, she may feel more confident.

Imani

- ❗ A couple of Imani's classmates have been targeting her on social media. It's made her feel so bad that she's been coming in late a lot and some days avoids school altogether.
- ⊖ Imani can improve her *relationships* by telling family, friends, teachers, and/or counselors what is happening in her life. She can also work on a positive *mindset* by reminding herself of her strengths, that she doesn't deserve what is happening to her, and that this situation won't last forever.

Jennifer

- ❗ Jennifer is juggling honors courses and sports while trying to live up to her parents' high expectations. She regularly skips lunch to catch up on school work.
- ⊖ To be mentally healthy, Jennifer should strengthen her healthy *habits* by eating well-balanced meals and healthy snacks throughout the day. She should also work on her *relationships* and *emotions* by reaching out to friends and family for support and to share her feelings. If she understands that grades are not as important as her mental health, she'll gain a more positive *mindset*.

Sarah

- ❗ Sarah recently had a death in the family and dealing with her emotions has been really hard. She doesn't want anyone to know how upset she is, so she tries to be funny and outgoing so everyone thinks she's okay. She leaves school everyday with a headache and doesn't know why.
- ⊖ Sarah feels like no one understands her. By reaching out to a friend or trusted adult to share her feelings, she could strengthen her *relationships* and realize she's not alone. Sarah could work on her *emotions* by naming what she's feeling and not hiding them.

We encourage you to ask students to write a reflection on what they learned after discussing.

- ❗ Issues that they faced
- ⊖ How they could deal with issues

LESSON 1.1

Strengthening Mental Health Foundations

⌚ 45min **Prerequisite:** Mental Health Basics Lesson in Mental Wellness Basics by EVERFI

Objectives

- Define mental health
- List behaviors that can maintain and contribute to positive mental health
- Evaluate the implementation of the four foundations of mental health in your own life
- Make a plan to improve and strengthen mental health foundations

Materials

- Pencils
- Discussion Handout
- Teacher Reference Page
- Additional Paper for individual plans

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

⌚ 4 min

Format: Partner discussion, class share

Discussion Prompt:

- Did your idea of what mental health is change after completing the module?
- What do you understand now that you didn't before?
- Did anything surprise you?

New Learning

⌚ 5 min

Format: Class discussion

Inform students that in today's lesson they will be making a plan to support and strengthen their own mental health.

Ask students if they are aware that they can improve their mental health and also ask how that might be done.

Activity

🕒 20 min

Format: Write personal definitions and plans, class share

Write personal definitions, share out with the class:

- Have students write their definition of mental health on the handout and be prepared to share with class.
- Before proceeding, be sure that students have some form of the definition that includes mental health as a state of being that enables one to overcome life's challenges.
- Since it deals with personal challenges have students write (what they feel comfortable sharing) their challenges on the handout to help frame the subsequent discussion around how students can handle such challenges.

Discuss in groups, share out with the class:

- Tee up next activity by stating that the foundations of positive mental health can help with overcoming life's challenges. Have students discuss their recollections of the four foundations of mental health from the online course and fill in handout with what they remember (see Teacher Reference Page for full text). Discuss findings with the class until students have a clear understanding of the four foundations of mental health.

Write personal plans for supporting their own mental health:

- On a separate sheet of paper, have students draft a plan for how they will focus on their foundations of mental health to deal with the challenges that they face. (See examples on Teacher Reference Page).

Discussion

🕒 10 min

Format: Class share

Students share their plans for supporting mental health. This can be done as a group or anonymously. Discuss how the actions taken will support mental health and make it possible to deal with life's challenges.

Closing

🕒 1 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group

Remind students that mental health is like physical health and there are things that you can do to strengthen and maintain positive states of mental health.

Evaluation

🕒 5 min

Format: Access individually

Look over personal plan (or look over partner's) and assess the impact of the plan and possible effectiveness using the assessment rubric.



Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Strengthening Mental Health Foundations

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 1.1

Name:

Date:

What is your definition of mental health?

What challenges do you have in your life this year?

Positive Mindset

Healthy Habits

Positive Relationships

Emotional Awareness

Strengthening Mental Health Foundations

ASSESSMENT PAGE: LESSON 1.1

Copy and cut a half sheet for each student. Have students evaluate their own plan and turn in together or hand in only the assessment based on level of privacy desired.

Name:

Date:

1. Will this plan help with your mental health now? Explain:

2. Will this plan will help with your mental health in the future? Explain:

How effective will this plan be in helping you overcome your challenges?
(Put an X on the scale below to indicate how effective it might be)



Effective



Somewhat Effective



Not very Effective

Name:

Date:

1. Will this plan help with your mental health now? Explain:

2. Will this plan will help with your mental health in the future? Explain:

Strengthening Mental Health Foundations

TEACHER REFERENCE PAGE: LESSON 1.1

Definition of Mental Health (as it appears in Mental Wellness Basics)

Mental health is a state of well-being that helps you deal with life's challenges. It includes your thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

Mental Health Foundations

Positive Mindset

Believing that good things are possible can improve your overall well-being. For example, when you believe that you deserve to be happy and that you have the ability to overcome challenges it can help you tackle challenges with confidence.

Healthy Habits

Eating a healthy and balanced diet, staying active everyday, and getting plenty of sleep are just a few things that can help you deal with stress. When your body is healthy and well rested, it reduces tension and helps keep you centered and calm.

Positive Relationships

One of the most important things you can do for your mental health is build meaningful connections with others. Focus on relationships that support you and allow you to be open and honest about who you are. These may be with family members, friends, or people you meet through school or community groups.

Emotional Awareness

Understanding your own emotions is an important step in staying healthy. If you notice that your emotions are out of sync with how you want to feel, think about how they're connected to your thoughts and environment. Emotions can't always be controlled, but noticing what is causing them is a great first step in helping you work through them.

Example of Personal Plans for Strengthening and Supporting Mental Health



My biggest challenge is keeping up with all my school work.

I plan to deal with this challenge by supporting my *Healthy Habits* by getting enough sleep and eating right. I also connect with my friends to study or work together so that the class work does not separate me from them and also helps with getting things done. This will help me keep my Positive Relationships and support my mental health.

LESSON 1.2

Risk and Protective Factors

🕒 45min Prerequisite: None

Objectives

- Define risk factors and protective factors
- Understand that risk factors cannot be changed, but the impact can be mitigated
- Describe how to mitigate risk factors and augment protective factors

Materials

- Pencils
- Teacher Reference Page
- Student Discussion Handout
- Student Reflection Handout
- Internet
- Project Videos

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

🕒 5 min

Format: Partner and group discussion, class share



Raise your hand if you've ever felt nervous for a performance, a presentation, or a test?

With a partner, discuss how you managed to overcome this?

What sort of mindset were you in?

What kind of emotions were you experiencing?

What was your environment like?

Great! We just identified some of the protective factors and risk factors that come along with a challenging situation.

Let's watch a video to learn more and see if you can identify the risk and protective factors.

Read independently

Discuss with a partner

As a class, get partners to share out what they learned.

Watch the video that can be found at the beginning of module one, Mental Wellness Basics.

Have students identify the risk and protective factors seen in the video.

