

Activity Plan



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NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: BEHIND THE SMILE

OVERVIEW

IN THIS CREATIVE AND REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY, PARTICIPANTS ARE DIVIDED INTO SMALL GROUPS AND ASSIGNED A TYPE OF DEPRESSION. EACH GROUP RECEIVES A DEFINITION AND SYMPTOMS OF THEIR ASSIGNED TYPE. USING THIS INFORMATION, THE GROUP CREATES A VISUAL COLLAGE USING IMAGES, DRAWINGS, WORDS, OR SYMBOLIC OBJECTS TO REPRESENT THE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES RELATED TO THAT TYPE OF DEPRESSION. THE COLLAGES WILL BE PRESENTED IN A MINI-GALLERY OR SHORT PRESENTATION TO PROMOTE EMPATHY, AWARENESS, AND GROUP DISCUSSION.

OBJECTIVES:

INCREASE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEPRESSION

ENCOURAGE EMPATHY AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY

FOSTER CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND TEAMWORK

REDUCE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH STORYTELLING AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION

TARGET GROUP:

TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS (14-25),
ADAPTABLE FOR OTHER AGE GROUPS WITH
DIFFERENT DEPTH OF CONTENT.

GROUP SIZE:

12-36 PARTICIPANTS (3-6 PER GROUP IS IDEAL)

THEMES ADDRESSED:

MENTAL HEALTH, DEPRESSION, MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, EMPATHY, STIGMA REDUCTION, TEAMWORK, SELF-EXPRESSION

COMPLEXITY AND TIME:

MEDIUM – NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE NEEDED, BUT EMOTIONAL MATURITY REQUIRED.

90-120 MINUTES TOTAL

RESOURCES:

PRINTED HANDOUTS OR CARDS WITH DEPRESSION DEFINITIONS AND SYMPTOMS
MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, GLUE, SCISSORS, MARKERS, PAPER

OPTIONAL: MUSIC, POETRY BOOKS, SYMBOLIC ITEMS, MULTIMEDIA TOOLS

STICKY NOTES AND PENS FOR DEBRIEF
A QUIET AND CREATIVE-FRIENDLY SPACE

MATERIALS:

LARGE SHEETS OF PAPER / POSTER BOARDS (A3 OR LARGER) – ONE PER GROUP – THIS SERVES AS THE BASE FOR THEIR COLLAGE.

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS – (FASHION, NATURE, TECHNOLOGY, LIFESTYLE, ETC.)

FOR CUTTING OUT PICTURES, WORDS, OR PHRASES THAT SYMBOLIZE EMOTIONS OR THOUGHTS. THE MORE VARIETY, THE BETTER.

SCISSORS AND GLUE STICKS ONE OR MORE PER GROUP. SAFETY SCISSORS ARE RECOMMENDED IF WORKING WITH YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS.

COLOR MARKERS, PENCILS, PENS, CRAYONS
COLORED PAPER, CARDBOARD, STICKERS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS:

[HTTPS://WWW.CANVA.COM/DESIGN/DAGJP4ROCSS/1GRKNVSI00EGPLM6ZP42W/EDIT](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGJP4ROCSS/1GRKNVSI00EGPLM6ZP42W/EDIT)

OPTIONAL CREATIVE ELEMENTS: SYMBOLIC OBJECTS (OPTIONAL, FOR INSPIRATION OR INCLUSION IN THE COLLAGE): FEATHERS (LIGHTNESS/LOSS) STONES (HEAVINESS/BURDEN) THREADS OR STRINGS (CONNECTION OR ENTANGLEMENT) MIRRORS OR FOIL (IDENTITY, SELF-REFLECTION) AUDIO ELEMENTS (OPTIONAL): YOU COULD PROVIDE ACCESS TO DIFFERENT SHORT SOUNDSCAPES OR MUSIC TRACKS (CALM, CHAOTIC, SLOW) FOR INSPIRATION OR ATMOSPHERE WHILE GROUPS WORK.

