

LESSON PLANS

Time Frame: Adjustable (20 min-1 hour)
Number of students (1-30 students)



OBJECTIVE

Our lesson plans are a great way to dig deeper into mental health topics such as anxiety, depression, self-care, and mindfulness practices. These lessons take place in an activity and discussion-based settings, allowing students to share freely and openly. This is a great opportunity for students who engage better in activity-based learning instead of a presentation style as with our Mental Health 101 curriculum. These lessons can be offered on a weekly/monthly basis (schedule permitting). We also offer all lesson plans in both English and Spanish. We have had great success with weekly small group lessons in Spanish at Arroyo Grande High School, in addition to our monthly lessons at Loma Vista Community School. Below listed are example topics, activities, handouts, and full lesson plans. Each lesson plan is adjustable and if students have a specific interest in a mental health topic we would gladly make one geared to them.

EXAMPLE TOPICS

- Anxiety: types of anxiety, feelings, how to self-regulate
- Depression: types of depression, what it looks and feels like, tools to help
- Self-care: how it is different than coping, examples, why it is important, ways to practice self-care
- Signs & Symptoms of Mental health challenges
- Wellness: 8 pillars of dimensions of wellness and how this connects to mental health
- Suicide and Suicide prevention: Know the signs of suicide and how to have a conversation
- Mindfulness Practices: teach different tools & practices to be mindful
- Build Confidence: Stop Negative Self Talk, CARS tool
- Resource day: presentation on specific resources in the area, create a “coping card”
- Boundaries: why boundaries are important, how to set boundaries

ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

1. Mindfulness activities

Notice your environment, box breathing, 54321 senses

2. Anxiety art activity

Draw what anxiety feels like to you

3. Kahoot quizzes

Kahoot quizzes on selected topic with prizes!

4. Make your own “coping card”

Write down ways to regulate yourself in times of anxiety, panic attacks, or depressive episodes to have an easy access to resources

Example Lesson Plan 1

LOGISTICS

Theme	Signs & Symptoms
Rationale	Small Group Discussion
Objective / expected lesson / takeaway	Have a discussion to dive deeper into what signs and symptoms of mental health challenges look and feel like.
Estimated Time	45 minutes lesson and discussion
Audience Size	5 students
Facilitators	2
Materials / Other Inputs	Kahoot, Print outs, prizes, candy
Deliverable	Have students know how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges
Check In Estimated time: 5-10 Min	Start the day with notice-your-environment activity and share with class 2 things they have not noticed before in the classroom
Intro to Activity 1: Teaching Mental Signs & Symptoms slides Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Signs & Symptoms Slides Teach: Mental Health as a spectrum slide, print out copies of the slide for everyone
Activity 1: Share with the group through discussion or snowball activity: each student writes examples on a piece of paper and throws them into a basket	We all go around and give examples on how they notice signs and symptoms of Mental Health Challenges OR snowball activity
Intro to Activity 2: Importance Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Teach why it is important to know the signs and symptoms: knowing the signs allows us to check in with ourselves, peers, loved ones who might be going through a difficult time
Activity 2: Journal and Reflection Estimated time: 10 mins	Reflect/Share/Draw/Paint the signs and symptoms you notice in yourself or a loved one
Check Out Estimated time: 5 mins	What type of activities do you like best? Writing? Moving? Games? Drawing? What are other mental health topics you all would like to learn more about?