Discuss as a class



New Learning

🕒 12 min

Format: Write personal definitions, class share

Inform students that in today's lesson they will be exploring protective and risk factors and how the environment and family history affects personal health.

Discuss as a class:

- Ask students if they are aware that they can use their protective factors to offset their risk factors. Have students to share examples.

As a class, review the Risk & Protective Factors by Youth.Gov.

(<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>)

Write personal definitions, discuss as a class:

- Have students write their definition of protective and risk factors and be prepared to share with the class.

Read individually:

- Have students read "The Harvard Center on the Developing Child: Resilience". (<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>)

Write personal definitions, discuss as a class:

- Have students write their definition of resilience and be prepared to share with the class.

Activity Part 1

🕒 9 min

Format: Create in small groups

In small groups, have students read "Digital addiction: How technology keeps us hooked" and identify some of the protective factors and risk factors. Be prepared to share your reasoning with the class.

(<https://theconversation.com/digital-addiction-how-technology-keeps-us-hooked-97499>)

Activity Part 2

🕒 9 min

Format: Create in small groups

In small groups, have students create their own challenging life scenarios that includes at least two protective factors and two risk factors. Be prepared to share your thinking with the class.

Note: Have students refer to "The Risk & Protective Factors by Youth.Gov" for guidance.

(<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>)

Discussion

🕒 8 min

Format: Class share

Students share their learnings from Part 1 and present the protective factors and risk factors from Part 2.

- What are the risk factors?
- What are the protective factors?
- How do you offset the risks with protective factors and build resilience?
- How does the understanding of your environment impact your personal health?
- How does your family history play into your personal health and wellbeing?

Remind students the importance of identifying your own protective factors and risk factors and how that affects your personal health.

Closing

🕒 1 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group

For homework, have students complete the handout titled, 'My Protective Factors Reflection.' This will help students identify their own protective factors and how they might handle challenging situations.

Evaluation

🕒 1 min

Format: Access individually

Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Risk and Protective Factors

STUDENT HANDOUT EXTENSION: LESSON 1.2

Name:

Date:

What is your definition of a *Protective Factor*?

What is your definition of a *Risk Factor*?

What is your definition of *Resilience*?

Risk and Protective Factors *Cont.*

Part 1: Digital Addiction Discussion Notes

Part 2: Challenging Life Scenario Discussion Notes



My Protective Factors Reflection

Instructions: Refer to the protective factors on page 2 of the Risk & Protective Factors by Youth.Gov
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>

Name:

Date:

Which protective factor has been the most valuable to you during a difficult situation?

Provide an example of how you used this protective factor to your advantage:

What two protective factors would you like to improve on?

1.

2.

Describe how improving these protective factors might impact your personal health?

List the first few steps to making this a reality:

Risk and Protective Factors

STUDENT HANDOUT EXTENSION: LESSON 1.2

Definition of a Protective Factor

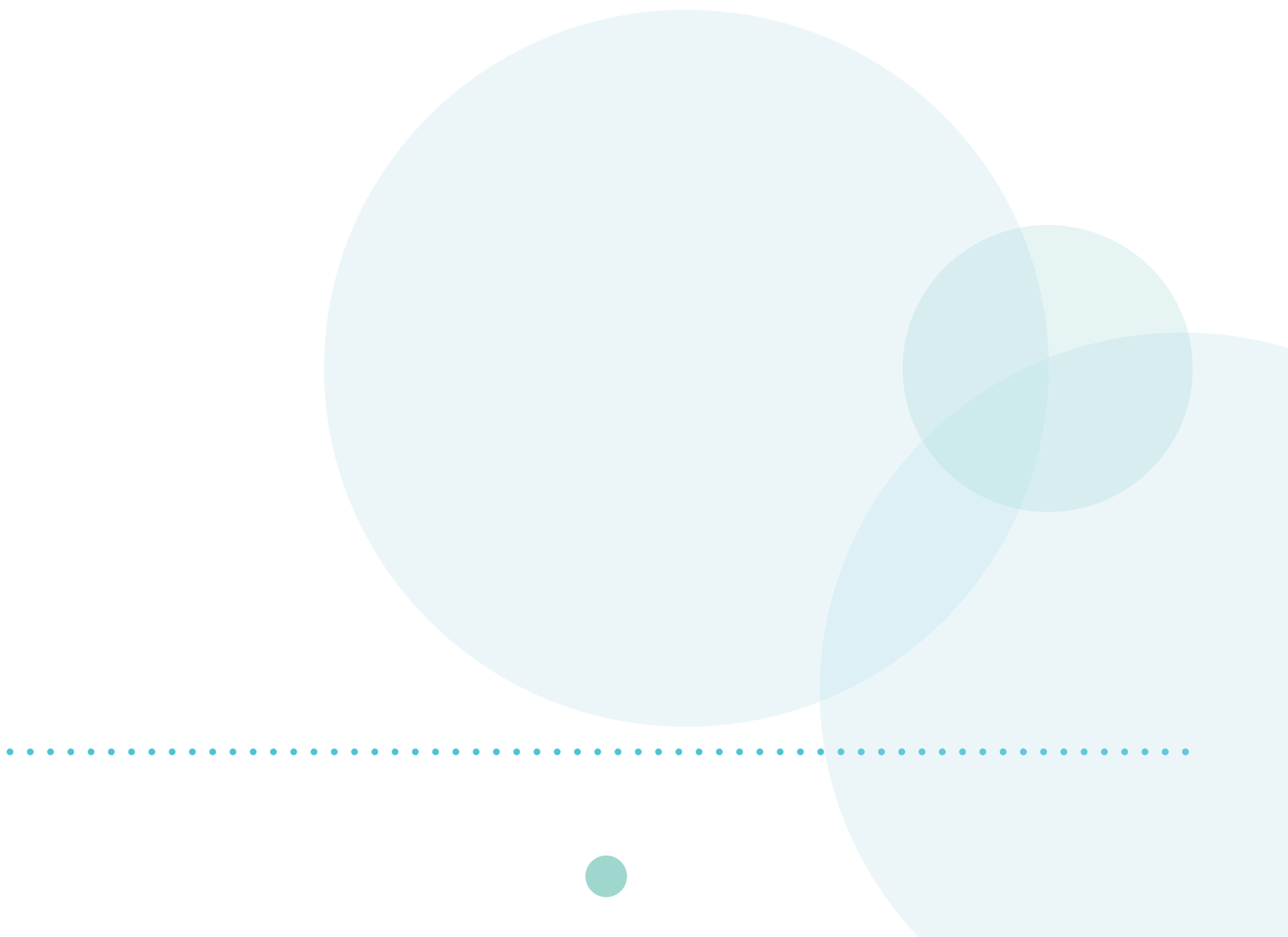
A characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, or community (including peers and culture) level that is associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduces the negative impact of a risk factor on problem outcomes. (According to Risk & Protective Factors by Youth.Gov <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>)

Definition of a Risk Factor

A characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precedes and is associated with a higher likelihood of problem outcomes. (According to Risk & Protective Factors by Youth.Gov <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>)

Definition of Resilience

When protective experiences and coping skills on one side counterbalance significant adversity on the other. Resilience is evident when a child's health and development tips toward positive outcomes — even when a heavy load of factors is stacked on the negative outcome side. (According to Harvard Center on the Developing Child: Resilience <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>)



LESSON 2

Understanding Mental Health Disorders

🕒 25min **Prerequisite:** Completed the Understanding Mental Health Disorders Digital Lesson

Discussion Questions:

- What are some signs that someone might be dealing with a mental health disorder or illness? (See glossary for observable/non-observable warning signs)
- What is a coping strategy and can you give an example of how it might work?
- What is meant by a positive mindset and how can that help when coping with life's challenges?
- What is meant by emotional awareness and how can that help when coping with life's challenges?
- What should you do if you are worried about the mental health of a friend or loved one?

