

# Health and Wellness Lesson 3

## Depression and Anxiety

### Middle School Level



#### Video Segment

<http://bwa.connectwithkids.com/middle-high-health-wellness/>

#### Essential Question

Why is it important to understand to learn strategies for recognizing and managing depression and anxiety?

#### Video Description:

Most teens will agree that their lives are filled with moments of stress, living up to expectations, pressure, and competition. These expectations, personal and parental, can prove to be somewhat overwhelming at times.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Ask students to share a few words or feelings associated with depression. What are some of the actions often associated with depression?
2. Have students develop a definition of depression. What causes depression?
3. Explain that clinical depression is a term that is used when a person feels depressed for long periods of time. Clinical depression is very serious. Why do you think this is so?
4. Being sad or disappointed when things seem to go wrong is a natural feeling to have. These feelings generally do not last for long periods of time. Not being selected for an athletic team or for a solo in a concert would be very disappointing to most individuals. How do teens generally deal with these types of situations?
5. Why is it hard to tell if a person is clinically depressed? Keeping an image of being a fun loving, outgoing, and confident person may be masking a person's real feelings of depression. What are some of the feelings of depression? (see vocabulary terms)
6. Anger, resentment, and feelings of hopelessness or helplessness are warning signs. Recognizing these feelings is an important first step to take. Ask students to name some of the staff at school that has been trained to help students in crisis situations. Would you feel comfortable asking one of these people for help if you needed it? Why or why not?
7. What are some common situations teens experience that cause higher than normal levels of anxiety or stress? Why?

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## Depression and Anxiety

### Activity: Depression Reflections

#### Project and Purpose:

Students participate in an open discussion on depression and reflect on times and situations in their own lives that they have encountered those feelings.

#### Materials:

- Depression Reflections Worksheet
- Board or Chart that everyone in class can see

#### Procedure:

1. Explain to students that sometimes it is helpful to use an analogy to illustrate a point. Open up a discussion on depression and anxiety using the analogy of a “cold” to express the prevalence of teen depression. Like the common cold, teen depression is taken somewhat for granted. “You’ll get over it, everyone does,” is a common thought in regards to dealing with the usual forms of depression. However, colds can be very dangerous. They weaken the immune system and allow other infections to invade the body.
  - Depression is often called the “common cold” of mental and emotional health. Why do you think it is called that? (**Answer:** Just like the cold, there are literally hundreds of different reasons why depression happens. Just like colds, it can last for several days, a week, or even longer. Unfortunately, like a cold that may turn into something serious, depression can lead to suicide.)
  - Just like colds, there are varying degrees of depression. It can be mild, where you may feel “down” or a bit “blue,” or it can be severe like clinical depression. What were some of the signs of clinical depression outlined in the video? (**Answer:** Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, anger, or hurt that last for weeks or months and do not go away. Being tired or drained or crying.)
  - Who or what can help with depression? (**Answer:** Clinical depression can be helped through medication called anti-depressants that are prescribed by doctors. Counseling and engaging in positive outlets that relieve depression such as exercise can also help.)
  - Is it normal to get sad from time to time? (**Answer:** Yes.)
  - According to the video, 1 in 8, or about 12% of teens have episodes of clinical depression. Clinical depression is serious. If you or someone you know exhibits signs of clinical depression, what should that person do? (**Answer:** Seek immediate medical attention.)
2. Distribute copies of the Reflection Worksheet. Ask the students to reflect on a time in their lives when they felt depressed, anxious, or under a great deal of stress. Ask them to write about this time on the worksheet. Tell the students that it is not the purpose of this activity to get them to reveal anything too personal or uncomfortable. Give the class about 5-10 minutes for this reflection piece.
3. Make three columns on the board or where the group can see. Label the first column “Feel,” the second column “Act,” and the third “Think.”

4. Ask students who are comfortable to share a few of the words that describe how they felt when they were sad. List these words in the “Feel” column.
5. Ask students if any of them acted differently during their time of depression. What were some of the ways? List these under the column titled “Act.”
6. Ask if any of the students wrote that while they were depressed they thought differently than they normally do. Write these words under the column headed “Think.”
7. Throughout the discussion of the above three columns/questions, expand the conversation and involve more students by asking the following:
  - How many of you have felt/acted/thought this way?
  - What conclusions can we draw from our discussion? Do we all experience times when we are depressed?
  - When we are depressed we don’t act in ways we usually do and we don’t think the way we usually do. What is an example of acting differently or thinking differently than usual?
  - How many of you are less optimistic when you are depressed? Are you less optimistic than usual now? Why or why not?
  - Unless the event you were using was a recent one, the ways you were acting or thinking are probably gone. What did you do that helped you? How many of you talked with a person you trusted? What was a word of advice that helped you feel better?

### **Conclusion:**

Review the theme of the video and lesson.

Explain to students that if they have experienced or are experiencing depression and/or anxiety they may find the need to speak with someone. Remind them they can speak to a trusted adult at home or in school or to a school counselor or social worker.

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## Depression and Anxiety

### Vocabulary

#### **crisis:**

A term used to describe an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty.

#### **positive outlets:**

A term used to describe positive ways to reduce the stress caused by a crisis. Examples include talking to a friend, taking a break from the stress (e.g., vacation), riding your bike, or doing something with a friend.

#### **negative outlets:**

A term used to describe negative ways to reduce the stress caused by a crisis. Examples include using alcohol, ignoring your feelings or secluding yourself from friends.

#### **feelings of depression:**

The general feeling of depression may include sadness, unhappiness, worthlessness, bitterness, hopelessness, helplessness, restlessness, or irritation and anger.

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### Activity: Depression Reflections

Think of a time in your life when you felt depressed, sad, or blue. Take 5 to 10 minutes to answer the following reflection questions.

1. Generally, what was the situation?

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2. Who was involved?

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3. Where did it happen?

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4. When did it happen?

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5. Make a list of the words that describe how you felt when you were sad.

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6. Did you act differently during this time? Describe this:

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7. Did you think differently during this time? Describe this:

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