

MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

Purpose

To show students that everyday small actions and interactions can have a BIG impact when it comes to our mental health and those around us.

Objective

To help students identify ways that they already practice mental health leadership, and explore new ways to incorporate those practices into their everyday lives.

Instructor directions

This activity can be completed in two ways: individual-led or group-led.

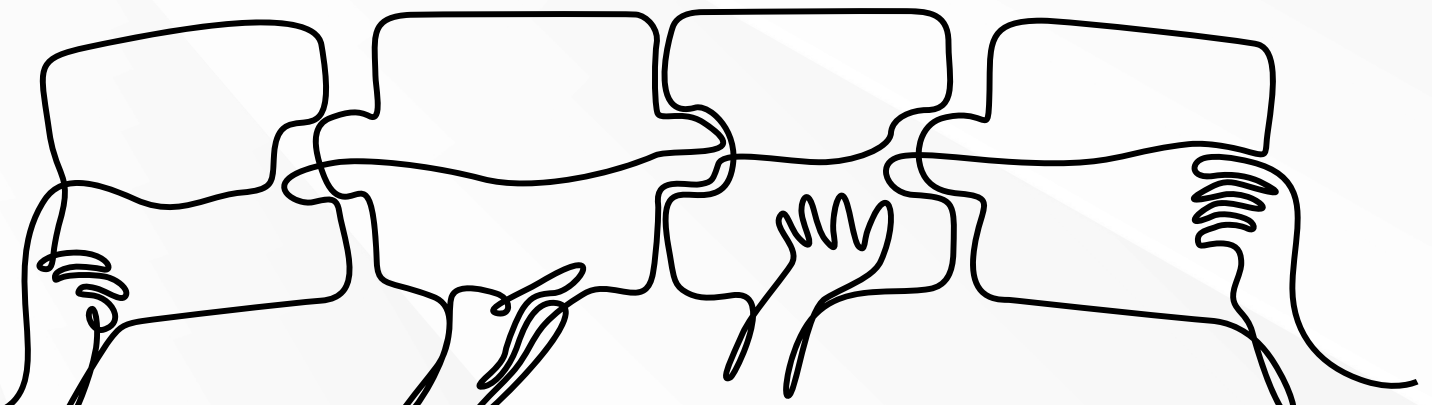
Individual-led

Read the directions of the activity, and give students 5-10 minutes to complete each part.

Optional: After the activity is finished, you can have students share out by turning and talking to a neighbor or by having students raise their hands to share their responses with the class.

Group-led

Instead of having students complete the activity independently, you can make it a group-led activity. For example, you can read each action on the list and ask students to raise their hands if this is something they have done. You could also get them moving by having them step into a circle or stand in a line if the action applies to them. You can then use the questions from the activity to guide a group discussion, rather than having students write individual responses and reflections.



WHAT MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

When we think about mental health, we often think about things like therapy or medication. But mental health is also the small steps we take every day to take care of ourselves and feel good.

When we take care of our own mental health, we encourage others to do so too. So we can think of mental health leadership as the things that we do to inspire others to take good care of themselves.

In this activity, we will explore examples of what mental health leadership looks like in everyday life and how we can incorporate these actions into our own lives.

Part 1: Examples of mental health leadership

Directions: Read the list of mental health leadership actions below, then complete the 3-2-1 activity.

- Seeing a friend struggling and starting a conversation with them
- Struggling and asking for help
- Letting yourself feel difficult feelings like grief, sadness, anger, etc.
- Having a good way to cope with stress, like playing video games, reading, etc.
- Identifying at least one person you can talk to about your problems or feelings
- Checking in with friends and seeing how they are feeling
- Standing up for yourself
- Standing up for others
- Having a difficult conversation about your feelings with someone
- Speaking up even if you are scared or worried
- Saying affirmations to yourself
- Journaling or writing down your feelings
- Talking to someone you trust about your feelings
- Listening when a friend comes to you with a problem
- Giving good advice to a friend
- Listening to good advice that a friend gave you
- Helping a friend handle a difficult situation
- Taking a break when you need it
- Using a mental health app
- Knowing where the mental health resources are at your school
- Finding good mental health resources online, like those from Mental Health America
- Recommending a mental health app or mental health resources to a friend
- Joining a club or doing events that promote good mental health, like Active Minds, spirit weeks, etc.
- Participating in a sport or activity that makes you feel good
- Learning about mental health advocates in the larger community
- Taking a mental health test, like a depression or anxiety test
- Sharing a post, podcast, video, etc. with a friend to help them feel better
- Being there when a friend needed you
- Talking to a mental health professional, like a school counselor, therapist, social worker, etc.

3 Write down three actions from the list that you have already done.

2 Write down two actions from the list that you haven't done but want to try.

1 Write down one action from the list that you will do this week.



Part 2: Practicing mental health leadership

Directions: In 3–5 sentences, take some time to reflect on how you will incorporate one mental health leadership action into your life this week. Think about when or how you will take action and why you selected this specific action.

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