Refer to student experiences (below) from the digital Understanding Mental Health Disorders lesson to discuss examples of feeling out of balance, coping strategies, and signs of possible mental health disorders. Here are three examples from the course:

Character #1

- ⊗ This morning, everything was going wrong. Stuff at home blew up and I had a test first period that I totally bombed. Thankfully today I had art class, my favorite! Even though my morning was rough, focusing on something I liked made me feel better. Good thing, because in the afternoon, I got an assignment back and didn't do as well as I thought I would.
- ✓ The emotions and thoughts that come with mental distress affect everyone. Most people experience a range of feelings including sadness, anxiety, joy, and love. These feelings typically come and go and vary in intensity. When faced with something that affects your mental health, find things that work, like creative activities, to improve your outlook and help you feel balanced.

Character #2

- ⊗ I started my week feeling great! Football is going really well and things are on track with school. Everything was awesome! Then, out of the blue, my girlfriend said she wanted to take a break. It caught me totally off guard. I couldn't concentrate in class at all and ended up just skipping school. I didn't want anyone to see me upset and I definitely didn't want to run into her. I finally came back on Friday for practice and talked to my coach. He helped me remember all of the other good things I have going for me. I hate how I feel right now, but hopefully it will get better with time.
- ✓ Intense emotions are a part of life. An event that has a major impact, such as a move, a break-up, or the death of a loved one, can be sudden and hard to handle. During these times, emotions may feel more intense than usual, and you may feel a lot of confusing emotions all at once. Emotions may also lead to negative thoughts and can even cause you to feel physical pain, but finding support from others can help you to feel more balanced.

Character #3

- ⊗ When Staci asked me to her party, I was really excited, but nervous too. I really want to make more friends but I just don't feel like I fit in. I was so anxious that whole week, I couldn't focus at school. When it came time to go to the party, I didn't even want to come out of my room. I forced myself to go, but felt super awkward the whole time and barely talked to anyone. I didn't want to see anyone for weeks after. What's the point? I just don't want to try anymore. I hate myself.
- ✓ At times, emotions may be particularly distressing, hard to understand, or difficult to manage. In some cases, they may last a long time and may not go away, even when you try. If strong emotions make it harder to get through your day or cause negative thoughts or actions, you may need to reach out to a trusted adult for help to feel balanced again.

We encourage you to ask students to write a reflection on what they learned after discussing.

- ⊗ Issues that they faced
- ✓ How they could deal with issues

LESSON 2.1

Physical vs. Mental Disorders

🕒 45min **Prerequisite:** Understanding Mental Health Disorders in Mental Wellness Basics by EVERFI

Objectives

- Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health
- Identify the symptoms and treatments of 5 common mental health conditions affecting adolescents

Materials

- HHS article: Common Mental Health Disorders in Adolescence*
- Graphic Organizers (below)

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

🕒 4 min

Format: Read independently, partner discussion, class share



What does it mean to you when someone is having a “bad day”?

Has this ever happened to you?

What was the cause?

How did this make you feel emotionally?

How did it make you feel physically?

Read independently

Discuss with a partner

Share out with the class

Consider the questions above and interview your neighbor to share her/his answers.

New Learning

🕒 12 min

Format: Read as a class, small group, partners, or individually, class share

Read about Common Mental Health Disorders in Adolescence

Link: <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/adolescent-mental-health-basics/common-disorders/index.html>

Complete the graphic organizer while you read.

* <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/adolescent-mental-health-basics/common-disorders/index.html>

Activity

🕒 17 min

Format: Create in small groups

Discussion

🕒 10 min

Format: Class share

Divide students into groups or pairs. Students will compare a mental disorder from the reading to a physical disorder such as the Flu. Students will work together to complete the table and then reflect on the similarities between physical and mental health.

Students will review their table and reflect on the following questions to share.

- What disorders did you choose?
- What similarities did you find between mental and physical disorders?
- Were their risks associated in not seeking treatment? If so what were they?
- Were these risks for mental and physical health different?
- Why is it important to consider and treat our mental health similar to our physical health?
- Why do you think people might consider these differently?

Closing

🕒 1 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group



Consider what you've learned about the causes, effects, and treatment of mental disorders and the similarities to physical disorders. In both cases these are disorders are not caused by anything that the person is doing and doing nothing typically will not be the most effective treatment. You learn early on when you have a physical disorder like a cut you need a treatment (like a band-aid) Now, let's apply the same mindset to your mental health!

Formalize learning with the whole group

Evaluation

🕒 1 min

Format: Access individually

Takeaways on one task that they will do this week to strengthen their mental health.

Exit ticket: 3, 2, 1

- 3 things I learned are...
- 2 questions I still have are...
- 1 thing that stuck with me is...



Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Physical vs. Mental Disorders

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.1

Name:

Date:

Complete the graphic organizer below with the information from your reading:
<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/adolescent-mental-health-basics/common-disorders/index.html>

Disorder	Characteristics	% of Teens Experience	Possible Effects on Physical Health

Physical vs. Mental Disorders

TEACHER GUIDE: LESSON 2.1

Name:

Date:

Complete the graphic organizer below with the information from your reading:

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/mental-health/adolescent-mental-health-basics/common-disorders/index.html>

Disorder	Characteristics	% of Teens Experience	Possible Effects on Physical Health
Anxiety	Feelings of excessive uneasiness, worry, and fear	32%	Answers will vary
Depression	Depressed mood that affects thoughts, feelings, and daily activities, including eating, sleeping, and working; prolonged irritability, anger, or sadness	13%	Answers will vary
ADD	Continuing inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with daily functioning or development	9%	Answers will vary
Eating Disorder	Extreme and abnormal eating behaviors, such as insufficient or excessive eating; preoccupation with food, calories, weight, or exercise; avoiding activities once enjoyed, particularly if associated with food	3%	Answers will vary
Co-Occuring (substance use)	Repeatedly use alcohol and/or drugs to the point of impairment, and neglect major responsibilities at home, work, or school	29%	Answers will vary

Physical Ailment Organizer

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.1

Name:

Date:

Activity:

In pairs or small groups, spend some time completing the following.

Part 1:

First, consider a physical ailment or disorder that you or others may have experienced (i.e the flu, a cold, a broken bone). With this disorder in mind, fill out the following chart.

	Physical Disorder/Ailment
Disorder	(Choose one) THE FLU • BROKEN BONE • FOOD ALLERGY
Symptoms/characteristics	
Who can help	
Treatment ideas	
Potential risks of not seeking treatment	
What might someone say to a person experiencing this ailment?	
How can someone who experiences this ailment show self-compassion?	

