

Overview: Learning and Activity Sequence for Grades 3-5
Can be adapted for Grades K-2
Suggested Time to Complete: 4 Sessions of 30-45 minutes



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Goal: Students will be introduced to the basic ideas of mental health by observing student produced short videos, following a mindfulness meditation, and then create a PSA about mental health.

The Objective: Students will understand that mental health is a spectrum, and similar to a person being physically ill, persons with a mental illness have symptoms, can seek help, may take medicine, and can recover.

Overview:

In this sequence of three lessons, students will learn basic principles of mental health, review techniques and create a video PSA.

- **Lesson 1:** Watch NYC Public School Film Festival selections that explore different topics of mental health.
- **Lesson 2:** Explore mindfulness with a guided meditation video.
- **Lesson 3 and 4:** View examples of PSAs and create one on a mobile device.

Materials Needed:

- Computer or mobile device connected to wifi.

DISCLAIMER: Resources in these activities contain external internet links. In other words, once a student links to a video or to one of the recommended images, they are on an external site and have access to whatever the site has placed online. As with all independent student engagement, it is strongly recommended that parents or guardians actively supervise each student's independent research.



SESSION 1: What is Mental Health?

Lesson Objective: Watch NYC Public School Film Festival selections to explore different topics of mental health.

Students will watch the New York Public School 2021 Film Festival [here](#) and explore the different themes and topics of mental health. The selection of short films is below:

Short Film Titles and Times

Help, I'm Drowning - 18:01-20:57

Colors - 58:24-59:57

Delusions - 1:28:16-1:31:41 (**viewer discretion advised**)*

**This piece may too challenging for younger viewers.*

DISCUSSION:

Kids are naturally curious and have questions about mental illness. Understanding mental illness can be challenging for adults as well as for children. Myths, confusion, and misinformation about mental illnesses can cause anxiety, strengthen stereotypes, and lead to stigma. During the past several decades, great advances have been made in the areas of diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. Adults can help children understand that these are real illnesses that can be treated.

When explaining to a child about how a mental illness affects a person, it may be helpful to make a comparison to a physical illness. For example, many people get sick with a cold or the flu, but only a few get really sick with something serious like pneumonia. People who have a cold are usually able to do their normal activities. However, if they get pneumonia, they will have to take medicine and may have to go to the hospital. Similarly, feelings of sadness, anxiety, worry, irritability, or sleep problems are common for most people. However, when these feelings get very strong, last for a long period of time, and begin to interfere with school, work, and relationships, it may be a sign of a mental illness that requires treatment. -

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Talking-To-Kids-About-Mental-Illnesses-084.aspx

ACTIVITY

Watch the three short films and discuss mental health as a class.

Short Film Titles and Times

Help, I'm Drowning - 18:01-20:57

Colors - 58:24-59:57

Delusions - 1:28:16-1:31:41 **(viewer discretion advised)***

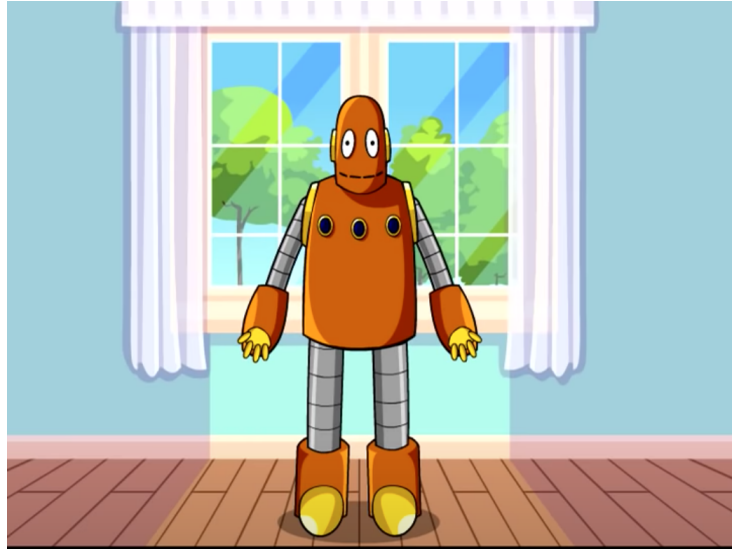
**This piece may too challenging for younger viewers.*