FACILITATION & REFLECTION: STICKY NOTES AND PENS FOR DEBRIEFING – PARTICIPANTS CAN WRITE ONE WORD OR SHORT SENTENCE REFLECTING THEIR FEELINGS AFTER THE ACTIVITY.

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION (10 MIN)

BEGIN WITH A SHORT ICEBREAKER OR DISCUSSION AROUND WHAT PARTICIPANTS ALREADY KNOW OR FEEL ABOUT THE WORD DEPRESSION. CLARIFY THAT DEPRESSION IS A REAL HEALTH CONDITION, NOT JUST “FEELING SAD.”

1. GROUP WORK (60 MIN)

- DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO 6 SMALL TEAMS (OR MORE IF NEEDED, WITH REPEATED TOPICS).
- ASSIGN EACH GROUP ONE TYPE OF DEPRESSION:
 - MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER
 - PERSISTENT DEPRESSIVE DISORDER
 - BIPOLAR DISORDER
 - POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION
 - PSYCHOTIC DEPRESSION
 - SITUATIONAL DEPRESSION
- GIVE EACH GROUP A SHORT DESCRIPTION AND LIST OF SYMPTOMS (ADAPTED FROM THE MATERIAL ABOVE).
- ASK GROUPS TO CREATE A COLLAGE OR VISUAL REPRESENTATION USING:
 - MAGAZINES, PRINTED IMAGES, DRAWINGS, WORDS, SYMBOLS
 - OPTIONAL: SOUNDSCAPES, COLORS, A SHORT POEM OR OBJECT
- ENCOURAGE THEM TO REFLECT HOW SOMEONE EXPERIENCING THIS CONDITION MIGHT FEEL, THINK, AND SEE THE WORLD.

1. GALLERY WALK OR GROUP PRESENTATIONS (40 MIN)

- GROUPS PRESENT THEIR COLLAGES BRIEFLY OR DISPLAY THEM IN A GALLERY FORMAT.
- EACH GROUP EXPLAINS THE SYMBOLISM AND CHOICES BEHIND THEIR ARTWORK.

DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION:

(15–20 MIN)

GATHER EVERYONE IN A CIRCLE AND LEAD A REFLECTION WITH QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

- WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT DEPRESSION THAT YOU DIDN’ T KNOW BEFORE?
- DID ANYTHING SURPRISE YOU WHILE CREATING OR SEEING THE OTHER COLLAGES?
- HOW CAN VISUAL STORYTELLING HELP US UNDERSTAND DIFFICULT EMOTIONS?
- WHAT EMOTIONS DID YOU EXPERIENCE DURING THIS ACTIVITY?
- HOW CAN WE SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS?

INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO WRITE ONE WORD ON A STICKY NOTE REPRESENTING HOW THEY FEEL AFTER THE SESSION AND POST IT ON A REFLECTION WALL.

TIPS FOR FACILITATOR

- BE SENSITIVE TO EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS. LET PARTICIPANTS KNOW THEY CAN TAKE A BREAK IF NEEDED.
- OFFER A SAFE SPACE WHERE ALL EMOTIONS ARE VALID AND RESPECTED.
- USE INCLUSIVE, NON-JUDGMENTAL LANGUAGE.
- HAVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CONTACTS READY, ESPECIALLY IN SCHOOL SETTINGS.
- ENCOURAGE SYMBOLIC AND METAPHORICAL EXPRESSION—NOT ALL REPRESENTATIONS NEED TO BE LITERAL

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FOLLOW-UP

- HAVE PARTICIPANTS WRITE A LETTER TO A FICTIONAL PERSON EXPERIENCING ONE OF THE TYPES OF DEPRESSION—OFFERING COMPASSION AND SUPPORT.
- CREATE A DIGITAL VERSION OF THE COLLAGES AND DISPLAY THEM DURING A SCHOOL/COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH WEEK.
- START A DISCUSSION OR JOURNALING ACTIVITY ON HOW PARTICIPANTS TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN MENTAL WELL-BEING.