Mental Disorder Organizer

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.1

Name:

Date:

Part 2:

Now, spend some time answering the same questions, but applied to a mental health disorder (i.e. anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression).

	Mental Health Disorder
Disorder	
Symptoms/ characteristics	
Who can help	
Treatment ideas	
Potential risks of not seeking treatment	
What might someone say to a person experiencing this ailment?	
How can someone who experiences this ailment show self-compassion?	

Physical vs. Mental Disorders

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.1

Name:

Date:

Part 3: Discussion Questions

- Did you notice anything different between how people might treat a physical ailment and how they might treat a mental health disorder?

- How can self-compassion and compassion towards others play a role?

- How can what we say to others when they are struggling have an impact?

- If you noticed that you'd treat your mental health and physical health differently, why do you think that is?

- What role do you think stigma plays?

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Extension Lesson 2.2

Researching Mental Health Disorders

🕒 75min **Prerequisite:** Understanding Mental Health Disorders in Mental Wellness Basics by EVERFI

Objectives

- Determine reliable and accurate sites for health information
- Research and present information about chosen mental health disorder
- Use de-stigmatizing language and approach to presenting information

Materials

- Pencils
- Discussion Handout
- Teacher Reference Page
- (Optional) Poster for presentations

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

- Consider assigning more complex, less researched mental health disorders to add an additional challenge for students.
- Provide a list of websites for students who need more guidance. Have them deem why each of the resources on the list are reliable and accurate.

Opening

🕒 3 min

Format: Partner discussion, class share



In Module 2, you learned about several different types of mental health disorders. Share what you learned and if anything surprised you.

Discuss with a partner
Share out with the class

New Learning

🕒 10 min

Format: Class share

Discuss as a class:

Inform students that in today's lesson they will be studying mental health disorders in greater depth and making determinations on what resources are reliable and accurate in their research.

- When you are looking for information on a topic, what helps you determine that the research you're doing is accurate?
- List responses on chart paper, white board, etc.

Explain to whole group:

In addition to students responses, list the following characteristics of a reliable and accurate resource:

- Indication of credentials
- Attachment to an institution (school, hospital, etc.)
- Degree of experience in and history of subject
- Confidentiality (in person and online)

Pose the question:

- Mental health is often considered difficult to talk about– but it doesn't need to be. What do you think are some ways you can be respectful when talking about mental health disorders?
- List responses on chart paper, white board, etc.

Explain to whole group:

In addition to students' responses, list the following ways to destigmatize mental health disorders:

- Use the same language about mental health as you would with physical health
- Use compassion
- Consider treatments with the same mindset you would with physical health treatments
- Talk openly about mental health

Pose the question:

- How might you be able to include de-stigmatizing language in your research?
(Example responses include: don't use judgmental language, don't portray mental health disorders as negative, include statistics around how common they are, etc.)

Activity

⌚ 40 min

Format: Class share, create in small groups complete research in small groups

Share out with the class:

Inform students that they will break into small research groups to find more information about a particular mental health disorders. Reinforce that students should look for and use resources that they deem reliable and credible.

Incentivize effort by informing students that they will be sharing their research with their peers.

Create in small groups:

Either assign mental illnesses to students or allow them to choose their own. Ensure that each student has written down the name of the mental illness they will be researching on their discussion guide handout.

Complete research in small groups:

Students will use their discussion guide handout to organize their research. If desired, have students use their research organizer to create a visual presentation of their findings (slide deck, poster, etc.)

Discussion

⌚ 20 min

Format: Class share

Have student groups take turns presenting their research findings. Ask groups clarifying questions and suggestions on how to adjust stigmatizing language as needed.

Closing

⌚ 1 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group

Remind students that there are varying types of mental health disorders and that it is important to consider the credibility of the source they're using when the are researching mental health disorders.

Evaluation

⌚ 1 min

Format: Access individually

Have students complete the student assessment page.



Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Researching Mental Health Disorders

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.2

Name:

Date:

What mental health disorder are you researching?

What resources are you considering using to research your topic? How do you know that they are reliable and accurate?

Resource	Evidence Demonstrating Reliability and Accuracy

Researching Mental Health Disorders

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 2.2

Provide details in each of the following categories for your assigned mental illness:

Definition

Symptoms/Indicators

Causes

Treatment and Management

What are steps that we can take to destigmatize this mental health disorder?

Researching Mental Health Disorders

ASSESSMENT PAGE: LESSON 2.2

Copy and cut a half sheet for each student.

Have students evaluate their own plan and turn in together or hand in only the assessment based on level of privacy desired.

Name:

Date:

1. What are two attributes you should consider when determining if a resource is accurate and reliable?

2. Describe the mental health disorder another group researched in two sentences.

Name:

Date:

1. What are two attributes you should consider when determining if a resource is accurate and reliable?

2. Describe the mental health disorder another group researched in two sentences.

Researching Mental Health Disorders

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: LESSON 2.2

Reliable Mental Health Resources:

Website	Reason for Reliability?
https://www.mentalhealth.gov/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Government website○ Provides access to hotlines
https://www.samhsa.gov/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Government website○ Provides access to hotlines
https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/ahrci/adolescent-mental-health-initiative-book-series/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Research-based○ Policy center is attached to an accredited university
https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Government website○ Provides access to hotlines

Potentially Reliable Mental Health Resources:

Website	Reason for Reliability?
https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provides great information○ Research is not clearly listed○ Not clearly attached to a legitimate organization
https://teenhealthandwellness.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provides great information○ Research is not clearly listed○ Not clearly attached to a legitimate organization

Unreliable Mental Health Resources:

Website	Reason for Reliability?
https://greatist.com/grow/resources-when-you-can-not-afford-therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tries to sell you applications○ Is not research-based
https://www.guideposts.org/faith-and-prayer/prayer-stories/power-of-prayer/prayer-as-an-aid-to-mental-health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is not research-based○ Many advertisements○ Much of the writing is opinion-based

LESSON 3

Discussion Questions for Healthy Coping Skills

🕒 25min Prerequisite: None

Discussion Questions:

Use these questions to frame discussion after students have completed Healthy Coping Skills digital lesson.

- How can you tell when your coping strategies are effective?
- Give an example of positive or negative cycles of thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors and describe how they can impact your mental health.
- What does it mean to “interrupt a cycle” of positive or negative thoughts?
- What are some examples of coping strategies that you think would work for you?

Refer to these student experiences from the digital Healthy Coping Skills lesson to serve as examples or as checks for understanding to dissect what went well or not.

- An important relationship in your life has just ended. You're sad and angry. You think to yourself what did I do wrong? *I'll never find another person like them again.* Because of this, you avoid hanging out with friends who are trying to comfort you because you just want to be alone.
- You tried out for a team, but didn't make the cut. You are so disappointed in yourself you can't figure out how you feel. All you want to do is stay in your room and watch TV or sleep. Your friends' text you, but you ignore them and haven't even spent time with your family. You tell yourself how ashamed you are not to have made the cut. I don't know why I even try, I can't do this.
- It's the start of the school year and none of your friends are in your classes. You're frustrated and angry that you'll only get to see them at lunch and in the hallways. You're nervous, and tell yourself that you won't make any new friends. *They won't like my sense of humor. I don't even want to be friends with them anyway.* You love school but sit in the back of class so no one talks to you.

