

RM 6–MH: Mental Health Scenarios*

This learning activity will enable students to become more acquainted with various mental health issues and some of their signs and symptoms. An assumption is that teachers have already addressed these topics in class and are using this learning activity primarily for review or application of learning.

Materials Needed

- slips of paper with a different mental health scenario on each (see the following page)
- notes taken in class
- a health book

Directions

Place the class into groups of three or four students. Have one person from each group pick a slip of paper that outlines a specific mental health scenario. Advise students that the groups will have approximately 10 minutes to figure out which mental health issue their selected scenario describes and to respond to three questions, providing explanations for their answers:

1. From what mental health issue do you think the person described in the scenario is suffering? Provide reasons for your decision (signs, symptoms, and possible causes of the mental health issue).
2. What advice and assistance would you offer the person in the scenario? Explain.
3. Which health care professionals would best be able to help the person? Give reasons.

When the 10 minutes are up, the groups take turns reading their scenarios to the class and presenting their response to the three problem-solving challenges. During the class discussion, the teacher can include any other important information that is appropriate.

Continued

* Source of adaptation: Ballard, Michelle. "Mental Health Scenarios." *PE Central: Health Lesson Ideas*. 2002. <www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/ViewLesson.asp?ID=3221>. Used by permission of PE Central (pecentral.org), the premier website for physical education teachers.

RM 6–MH: Mental Health Scenarios (*Continued*)

Mental Health Scenarios

Below are a few scenarios that may indicate a mental health issue. Teachers are encouraged to make up more scenarios for any other mental health topics addressed in class.

1. Suzie’s mother died a year ago, but Suzie just can’t seem to move on. Suzie is still having a hard time sleeping at night and concentrating in school. Last week, I even caught Suzie crying in the school washroom. Some people have seen her take some pills.
2. Brandon has recently graduated from high school and will be attending a local university this year. Brandon was always exercising and working out in high school. He now spends a lot of time weight training at the gym. He’s been putting on a lot of muscle lately, and he is always talking about working out and getting bigger. Brandon takes supplements, drinks protein shakes, and has started using creatine (amino acid). When I’m talking to Brandon it almost sounds as if he wants to become the next “superman.” I’m really worried about Brandon because he gets agitated and angry very easily.
3. Jenny is my best friend. We both play volleyball. We’ve been playing volleyball together since Grade 7. I’ve noticed that every winter Jenny withdraws from her friends and always seems sad. Every winter, I think that it’s me . . . that I’ve done something to Jenny to upset her. Once spring hits, Jenny slowly returns to her “normal” self.
4. Chris is constantly worried about catching colds. In fact, Chris washes his hands just about 20 times a day. When asked, Chris says that he cannot afford to be sick, and then goes into a lecture about how many germs there are around. Sometimes Chris washes his hands so much that they bleed.
5. Hailey’s parents were divorced when she was six. Since then, she has been spending every second weekend with her father. She is now in high school and doesn’t want to go to her father’s house every second weekend anymore. She wants to work and spend more time with her school friends. Her father lives in another part of the city quite a distance away. When she’s at his house there isn’t much to do, and he’s a smoker, which bothers her, but she realizes that he is lonely and needs her help to do household chores.

ANSWER KEY

1. Health issue: **depression**
2. Health issue: **muscle dysmorphia**
3. Health issue: **seasonal affective disorder**
4. Health issue: **anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder**
5. Health issue: **stress**