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mome/industries/nyc-public-school-film-festival.page>

QUESTIONS

- Who can tell me one thing they learned today about mental illness that they did not know before this class began?
- What would you do if you found out your friend had been diagnosed with a mental illness?
- What would you do if you witnessed someone at school making fun of a person with a mental illness?
- If a person who is physically sick goes to see a medical doctor, a person who has a mental health problem sees a _____?
- What is the least effective way of dealing with a mental health challenge or mental illness?
- If a person with a mental illness or mental health challenge experiences "stigma", what does that mean?

(Note to Teacher: Students are apt to answer with responses they think that you may want to hear. Challenge them to consider what they really would or would not do and why doing the "right" thing might not always be so easy. Accept all answers, even those that suggest actions that are not consistent with acceptance of another person. If this happens, probe deeper to find out why someone would ignore an incident where a classmate was the victim of bullying or did not want to be with a friend who has been diagnosed with a mental illness. Ask students if in fact their response has to do with stigma. Find out what it would take for those who are hesitant to change their behavior).



SESSION 2: Mindfulness & Meditation

Lesson Objective: Explore mindfulness with a guided meditation exercise.

DISCUSSION:

Everyone's mind wanders, especially during routine tasks that don't require our full attention. But sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by those thoughts, and lose sight of the world around us. Practicing mindfulness is one way to turn down the volume on an overactive brain. It's a skill that allows us to focus on the present. Some people practice mindfulness through meditation, which uses breathing and relaxation to keep our attention on the moment. Others do it while taking a walk or eating a meal. With practice, mindfulness can be a useful tool for managing our emotions and everyday stress. So inhale, exhale, and press "play" to learn more!

Materials:

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZpZOD6h6kU&ab_channel=BrainPOP
Interactive whiteboard

ACTIVITY:

1. On the board, write the word "Mindfulness." Ask students what they know about mindfulness. Jot their ideas on the board. For students who are aware of mindfulness, ask them if they've ever practiced it, what techniques they use, and how it makes them feel.
2. Make sure students understand that mindfulness is about paying attention to what you're doing and thinking in a calm and focused way. Explain that there are many benefits to practicing mindfulness, such as feeling happier and more relaxed, making better decisions, being more patient, having better attention skills, and so much more. Point out that being mindful helps us in all parts of our lives -- from succeeding in school to getting along with others.
3. Show the movie 5-Minute Yoga and Mindfulness Video from BrainPop. Encourage students to follow along: [5-Minute Yoga and Mindfulness](#)



SESSION 3 and 4: PSA (Public Service Announcement)

Lesson Objective: By watching examples of PSAs, students will write a script for a PSA on Mental Health.

Links:

- <https://www.pbs.org/video/my-voice-media-center-mental-health-psa-tkciz3/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/knowning-the-signs-zrmgqe/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/california-student-media-festival-csmf-june-student-spotlight-life-rocks/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/california-student-media-festival-csmf-march-student-spotlight-vam-tv/>
- <https://youtu.be/ubCyb2GKLCs>

ACTIVITY:

Watch the following PSAs:

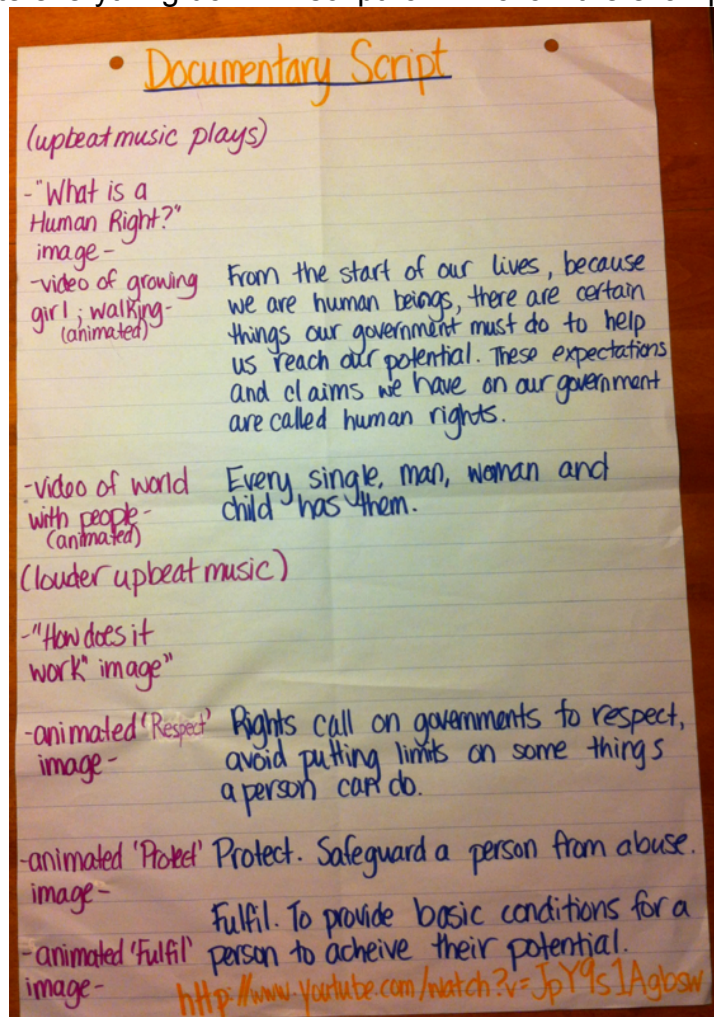
- [byYou Art & Culture | My Voice Media Center: Mental Health PSA | Season 2018 | Episode 88](#)
- [byYou Art & Culture | Sanger High: Knowing The Signs | Season 2018 | Episode 91](#)
- [California Student Media Festival | Life Rocks](#)
- [California Student Media Festival | Random Acts of Kindness](#)

ACTIVITY:

Write a script for a PSA about Mental Health.

1. Watch [Writing a Playscript](#)
2. Write down the following answers about your PSA:
 - a. What do you see?
 - b. What do you hear?

- c. Who are the characters?
 - d. What are they saying?
 - e. What are they feeling?
 - f. What are they doing?
 - g. What do you want the viewer/audience to do after watching your PSA?
 - h. What is your "tagline"? (ex. Life Rocks)
3. Now write everything down in script form. Follow the example below.



Alignment to the NYC DOE Blueprint for Teaching and Learning: Moving Image

Gr. 5 Benchmark Indicators

Making Moving Images

Through hands-on work, learn basic aspects of filmmaking production

Media Literacy

Comprehend that films are made up of moving images

Develop critical viewing skills





Understand basic vocabulary terms of animation

Making Connections

Understand that film can be used in a variety of contexts—cultural, personal, historical, and technological.

Develop a deeper understanding in other content areas by creating animation projects.

Alignment to the NYS Learning Standards for the Arts

Artistic Processes			
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Anchor Standards & Process Components			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IMAGINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PLAN & MAKE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EVALUATE & REFINE - PRESENT 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SELECT - ANALYZE - INTERPRET <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REHEARSE, EVALUATE, & REFINE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRESENT 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SELECT - ANALYZE <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 8: Interpret meaning in artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INTERPRET <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EVALUATE 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 10: Relate and synthesize knowledge and personal experiences to inspire and inform artistic work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RELATE <input type="checkbox"/> Anchor Standard 11: Investigate ways that artistic work is influenced by societal, cultural, and historical context and, in turn, how artistic ideas shape culture's past, present, and future. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INTERRELATE