LESSON 3.1

What is Stress?

⌚ 45min **Prerequisite:** Connects to Healthy Coping Skills in Mental Wellness Basics but not necessary to complete before this lesson.

Objectives

- Define stress
- Understand purpose of stress and how it can affect a person physically
- Identify coping strategies that can be used to reduce stress

Materials

- Pencils
- Stress reaction cards
- Teacher Reference Page
- What is stress? Article
- Assessment cards

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

⌚ 3 min

Format: Partner discussion, class share



What is stress and how does it affect you?

Discuss with a partner
Share out with the class

New Learning

⌚ 10 min

Format: Categorize cards, class share

Stress is your physical and mental reaction to events in your life. It is how you respond to what is happening around you. Take a look at these stress reaction cards and categorize them with a partner.

Categorize cards. Students in pairs place cards into their own categories on desk.

Discuss the categories that they created and what they noticed.

Activity: Students categorize the stress reaction cards.

What categories did you create and why?

They may have divided their cards into positive and negative reactions or grouped them by parts of the body affected. Students will be noticing several different reactions to stress.

Have students share out what they did and justify the categories that they created.

Activity

⌚ 25 min

Format: Class share or small groups, independent reading



Building off of your recognition that there are positive benefits to stress, in what types of situations could stress be helpful?

Discuss and hypothesize why stress can be helpful and positive.

Discuss as whole class or in small groups

Read: Let's test our ideas of why we think stress could be helpful and why we have it in the first place. Share the article on "What is stress?" by <http://www.stress.org.uk/what-is-stress/>

Independent reading

(Note that this has been modified from original British spelling and use of "caveman" has been changed to prehistoric ancestor. We have also taken out mention of libido. Access the original text at the url above.)

- Were any of our hypotheses for why stress can be helpful correct?
- What is the biggest factor that causes stress to have a negative impact on our lives? (*Stress that is long lasting or recurs often. Our bodies are able to produce stress hormones for acute situations but the longer a stressful situation lasts the greater negative impact it has on our health*)

Discuss as whole class or in small groups

Discussion

⌚ 5 min

Format: Class share

Stress that lasts a long time can take a toll on our bodies and also on our mental health. Stressful events will always happen but the important thing is to figure out how to reduce stress in ways that work for you.

Discuss ways that stress can be reduced through coping strategies. As students share how they try to reduce their stress, generate a list on the board and also refer to the teacher resource page for additional information to bring to the discussion.



Stress Reaction Card 1

Digestion slows down so the body can pay attention to the stressful situation.

Stress Reaction Card 2

Tight muscles trigger sweating and body hair to stand up. If it continues for a while, muscles will ache and experience more physical pain.

Stress Reaction Card 3

Faster heart rate supplies blood and oxygen to body for faster reaction times.

Stress Reaction Card 4

Fast heart rate and adrenaline make it hard to relax and fall asleep.

Stress Reaction Card 5

You may experience
headaches or
loss of focus and
concentration.

Stress Reaction Card 6

Thoughts and eyesight
are sharpened to allow
for better focus.

Stress Reaction Card 7

Upset stomach,
diarrhea or
constipation.

Stress Reaction Card 8

Muscles tighten with
adrenaline and have
added strength.

What is Stress?

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 3.1

What Is Stress?

Firstly, let's debunk one myth: stress is not necessarily a 'bad' thing. Without this brilliant ability to feel stress, humankind wouldn't have survived. Our prehistoric ancestors, for example, used the onset of stress to alert them to a potential danger, such as a sabre-toothed tiger.

Stress is primarily a physical response. When stressed, the body thinks it is under attack and switches to 'fight or flight' mode, releasing a complex mix of hormones and chemicals such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine to prepare the body for physical action. This causes a number of reactions, from blood being diverted to muscles to shutting down unnecessary bodily functions such as digestion.

Through the release of hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine, our prehistoric ancestors gained a rush of energy, which prepared them to either fight the tiger or run away. That heart pounding, fast breathing sensation is the adrenaline; as well as a boost of energy, it enables us to focus our attention so we can quickly respond to the situation.

In the modern world, the 'fight or flight' mode can still help us survive dangerous situations, such as reacting swiftly to a person running in front of our car by slamming on the brakes.

The challenge is when our body goes into a state of stress in inappropriate situations. When blood flow is going only to the most important muscles needed to fight or flee, brain function is minimized. This can lead to an inability to 'think straight'; a state that is a great hindrance in both our work and home lives. If we are kept in a state of stress for long periods, it can be detrimental to our health. The results of having elevated cortisol levels can be an increase in sugar and blood pressure levels.

Modified from: <http://www.stress.org.uk/what-is-stress/>

What is Stress?

TEACHER RESOURCE PAGE: LESSON 3.1

Coping Strategies from Mental Wellness Basics

Coping Strategy	Description
Reframe Thoughts	<p>Consider the thoughts you are having and ask yourself if they are true and helpful.</p> <p>If you notice negative self-talk, think about treating yourself the same way you would treat someone you care about. Would you say negative or discouraging things to a friend? Probably not.</p> <p>Think about how you can be a friend to yourself through kind and encouraging thoughts and words.</p>
Relax the Body	<p>In stressful situations, your muscles can tense up and may even cause you physical pain. Stressful thoughts and emotions can also cause stomach aches or headaches.</p> <p>Find activities that relax you, like exercising, listening to peaceful music, or finding a quiet spot without distractions to reduce stress.</p>
Breathe Mindfully	<p>Mindfulness practices, like yoga and meditation, help you focus on the present, notice your feelings, thoughts, and sensations, and create a moment to pause, reflect, or just “be”.</p> <p>Try this as part of your morning routine, during difficult situations, or before going to sleep. Breathing at a pace that you find calming can lower your heart rate, which can help if you’re having anxiety.</p>
Write It Down	<p>Take time to write down your thoughts and feelings during difficult situations. This can help you become aware of your emotions and the events that trigger them. Writing things down can ease your mind in the moment.</p>
Name It	<p>When you have emotions, especially challenging or confusing ones, name them. For example, ask yourself if you’re feeling anxious or sad. Studies show that naming emotions like anger, sadness, or pain can reduce their strength and help you plan for what to do about them. Naming what you’re feeling is an important part of self-compassion.</p>

Additional Resources for Stress Reducing Techniques

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/20-tips-to-tame-your-stress/>

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/stress-coping-everyday-problems>

What is Stress?

ASSESSMENT PAGE: LESSON 3.1

Name:

Date:

1. Why can stress be a problem for your health?
2. What will you do to personally cope with stress in your life?

Name:

Date:

1. Why can stress be a problem for your health?
2. What will you do to personally cope with stress in your life?

Extension LESSON 3.1

Reframing Negative Self-Talk

🕒 45min Prerequisite: None

Objectives

- To identify examples of negative self-talk and develop ways to challenge and reframe it.

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

🕒 4 min

Format: Teacher facilitated class discussion



- What is “self-talk”?
- Did this course make you think differently about how you talk to yourself?
- What does self-compassion look like when it comes to self-talk?
- What does it mean to reframe a negative thought?

Teacher facilitated class discussion

New Learning

⌚ 12 min

Format: Read as a class, small group, partners, or individually, class share

Read as a class, small group, partners, or individually.

