

Depression: Myth vs. Reality

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: Mental Health

Lesson Duration: One or two class periods

Student Objectives

- Review what they've learned about clinical depression and various treatments.
- Create a poster that highlights one common misconception about depression, and the truth behind that myth.

Materials

- Discovery School video on *unitedstreaming: Managing Your Health: Depression*
Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

- Depression: A Misunderstood Illness
 - Diagnosing Depression
 - Depression: Not Just a Mood Swing
 - Biochemical Basis of Depression
 - Drugs that Treat Depression
 - Symptoms of Teen Depression
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- Computer with Internet access
 - Print resources about depression
 - Poster board, markers

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing what students learned about depression in the video. What is depression? What are some different types of depression? What are some causes of depression? Describe different treatments available.
2. Next, have students work in pairs and discuss what facts in the video they found most surprising. Tell students they will choose one fact they'd like to explore further to create a "Myth and Reality" poster about that aspect of depression. Their poster should highlight one misperception and feature the truth. Encourage students to use facts from the video and their

own research. They can also include quotes from a variety of sources: the video, their research, or anonymous interviews. Below are some ideas for common misperceptions about depression. You may choose to use them to spark discussion among students.

- Depression is just a feeling; you can snap out of it if you try hard enough.
 - Only a few “crazy” people really get depressed.
 - Depression only occurs when bad things happen.
 - It’s easy to make yourself feel better.
 - There’s nothing you can do to treat depression.
 - Medicines like Prozac and Zoloft are “happy pills.”
 - Only adults suffer from depression.
 - Antidepressants can help anybody with depression.
 - There are no outward signs of depression.
 - People dealing with depression never experience extreme highs.
3. Student pairs should use print and online resources in their research. The following Web sites are a good starting point:
- **Discovery Health: Depression**
<http://health.discovery.com/diseasesandcond/encyclopedia/2847.html>
 - **Teen Health: Depression**
http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/depression.html
 - **National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association: Stories of Depression**
<http://www.ndmda.org/storymenu.html>
4. Once students have completed their posters, have them make presentations to the class. Then, as a class, discuss the steps students should take if they suspect they are suffering from depression themselves. What steps should they take if they think a friend is suffering from depression?
5. Display student posters in a school hallway or other high-traffic location.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students’ work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions; created comprehensive and thoughtful posters that included several relevant facts and quotes.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions; created somewhat comprehensive posters that included some facts and at least one quote.



- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions; created simplistic poster with few or no facts or quotes.

Vocabulary

bipolar disorder

Definition: A type of depression that has subtle or extreme “high” periods alternating with “low” periods of depression; also known as manic depression

Context: Bipolar disorder, or manic depression, is a disorder of the brain.

depression

Definition: A medical condition that leads to intense feelings of sadness or despair; these feelings don’t go away on their own, and are not necessarily related to a particular life event

Context: People of all ages can suffer from depression.

neurotransmitter

Definition: Chemicals in the brain that allow nerve cells to “communicate” with one another

Context: Too few or too many neurotransmitters may be released and cause or contribute to depression.

psychotherapy

Definition: A treatment that tries to eliminate or control mental illness symptoms through talking; the relationship between a therapist and a client is crucial

Context: Several types of psychotherapy are available: Psychodynamic therapy looks at past traumas, while behavioral psychotherapy tries to change negative patterns of behavior or thought.

Academic Standards

National Academy of Sciences

The National Science Education Standards provide guidelines for teaching science as well as a coherent vision of what it means to be scientifically literate for students in grades K-12. To view the standards, visit <http://books.nap.edu>.

This lesson plan addresses the following science standards:

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal health; Risks and benefits

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit link:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:



- Health: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
 - Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>