

Let's Talk Jenga

Focus: To educate grades 6 through 8 on mental health and spur group discussion.

Lesson Topic:

Bloom focuses to help individuals learn how to find a healthy balance mentally, physically, and emotionally. The acronym, BLOOM, was made to help anyone maintain or improve their own personal balance and health. It helps individuals develop skills that enable them to achieve their goals in life with the knowledge and tools to properly fuel their minds and bodies. The B stands for balance, the L for listen, the O's for outlet and outlook, and M for movement and meditation. The focus of this acronym is to be applicable for all ages. The state of South Dakota had the 8th highest suicide rate in the nation in 2019. The nation's youth population struggles with a wide array of mental disorders. Studies show that disorders such as anxiety and depression are at all-time highs. BLOOM works to address these issues at the source, educating youth about mental health balance and well-being.

In this activity, the goal is to focus on educating junior high students, grades 6 through 8 about mental health and healthy habits. Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses often begin to develop in middle school or early high school. Therefore, this is a critical time to educate youth. Classroom talks about mental health may be uncomfortable at first, but it is critical mental health is discussed throughout a person's life. If healthy habits and coping strategies are instilled at an early age, the occurrence of depression and other mental illnesses can be decreased.

Talking Points:

B-Balance

- A healthy balance is critical to good mental health.
 - Junior high is a time when students begin to become busy.
 - At this point, they need to be assured it is ok if they are unable to do everything.
 - Choose what makes them happy and do that!
 - It is ok to say no!

L- Listen

- Listening to one's mind and body is critical to mental health.
 - Eating healthy is great but extreme dieting is not.
 - Body dysmorphia often starts at this age.
 - Feel free to chat with each student about how they feel about themselves
 - Eat the foods you like!

- Listen to your body.
 - Go to bed earlier if you are tired during the day.
 - Give your body the nutrients it needs

O- Outlet

- Having an outlet is an amazing way to learn more about yourself and reflect deeper into your emotions.
 - Grades 6-8 are a critical time for teenagers to develop their outlet.
 - Outlets are a great way to cope with mental struggles.
 - It is critical for people to develop healthy outlets.

O- Outlook

- Perspective will take you far in any situation and will tremendously transform your life.
 - If a person has a positive outlook, their mental health will be improved
 - At this age, kids often compare themselves to others.
 - It is best to talk about how not everyone can achieve the same things, and each person has their talents.

M- Movement/Meditation

- Both movement and meditation play important roles in one's health journey.
 - Movement is great for both a person's body and mind.
 - Movement can alleviate stress and better a person's mental state.
- Meditation is a great underutilized way to better oneself mentally
 - This can be done through simple activities, like reflection and schedule making.

Activity:

For this activity, a pre-prepared Jenga set is required for each group. Groups should consist of 4 or 5 students that can work and be productive with one another.

In preparation, please write a question from the section below on each Jenga block. Add your questions based on your knowledge of your class.

Distribute the Jenga sets. Play Jenga as normal but after each block, have the player who pulled the block from the stack answer the question on the block to the group. Move throughout the classroom during the game and spur mental health conversations.

Jenga Questions:

What food could you eat to BLOOM?
 What are your OUTLETS?
 How can you better listen to your body?
 What activities can you do to improve your outlook on life?
 What part of your life needs better balance?
 What do you do to balance your life?
 Which healthy habits do you follow?

How can you help others become the best versions of themselves?
Do you make to-do lists? If so, do they work for you?
Do you ever feel overwhelmed? How do you cope with this feeling?
How do you make schedules?
Do you set reminders on your phone? Do you find them helpful?
What is your favorite food?
How much sleep do you need per night to feel good the next day?
Do you eat breakfast? Should you?
What do you focus on in your overall diet?
When should breakfast be eaten in the morning?
What activities are you passionate about?
What are your hobbies?
What activities do you do to reduce stress?
How do you let your emotions out?
Do you write down your accomplishments?
Do you write yourself words of affirmation?
How can you improve others' outlooks?
What are your strengths?
What are your weaknesses?
What would you like to improve about yourself?
How could you improve your weaknesses?
Have you meditated before?
How early do you wake up?
Do you feel rushed in the mornings?
Do you drink water in the mornings?
What are your goals for this week?
What are your goals for today?
What are your goals for this month?
What are your goals for this year?
What habits would you like to change?
How do you change your habits?
How do you focus on yourself?
What can you do to better yourself today?
What resources for mental health are in your area?
How can you BLOOM today?
What foods are in a balanced breakfast?
What is your favorite form of exercise?
Do you feel better about yourself after exercise?
What is one thing in your life you want to change?
How are you working to improve in your day-to-day life?
What makes you happy in life?
What are your future plans?
How do you balance school with other activities?
What are your favorite extra-curricular activities?
What is your favorite healthy food?
How do you define healthy food?