- Inform the class that they will be spending time practicing ways to reframe negative thoughts.

Discuss as a class

- Ask students, by a show of hands, how many have found themselves engaging in negative self-talk.
- Write the following on the board: “I am bad at everything”.
- Ask the class how they would help a friend reframe this negative thought. What kinds of questions would they ask? What kinds of evidence would they look for to determine whether or not this statement was true?
- Ask the class how they could apply this same kind of thinking and investigation to their own automatic negative thoughts.
- Now, the class will work in partners or small groups to practice this skill a bit more.

Activity

⌚ 17 min

Format: Discussion in small groups

Break classroom up into partners or small groups.

Using examples in worksheet 3A, assign each group member an example of negative self talk.

Group members take turns reading their “negative statements” out loud, and provide feedback on ways in which to reframe the statement to demonstrate more self-compassion.

Students will come back together and each group will share an example of an original statement and a re-frame.

Discussion

⌚ 10 min

Format: Class share

- What are some of the challenges of reframing negative self-talk?
- What differences did you notice between the first statement and when it was reframed?
- How could you begin to make reframing a habit in your own lives?

Closing

⌚ 1 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group

Evaluation

⌚ 1 min

Format: Access individually

Exit ticket: 3, 2, 1

- 3 things I learned are...
- 2 questions I still have are...
- 1 thing that stuck with me is...

Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Reframing Negative Self-Talk

STUDENT ACTIVITY: LESSON 3.2

Tips for Challenging Negative Self-Talk

- Consider whether the statement is completely true. Use the “jury test”. Is there evidence that can dispute the negative statement. For example, you may do poorly on a test and have the thought “I am a failure” or “I always fail”. Put this statement under the microscope by looking for evidence that disproves it. Has there been a time when you haven’t failed? If so, the statement is false.
- For each negative statement, think of a strength of yours that can counteract it. So, using the “I always fail” analogy. What is a strength that you have that can help you with studying? A reframe could be: “I didn’t do as well as I’d like on this test, but I have a few good friends who can help me study next time.”
- Consider if what you say to yourself is what you’d say to a friend. Try reframing the statement to be compassionate, the way in which you would likely be if a friend said the same thing about themselves.

Negative Self Talk Examples

Cut each example and place in a hat or bowl for students to choose at random. Have them work together to reframe a negative thought into a more positive, compassionate one, and discuss strategies on how to increase self-compassion.

No one likes me.

I’m bad at everything.

I always mess up.

I never do anything right.

I'm such a loser.

I can't finish
anything I start.

I don't know
why I bother.

Everyone is doing
better than me.

I feel like everyone
is better than I am.

My life is a mess.

Reframing Negative Self-Talk

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE: LESSON 3.2

Below you will find some examples of how to reframe the negative thoughts listed above. It is important to note that these are just some suggestions, and that students should be encouraged to reframe thoughts in the way that feels most natural for them. The key focus is on ensuring that their reframe is rooted in reality and self-compassion.

No one likes me

REFRAME

I am likeable.
Many people like me (give examples).

I'm bad at everything

REFRAME

There are many things that I have tried
that I've been good at (list them).

I always mess up

REFRAME

Sometimes I mess up, but I'm human.
Everyone does.

I never do anything right

REFRAME

There are lots of things that I do right
(think of examples and list them).

I'm such a loser

REFRAME

I'm a person who deserves kindness
and compassion. I have a lot to offer.

I can't finish anything I start

REFRAME

There have been times when I've
finished things I've started (list them).

I don't know why I bother

REFRAME

I'm doing the best that I can.
My resilience is a strength.

Everyone is doing better than me

REFRAME

Sometimes it feels like other people are
doing better than I am, but I know that
we all struggle at times.

I feel like everyone is better than I am

REFRAME

I have a lot to be thankful for (list
things). There are lots of people who
are worse off than I am.

My life is a mess

REFRAME

I'm going through a tough time right
now, but I have things that can help me
get through it (list them).

LESSON 4

Discussion Questions for Getting Help

🕒 25min **Prerequisite:** Use these questions to frame discussion after students have completed Getting Help digital lesson.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you feel confident that you would be able to recognize when you or a friend are in need of help with a mental health challenge?
- What are some signs that someone might be struggling with their mental health??
- How is it possible to notice non-observable warning signs?
- What is stigma and how might it prevent someone from getting help?
- Why is getting help important?
- What kind of help is available for those who want to work on their mental health?
- What should you keep in mind as you are trying to help someone else?
 - You are not a trained professional, so don't try to treat or diagnose.. Connect the person to a trusted adult like a counselor or teacher.
 - Don't gossip and respect others' privacy.
 - Protect your own mental health and know your limits. You can support others, but you are not responsible for their mental health.
- What are some of the warning signs that indicate someone may be thinking about suicide?
- How can you support someone who is thinking of ending their life?

Two examples from the course that could be used to dissect and determine if they need help and proposing types of help that are needed.

- Character 1:
I don't know what's going on with Matias. We used to be such good friends, but now he's hanging out with a new group, skipping school, drinking more, and getting in fights. It's like he's a completely different person.
- Character 2:
I'm worried about Imani. She doesn't seem herself lately. She hasn't been responding to any of my messages, and she never wants to hang out with anyone anymore; she's even quit all the clubs we were in together. She just looks so sad and tired all the time.

LESSON 4.1

Identifying Stigma

⌚ 45min **Prerequisite:** Getting Help in Mental Wellness Basics by EVERFI

Objectives

- Identify how stigma prevents people from seeking support for mental health issues
- Recognize how the media can impact how mental health is viewed

Materials

- Pencil
- Worksheet for students
- Exit ticket

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

Opening

⌚ 4 min

Format: Partner discussion, class share



What would you do if you suspected a friend of yours is with struggling with their mental health?

Discuss with a partner

Share out with the class

New Learning

⌚ 6 min

Format: Class share

Inform students that in today's lesson they will be discussing how the media and pop culture can add to the stigma associated with mental health.

- Ask students what they have seen or heard in the media that could diminish the importance of mental health or reinforce stigmas.

Activity

⌚ 15 min

Format: Write independently, class share, discuss/write small groups, create as a class

Write independently. Share as a class.

- Have students write their definition of stigma as it relates to mental health on the handout and be prepared to share with class.
- With media being such a large part of society it is important to recognize how what is posted and shared influences our responses.

Discuss/write in small groups.

- During this activity students will look at the language used on social media that can reenforce the existing stigma associated with mental wellness. Have students review the entries on the worksheet. While reading the entries students will point out the stigma imbedded and how that can impact someone struggling with mental wellness. Students will rewrite the entries to make them more supportive of mental wellness.
- If timing allows, have students think about jokes they have heard or may have said themselves that could have an influence (positive or negative) on someone else's mental health.

Create as a class

- On separate sheet of paper, have students list out all the resources available to them that they know of. Review as a class and make sure to fill in with any they might not know about. See examples on Teacher Reference Page.

Discussion

⌚ 15 min

Format: Class share

Discuss as a class

- Students share out their responses to the class. Discuss the dangers and consequences of reinforcing stigma and what can happen if someone struggling with mental health does not seek help.

