

You Can Get Through It

Summary

Students will understand the impact of suicide and identify the factors contributing to suicide risk. They will also identify people included in a support system and the warning signs of suicide.

Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 2: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH \(MEH\) Standard HI.MEH.3:](#)

Materials

- [Poster:](#)
"Rock Bottom"
Worksheets: ["Dealing With My Ups and Downs,"](#) ["The Sun Will Come Out,"](#) ["If We Stand Together."](#)
Materials: 30-40 dowels or skewer sticks, glass, water, 3x5 cards, scissors
- [People Through Paper activity](#)
Music: "Tomorrow" (Annie, The Original Cast Recording, Martin Charnin, 1972)

Intended Learning Outcomes

Determine the impact of suicide (finality, irreversibility and loss of opportunities).
Identify factors contributing to suicide risk.
Identify the people included in a personal support system.
Identify the warning signs of suicide.

Instructional Procedures

Lesson at a Glance

Discuss concepts of "ups" and "downs."
Complete the "Dealing With My Ups and Downs" worksheet.
Complete the "people through paper" activity.
Complete the "water on back" activity.
Complete the "stick" activity.
Complete the "If We Stand Together" worksheet.
Complete the "The Sun Will Come Out" worksheet.

New Vocabulary

suicide
ups and downs
risk factor
protective factor

Introduction (Setting Focus)

Discuss the following:
According to the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov), suicide is a leading cause of death among young people.
One suicide is too many.
Suicide is final and irreversible and results in lost opportunities.
Many people who attempt suicide do not want to die, but want their problems to go away and their pain to stop.
Many people who attempt suicide are pleading for help.

Draw a 45° upward sloping line on the board and ask students if this line represents actual life (always getting better).

Draw a 45° downward sloping line and ask students if this line represents actual life (always getting worse).

Use an up-and-down line similar to an EKG monitor, and discuss that life has ups and downs, just like an EKG.

Discuss some of the protective factors or "ups" of life.

Discuss some of the risk factors or "downs" of life that might increase the risk of suicide.

Discuss that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Use "arrow cards" and discuss the risk factors or "downs" of life, suggesting that downs are only temporary and there isn't anything worth killing yourself over. During the discussion, turn the arrow cards to an up position as you explain that life's downs are only temporary, and, with time and help from others, people can move past these problems.

Body (Strategies/Activities)

Show and briefly discuss the "rock bottom" poster.

Students complete the worksheet, "Dealing With My Ups and Downs."

Complete the "people through paper" activity:

Each student receives a 3X5 card and a pair of scissors.

Students are to cut a hole in the card that is big enough for them to climb through.

Prepare the activity by asking the class for a vote of how many think this exercise is possible.

If a student asks for help, show him or her how it is done.

It is important for each member of the class to perform the activity.

Discuss the activity using the following prompts:

How did people accomplish the task even though at first it seemed impossible?

Did everything you tried work?

Is there more than one way to accomplish the task?

What previous knowledge or experience helped you with the problem?

How did watching others help?

How did people help each other?

When did people offer help?

Did you offer help to others?

What can we learn from this activity about getting through problems?

What does the saying mean that says, "The impulse to end it all does not last forever"? (Feelings don't last forever.)

Complete the "water on back" activity.

A volunteer kneels on both hands and knees in front of the class.

A glass of water is placed on the volunteer's back between the shoulder blades.

The volunteer is to remove the glass and place it on the floor in front of him or her without spilling a single drop.

Some students may be able to accomplish this task by themselves, but most will require help.

Process the activity using the following prompts:

What happened to the people who tried to remove the water by themselves?

How did you feel when you asked for help?

What makes people afraid to ask for help?

If people would go to a doctor to treat a broken bone, why would they be afraid to ask for help with other problems?

Complete the stick activity.

A student volunteer is given a stick (dowel or skewer) which represents someone trying to deal alone with life's challenges and disappointments.

The student is asked to break the stick and explain how easily it was accomplished.

The student is given another stick and asked to name examples of people and places he or she may go for support. Each time the student names a source of help, give him or her another stick. Continue until the student has 20-30 sticks. Encourage the student to attempt to break the new bundle.

Discuss the value of added strength in numbers.

Students complete the "If We Stand Together" worksheet.

Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)

While playing the song, "Tomorrow," review that life is full of ups and downs but things will get better.

Students separate into small groups and complete the worksheet, "The Sun Will Come Out."

Authors

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