Example Lesson Plan 2

LOGISTICS

Theme	Suicide Prevention (Know the Signs)
Rationale	Small Group Discussion
Objective / expected lesson / takeaway	Students will be able to know the signs of suicide which include behavioral clues, situational clues, direct/indirect verbal clues
Estimated Time	45 minutes lesson and discussion
Audience Size	5 students
Facilitators	2
Materials / Websites / Other Inputs	Print copies of Know the Signs, Kahoot, prizes, candy
Deliverable	Know the Signs
Check In Estimated time: 5-10 Min	1.Caring reminders (we will be discussing suicide which is a sensitive topics please be mindful for yourself and your fellow students, please take a break if the topic affects you) 2.5,4,3,2,1 senses check in
Intro to Activity 1: Know the Signs Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Teach: know the signs, behavioral clues, situational clues, direct/indirect verbal clues
Activity 1: Move Break	Let's check in with ourselves since it is a sensitive topic! Quick move / stand up / stretch break
Intro to Activity 2: "Joking About Suicide" Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Teach "Joking About Suicide" and why it is important to talk about, which is why we also need to talk about empathy
Activity 2: Discussion Estimated time: 10 mins	Discuss together: what does empathy mean? Show empathy video follow by discussion
Check Out Estimated time: 5 mins	How is everyone feeling today after discussing suicide? Does anyone have any further questions?

Example Lesson Plan 3

LOGISTICS

Theme	Suicide Prevention (ALEC: How to have a conversation)
Rationale	Small Group Discussion
Objective / expected lesson / takeaway	Students will be able to know how to navigate a conversation about suicide, check in with their friends, loved ones, and peers
Estimated Time	45 minutes lesson and discussion
Audience Size	5 students
Facilitators	2
Materials / Websites / Other Inputs	Print copies of ALEC, Kahoot, prizes, candy
Deliverable	ALEC (Ask, Listen, Encourage, Connect)
Check In Estimated time: 5-10 Min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Caring reminders (we will be discussing suicide which is a sensitive topics please be mindful for yourself and your fellow students, please take a break if the topic affects you) 2.Rainbow check in: Find one thing around the room for each color of the rainbow
Intro to Activity 1: ALEC (Ask, Listen, Encourage, Connect) Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Teach: review Know The Signs, if you notice the signs it is important to start a conversation with that person. Teach ALEC.
Activity 1: Move Break	Let's check in with ourselves since it is a sensitive topic! Quick move / stand up / stretch break
Intro to Activity 2: Central Coast Hotline Estimated time: 5-10 mins	Teach Hotline: the three main reasons to call or text in, examples why people may use the hotline for, important things to remember about the hotline
Activity 2: Kahoot with prizes Estimated time: 10 mins	Kahoot: ALEC & Hotline Kahoot
Check Out Estimated time: 5 mins	How is everyone feeling today after discussing suicide prevention? Does anyone have any further questions?

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION



FEELING
HOPELESS,
HELPLESS, OR
EXCEPTIONALLY
SAD

IRRITABILITY
OR
ANGER

LOSS OF
INTEREST IN
DAILY ACTIVITIES
OR HOBBIES

CHANGES IN
EATING
HABITS

CHANGES IN
SLEEPING
HABITS

SLOWED
THINKING OR
BODY
MOVEMENTS

FEELING
WORTHLESS OR
GUILTY, FIXATING
ON PAST
FAILURES

FEELING
EXTREMELY
TIRED OR
EXHAUSTED

TROUBLE
CONCENTRATING
OR MAKING
DECISIONS OR
REMEMBERING

ANXIETY,
AGITATION, OR
RESTLESSNESS

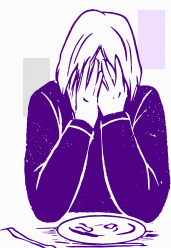
PHYSICAL
AILMENTS
WITHOUT OTHER
CAUSES

RECURRING
THOUGHTS OF
DEATH OR SELF
INJURY

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

Depression is caused by a variety of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors

- Personal or family history of depression
- Major life changes or trauma
- Brain chemistry
 - An imbalance of neurotransmitters, including serotonin and dopamine
- Certain physical illnesses or medications
 - Diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and Parkinson's disease



HANDOUT EXAMPLE 2



WHAT ANXIETY FEELS LIKE...



- Feeling nervous, tense, or restless
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- Sweating or trembling



- Feeling tired or weak
- Experiencing digestive problems
- Avoiding/wanting to avoid certain situations that may trigger anxiety



- Having a hard time concentrating
- Having a difficulty controlling worry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Breathing rapidly/shallow breathing



- Muscle tension/muscle aches
- Overthinking
- Indecisiveness due to fear of making a wrong decision



- Irritability
- Difficulty handling uncertainty