Closing

⌚ 2 min

Format: Formalize learning with the whole group

Remind students that it is important for them to know when they or someone else needs help, as well as where to go to seek help. Help is always available.

Evaluation

⌚ 3 min

Format: Access individually

Takeaways on one task that they will do this week to strengthen their mental health.

Exit ticket: 3, 2, 1

- 3 things I learned are...
- 2 questions I still have are...
- 1 thing that stuck with me is...

Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Identifying Stigma

STUDENT HANDOUT: LESSON 4.1

Name:

Date:

What is your definition of stigma?

Review the following social media posts/comments. How does it reenforce the stigma of mental wellness?
What might happen if someone struggling with mental health sees it? How would you rewrite them to show support?

**Piers Morgan** 
@piersmorgan

 Follow 

34 million UK adults are mentally ill? What utter nonsense.
Man up, Britain & focus on those who REALLY need help.

**Andrew Tate** 
@Cobratate

 Follow 

Depression is not something you catch from the sky. Take responsibility for yourself and your life. Push forward. And it's gone. Fact.

7:45 AM · 8 Sep 2017

Extension Lesson 4.2

Recognizing and Combating Stigma: A PSA Project

⌚ 45min **Prerequisite:** Getting Help in Mental Wellness Basics by EVERFI

Objectives

- SW evaluate and discuss the effectiveness of established PSAs
- SW work in groups to outline and produce their own PSA posters surrounding the topic mental health stigmas
- SW use rubrics to evaluate the effectiveness of their peers PSA posted

Materials

- Computer with internet access
- Projector / SmartBoard
- Copies of Graphic Organizer
- Copies of Rubric
- Poster Board/ Construction Paper
- Markers, Colored Pencils, Etc.
- Scissors, Glue / Tape
- Optional: Magazines/Newspaper to cut images from

Notes (Differentiation, student groupings, additional questions, etc.)

- Depending on how long students need to fill in graphic organizer and create poster, this lesson can be lengthened to take two class periods

Opening

⌚ 4 min

Format: Partner discussion, class share



What is a stigma?

How can stigmas around Mental Health have a negative impact on individuals facing mental health issues?

Discuss with a partner

Share out with the class

New Learning

🕒 10 min

Format: Class share

Discuss as a class

Introduce students to the idea of a public service announcement (PSA). A PSA is designed to reach a specific group with a message that will educate and change the group's behavior.

As a class, watch/view and discuss a few examples of iconic and effective PSAs. Examples can be found on the following websites:

- EPA Public Service Announcements
- NRSF Teen Lane PSAs
- 60 Powerful Social Issue Ads That Will Make You Stop and Think via. Digital Synopsis

Activity

🕒 20 min

Format: Create in small groups

Inform students that they will work in groups to create a “PSA” for their school to help educate and reduce stigmas around mental health issues students may be facing in their daily lives. Encourage them to think about how they can help to combat stigmas around mental health to support those struggling with these issues in your school community.

- Break students into groups
(ideally 2-3 per group, but flexible based on class size and teacher discretion)
- Distribute graphic organizer and materials
- Allow students to use internet to research statistics and search for images if possible
- Optional: request that each group submits their completed graphic prior to starting

Discussion & Evaluation

🕒 10 min

Format: Class share, formalize learning with the whole group

Students will share their PSA posters with the class, peers will evaluate using rubric found below.

Closing

🕒 1 min

Format: Collect work

Teacher will collect work to hang in school and rubrics.

Learners needing support

Learners ready for extensions

Notes for next time

Recognizing and Combating Stigma: A PSA Project

TEACHER REFERENCE PAGE: LESSON 4.2

Group Members:

Topic:

Audience: Who are you targeting with your PSA message? *Be specific about your demographic.*

Overall Message: This is the most important part of your poster, make your message as clear as possible using simple, descriptive words.

Opening Hook: Remember your target audience. How will you grab the attention of your audience?
Consider ways in which you will make your poster appealing & eye-catching to your chosen demographic.

Informational Elements: What support and details will you include? (Descriptions, statistics, quotations, definitions, examples and images) *Use back if necessary; if internet is used to research remember to document your sources appropriately.*

Call to Action: How can the audience get involved and support the message your spreading? Provide clear directions on what your audience can do after they view your PSA

Recognizing and Combating Stigma: A PSA Project

RUBRIC: LESSON 4.2

Component	Does not meet expectations	Approaching expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations
Message, Audience, and Purpose	The message is unclear. The message leaves no impression on the viewer and is inappropriate for the intended audience. The purpose of the PSA is not clear.	The message is clear. The message leaves little impression on the viewer and some aspects are inappropriate for the intended audience. The purpose of the PSA is clear after initial clarification.	The message is clear. The message leaves an impression on the viewer. The message clearly addresses the intended audience. The purpose of the PSA is clear.	Message is clear and creative. The message leaves a lasting impression on the viewer. The message is clearly targeted to impact the intended audience. The PSA has a clear, universal purpose and call to action.
Support and Details	No research, statistics, information, or other details are included in the PSA.	Minimal research, statistics, information, or other details are included. There is no unifying connection between the support and the message.	The PSA is complete with research, statistics, details, and information. The support and details are clearly connected to the message.	The PSA is complete with research, statistics, details, information, and other support for the message. The support and details are comprehensive and connected to the message. Everything in the PSA is there for a reason.
Creativity & Execution	Images and text communicate basic or already used ideas	Images, effects, and text communicate a general creativity. The PSA incorporates few original ideas.	Images, effects, and text communicate some creativity. The PSA incorporates many original ideas.	Images, special effects, and text communicate creative ideas and execution. The PSA incorporates innovative and original ideas.



Standards Alignment

Unit/Lesson	SEL Standards
NHES Standards	
Lesson 1: Discussion Questions	<p>1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.</p> <p>1.12.5 Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems.</p>
Lesson 1.1: Strengthening Mental Health Foundations	<p>5.12.7 Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.</p> <p>6.12.2 Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.</p>
Lesson 1.2: Risk & Protective Factors	<p>1.8.3 Analyze how the environment affects personal health.</p> <p>1.8.4 Describe how family history can affect personal health.</p>
Lesson 2: Discussion Questions	<p>1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.</p> <p>1.12.5 Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems</p> <p>3.12.4 Determine when professional health services may be required.</p> <p>6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.</p>
Lesson 2.1: Physical vs. Mental Disorders	<p>1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.</p>
Lesson 2.2: Researching Mental Health Disorders	<p>3.12.2 Use resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.</p> <p>3.12.5 Access valid and reliable health products and services.</p>

Unit/Lesson	SEL Standards
NHES Standards	
Lesson 3: Discussion Questions	<p>1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.</p> <p>1.12.5 Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems.</p> <p>6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.</p> <p>7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.</p> <p>7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.</p>
Lesson 3.1: What is Stress?	<p>1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health,</p> <p>1.12.5 Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems,</p> <p>7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.</p>
Lesson 3.2: Reframing Negative Self-Talk	<p>5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.</p> <p>5.12.4 Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems.</p>
Lesson 4: Discussion Questions	<p>1.12.9 Analyze the potential severity of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.</p> <p>3.12.4 Determine when professional health services may be required.</p> <p>4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.</p> <p>5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.</p>
Lesson 4.1: Identifying Stigma	<p>5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.</p>
Lesson 4.2: Recognizing and Combating Stigma: A PSA Project	<p>8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.</p> <p>8.12.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.</p> <p>8.12.4 Adapt health messages and communication techniques to a specific target audience.</p>



Glossary

Amygdala

The Amygdala is part of the brain is most connected to stress. It sends signals to the rest of your body when it detects a threat. However, the amygdala may not know if the threat is real. It's up to you to understand what causes feelings of stress and to ask yourself if it's really something to worry about. The amygdala is involved in:

- Making decisions.
- Storing memories associated with emotional events.
- Emotional responses like fear, anxiety, and aggression

Compassion¹

Sympathetic consciousness of others distress together with a desire to alleviate it.

Coping strategies

“Coping strategies are tools that help you to adapt to challenges and balance the thoughts, emotions and behaviors that impact your mental health.”

Empathy²

The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.

Genetics³

The genetic makeup and phenomena of an organism, type, group, or condition. When applied to mental health, genetics can play a role in that certain personality traits and conditions can be passed down from one generation to the next through genes.

Hippocampus

The hippocampus is part of the brain is most connected to memories. As you go through life, you form memories. Some help you remember how to travel from home to school, some help you remember faces and names, and some help you draw connections between experiences and feelings. The hippocampus is involved in:

- Storing Memories.
- Processing experiences.
- Deciding actions to take based on past experiences.

Mental/Psychological Distress⁴

A general term that is used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact your level of functioning.

Mental Health

Is a state of well-being that helps you deal with life's challenges. It includes your thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

¹ Merriam Webster, 2018

² Merriam Webster, 2018

³ Merriam Webster, 2018

⁴ Study.com

⁵ American Psychiatric Association, 2018: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness>

Mental Illness⁵

Treatable health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.

Neurotransmitters

Dopamine - Serotonin - GABA - Norepinephrine - Peptides

Some parts of the brain are not specific areas, but chemicals that exist along pathways within it. Dopamine, Serotonin, Norepinephrine, and Peptides are just a few neurotransmitters that help your brain function. Neurons send chemicals that act as messengers to the rest of the brain and the body. These can affect your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Neurotransmitters are involved in:

- Motivation
- Feeling good after doing something
- Motor control

Neurotransmitters are involved in creating pathways between parts of the brain. Pathways become stronger each time they are repeated.

Non-Observable Warning Signs

Signs that can be seen which may indicate that someone may be dealing with a mental health disorder. Examples include:

- Feeling worthless or hopeless.
- Thoughts of self-harm.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Feeling like giving up.
- Feelings of anxiety that might be paralyzing.
- Hearing voices or seeing things that aren't there.

Observable Warning Signs

Signs that cannot be seen which may indicate that someone may be dealing with a mental health disorder. Examples include:

- Pushing away or avoiding good friends.
- Showing less interest in things.
- Acting more angry or irritable than usual.
- A change in appearance, sleeping, or eating habits.
- Engaging in risky or impulsive behaviors like drug or alcohol use.

Perceptions

The brain's ability to make meaning of the world using your five senses to smell, taste, feel, hear, and see what is happening around you.

Prefrontal cortex

The prefrontal cortex is connected to your ability to plan and helps you accomplish goals. It's also involved in your social interactions with others. The prefrontal cortex evaluates each situation along with your skills in

⁶ Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/why-we-worry/201308/mental-health-stigma>

⁷ Link, Cullen, Struening & Shrout, 1989

⁸ Perlick, Rosenheck, Clarkin, Sirey et al., 2001

⁹ Study.com

order to predict what you should do to get the best result. The prefrontal cortex is involved in:

- Making decisions
- Planning and organizing
- Focus and attention

“Self-talk”

The way in which we communicate or talk to ourselves, either aloud or silently and mentally. Self-talk can be either positive or negative, and can contribute to our resilience and self-esteem

Signaling

Signaling is another word for how your mind responds to what’s happening around you. For example, the brain may become more alert or signal to the body to run or fight when it senses danger.

Stigma⁶

Mental health stigma can be divided into two distinct types: social stigma is characterized by prejudicial attitudes and discriminating behaviour directed towards individuals with mental health problems as a result of the psychiatric label they have been given. In contrast, perceived stigma or self-stigma is the internalizing by the mental health sufferer of their perceptions of discrimination⁷, and perceived stigma can significantly affect feelings of shame and lead to poorer treatment outcomes⁸.

Stress

Stress is both a mental and physical reaction to the world around you.

- HEALTHY STRESS - Increases your focus, strength and reaction times in order to help in dangerous situations.
- UNHEALTHY STRESS - When stress lasts for a long time or is severe it is unhealthy because it can have serious impacts on your physical and mental health.

Suicide

The intentional taking of one’s own life

- WARNING SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY BE CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE⁹: Something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of sharpest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.
- TALK: If a person talks about:
 - Killing themselves
 - Feeling hopeless
 - Having no reason to live
 - Being a burden to others
 - Feeling trapped
 - Unbearable pain
- BEHAVIOR: Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:
 - Increased use of alcohol or drugs
 - Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
 - Withdrawing from activities

- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue
- MOOD: People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Loss of interest
 - Irritability
 - Humiliation/Shame
 - Agitation/Anger
 - Relief/Sudden Improvement

Hotline Resource Page

Organization	Topic	Website	Phone
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Suicide Prevention	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/	1-800-273-8255
Teen Line	Teens helping teens on anything	https://teenlineonline.org/	1-800-852-8336 (1-800-TLC-TEEN) Text: TEEN to 839863 (6-9pm PST)
Crisis Text Line	Text with a trained Crisis Counselor	https://www.crisistextline.org/	Text HOME to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis support in US Text HOME to 686868 in Canada
Trevor Lifeline	Suicide Prevention	https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/	1-866-488-7386 (24/7 Help) Text TREVOR to 202-304-1200 (M-F 3-10 EST)
Trans Lifeline	Crisis support for Transgender people	https://www.translifeline.org/	US: 1-877-565-8860 Canada: 1-877-330-6366 18 hours a day - 11-5am EST
National Domestic Abuse Hotline	Domestic Violence or Unhealthy Relationship concerns	http://www.thehotline.org/help/	USA 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) 24/7 in 200 languages
National Alliance on Mental Illness	General Crisis Line for all mental health issues	https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI	1-800-950-NAMI (10-6pm EST) Text NAMI to 741741
International Hotlines	Suicide Prevention	http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html	Lists suicide prevention programs in countries around the world

Hotline Resource Page

Organization	Topic	Website	Phone
Disorder-Specific Help			
National Eating Disorders Association	Eating Disorders	http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org	1-800-931-2237 9-5pm
National Mental Health Association Hotline	Anxiety	http://www.nmha.org	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance	Depression and Bipolar Support	http://www.dbsalliance.org	1-800-273-TALK (8255) 24/7
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	OCD	http://www.247mentalhealthhelpline.com/blog/mental-health/treatment-for-obsessive-compulsive-disorder/	1-855-653-8178
National Alliance on Mental Health	Caring for Loved Ones with Mental Illness	https://www.nami.org/find-support/family-members-and-caregivers	1-800-950-NAMI
JED Foundation	Suicide Prevention	https://www.jedfoundation.org/	

